

“Historical and Architectural Traces of Sam Tung Uk” Audio Transcript

Location: Middle Hall

Theme: “Naming of “Sam Tung Uk” and architectural layout of the courtyards

We’re now in the “Middle Hall” of the Chan Ancestral Hall. This was the main venue for family gatherings of the Chan clan.

By the way, do you know anything about the naming of “Sam Tung Uk”?

Let me explain it to you. The Chan Ancestral Hall was situated on the central axis of Sam Tung Uk. Along the route we just walked through, there are three halls including the Entrance Hall, Middle Hall and the Ancestral Hall, separated by two open courtyards. A “hall” can be understood as a space with a pitched roof. If you look up at the wooden pitched roof of the Middle Hall, the ridge purlin at the top is known as a *tung*. There is a *tung* in each of the three halls of the Chan Ancestral Hall. Hence, this house was named “Sam Tung Uk”, a “building with three ridge purlins”.

Now, you can look at the open courtyard outside, which serves the purpose of providing both lighting and ventilation. The flooring of the courtyard is paved with firm and durable granite slabs. Above are the surrounding roofs of the Entrance Hall and Middle Hall as well as the corridors on two sides. On rainy days, rainwater running from these four roofs produces a poetic scene referred to as “water from four sides meets in the central court”. Any rainwater which collects on the indented floor will flow out through the only drain.

If you look up at the tiled roof, you’ll see that it is laid with rows of dark grey Hakka tiles. If you would like to learn more about the roof tiling later, you can explore the Interactive Zone to experience the fun of tiling the roof in Dwelling 2.

Let’s proceed to the next interpretation stand. It’s located below the plaque inscribed with the Chinese characters for “Greatly Respected Patriarch”. We’ll explain the history of this plaque and the story of the construction of Sam Tung Uk.