

Historic Building Appraisal
Tin Hau Temple
Fong Ma Po, Lam Tsuen, Tai Po, N.T.

Tin Hau Temple (天后宮) in Fong Ma Po (放馬莆), Lam Tsuen (林村/林村鄉), is believed to be built in the 33rd year of the Qianlong reign (乾隆, 1768) during the Qing (清) dynasty (1644 – 1911) as a cloud gong has the dating inscribed on it. Fong Ma Po is one of the twenty-six villages in Lam Tsuen, five of them are Punti (本地), whilst the others are Hakka (客家). In the Qing dynasty the villages were divided into six units called *kap* (甲), each consisting of about 100 households. The six *kaps* later formed an association called Luk Wo Tong (六和堂, literally meaning hall of six harmonies) for the maintenance of the temple. Its services then extended to other social and village affairs. Fong Ma Po was founded in early Qing dynasty in the seventeenth century. Being a Punti village, its main clans were the Wongs (黃) and Maks (麥). The original name of the village was called Lung Hing Tsuen (龍興村) and later renamed as Fong Ma Po, literally a place for horse grazing, when the villagers started rearing horses in the area. The temple was destroyed by Typhoon Dot (黛蒂) in 1964 and further damaged by a fire in 1965. It was then renovated in 1967. It has three halls, the middle one being for Tin Hau, the left one named Man Mo Court (文武殿) for Kwan Tai (關帝) with a tablet for twelve martyrs who were said to have sacrificed for the defense of the village, and the right one called Lung Mo Court (龍母殿) with a tablet of Tang Chim (鄧詹) and his wife for their contribution in founding the temple. The temple is managed by the local community.

**Historical
Interest**

The temple is a Qing vernacular building on a two-hall-one-courtyard-two-side-chamber plan with its roofs in flush gable style (硬山). All three entrances are recessed. The granite columns, grey-brick walls support the roofs which are with rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The main ridge has a ceramic pearl, a pair of dragon fish locally known as *aoyus* (鰲魚), plastered moulding of two fish and a set of geometric pattern. Wall friezes and fascia boards are respectively with floral, plants, landscape and scrolls carvings and paintings.

**Architectural
Merit**

It is a Tin Hau temple to witness the historic development of Lam Tsuen. The temple has moderate built heritage value. It was renovated in 1835, 1967 and 2001 with some other unknown ones. Plastering and the concrete columns added have affected the authenticity of the historic building.

**Rarity, Built
Heritage
Value &
Authenticity**

Other than the Tin Hau Festival (天后誕) celebrated on the 23rd day of the third lunar month, Ta Chiu (打醮) held every nine years in Lam Tsuen would have great offerings at the temple with Cantonese opera performances, vegetarian meals and others. The wishing trees (許願樹) by the temple have attracted a lot of worshippers to both the trees and the temple especially during the Chinese New Year.

***Social Value,
& Local Interest***

There are no other graded historic buildings near the temple.

Group Value