

Historic Building Appraisal

Tin Hau Temple

Sha Chau, Tuen Mun

The Tin Hau Temple (天后廟) at Sha Chau (沙洲), a composition of four tiny islets off Castle Peak Bay (青山灣) and north of Lantau (大嶼山), was first built by fishermen in the 26th year of the Daoguang (道光, 1846) reign of the Qing (清) dynasty as the name board above the doorway has the year inscribed on it. Sha Chau is composed of four islets including Sheung Sha Chau (上沙洲), Tai Sha Chau (大沙洲), Ha Sha Chau (下沙洲) and Siu Sha Chau (小沙洲). The temple is on Tai Sha Chau. The building was destroyed by a fire in the 1970s and rebuilt in 1998. The rebuilt project was sponsored by the Sino Co. Ltd. and the fishermen, most of them in Tuen Mun. The temple is managed by a Sha Chau Tin Hau Temple management Committee (沙洲天后廟管理委員會).

**Historical
Interest**

It is a Qing vernacular design building having one hall and flanked by a side hall on either side. The 1998 constructed building made use of the green bricks of the old temple. It is constructed of green bricks and granite stones with its walls to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and ceramic tiles. The lower courses of the walls are in leopard pattern with organic-shaped granite blocks bonded by mortar at a random design. The altar at the end wall of the main hall houses the statue of the deity in the middle flanked by two holy stones for worship. A giant fish rib of a whale is at the left hall. The fish was caught by Lai Kam-fuk (黎金福), a fisherman who worked in the fish market of Sam Shing Hui (三聖墟) in the 1970s. The ridge is decorated with a set of geometric mouldings. Two dragon mouldings are on either side of the name board above the doorway. Its gable walls are with mouldings of curling leafy pattern.

**Architectural
Merit**

It is a Tin Hau temple at Sha Chau erected by the fishermen.

Rarity

It has some built heritage value.

**Built Heritage
Value**

The temple was rebuilt in 1998. This would diminish its authenticity although it was destroyed by a fire in the 1970s and had been left dilapidated.

Authenticity

Since it is an off-shore Tin Hau temple, most of the worshippers are fishermen from Tuen Mun, Tai O (大澳) and some other areas when they are passing by the islet. They would seek the deity's protection on their fishing work, their families, their children and marriage. The celebration of the Tin Hau Festival (天后誕) on the 23rd of the third lunar month was held on the islet as

**Social Value,
& Local
Interest**

well as in Sam Shing Hui as there is not enough space on the islet. For the latter occasion the deity would be invited to attend the ceremony in the Hui.