



JOURNEY BETWEEN THE CENTURIES **SHA TIN**

Sha Tin

Settlement of the Sha Tin Valley began more than 500 years ago, but it was only in the 1950s that it developed into more than a community of rice-subsistence farmers. The real transformation of Sha Tin began in 1973 with the construction of the New Town with its plethora of high-rise residential blocks on partly reclaimed land from the river estuary.

Today, walking around Sha Tin is akin to walking through a time tunnel! You can find vestiges of bygone days here and there interspersed with the modern urban development. Experience a 16th century temple (Che Kung Temple) dedicated to a warrior general imbued with mystical powers! Visit an old village (Tsang Tai Uk) built in the 19th century featuring an amazing one-of-a-kind architectural style. Stroll around a modern-day shopping centre (New Town Plaza) built in the 20th century that serves as a lightning rod for many of the 750,000 people that call this bustling New Town home.





Tai Wai
36 Che Kung Temple

Tsang Tai Uk 37

38 The Hong Kong Heritage Museum



Central Sha Tin

39 Sha Tin Park

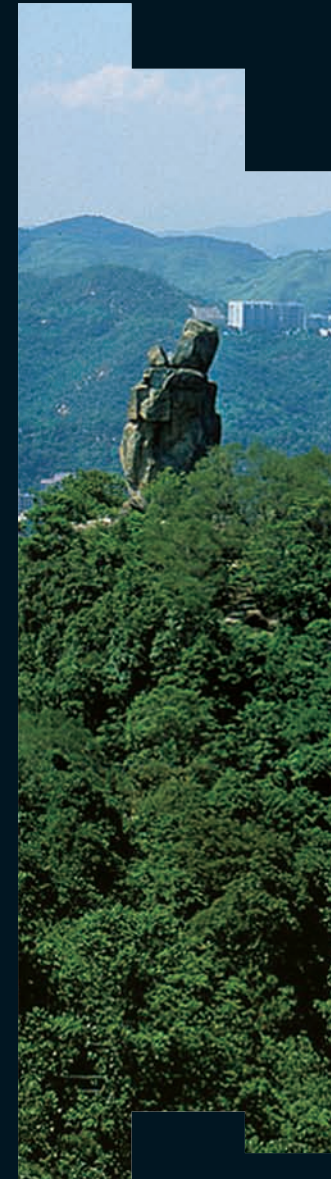
City Art Square 39

40 New Town Plaza



The Lady of Amah Rock

On the summit of a hill on the southern flank of Sha Tin valley is a large rock, which viewed from some directions looks like a woman carrying a child on her back! The story goes that after a fisherman failed to return from a fishing trip, his wife with their child on her back would climb the hill every day to look out to sea, looking for his boat. Alas, he had been caught in a storm and never came back. Day after day, she climbed the hill until, in sympathy and admiring her constancy, the spirit of the mountain turned her into stone, so that she could stand and look out to sea forever.





Tai Wai

1. Che Kung Temple

First established in the 16th century, the Che Kung Temple was built at the junction of three streams because the god was credited with controlling floods – and reputedly saved the area from a plague in 1629. Considered one of the Gods of Good Fortune, his birthday is celebrated on the Second Day of Chinese New Year when as many as 100,000 devotees come to the temple and turn brass windmills. It is believed turning the blades brings good luck.

Opening hours: 7am – 6pm daily.

Directions: MTR Che Kung Temple Station Exit B, go through the pedestrian tunnel and turn right into Che Kung Temple.



2. Tsang Tai Uk

Translated as the Big House of the Tsangs, this is a unique village in the New Territories, built to a *Hakka* design rather than the traditional local style. Entry is through gatehouses in the front courtyard, with wells on either side. The Ancestral Hall is in the centre of the building. All around are houses for visitors. The village was built in the mid-19th century by Tsang Koon-man, a *Hakka* who made his fortune as a stonemason. Locals called his village 'The Big House of the Tsangs'.

Note: Tsang Tai Uk is private property and not formally open to the public. It is usually accessible but care should be taken not to offend the residents or pry too intrusively into the private areas of the village. The Ancestral Hall is temporarily closed for restoration in early 2010.



Directions: Exit Che Kung Temple and retrace your steps to Che Kung Miu Road and walk to the right along the road. At the pedestrian tunnels, follow the directional signs to Tsang Tai Uk. When you exit the tunnel, keep walking past a tennis court on your left to reach Tsang Tai Uk.



3. The Hong Kong Heritage Museum

Opened in 2000, the museum's 12 galleries are built around traditional Chinese open courtyards. In addition to changing thematic exhibitions, the permanent galleries showcase the history and culture of the New Territories, Cantonese opera*, Chinese culture, and contemporary Hong Kong art and design. A Children's Discovery Gallery offers a fun way for children to discover the mysteries of archaeology and to learn about the natural environment.

Opening hours: 10am – 6pm Monday & Wednesday to Saturday; 10am – 7pm Sunday and most public holidays. Closed on Tuesday.

Directions: Retrace your steps to the pedestrian tunnels and follow the directional signs pointing to the Hong Kong Heritage Museum. The path takes you over the Lion Bridge.

Tel: +852 2180 8188

Homepage: www.heritagemuseum.gov.hk

*Join the Cantonese Opera Appreciation Class. For details, see page 71.



Central Sha Tin

4. Sha Tin Park

Take a break from all the sightseeing and go for a stroll in this lush eight-hectare park on the banks of the Shing Mun River. There are six gardens featuring a wide variety of shrubs and trees. Enjoy an eight-metre-high waterfall and two banyan trees that provide a great backdrop for photos. Exit through the North Gate and you'll see Sha Tin Town Hall.

Opening hours: 6:30am – 11pm daily.

Directions: Follow the directional signs to Sha Tin Park along Lion Rock Tunnel Road and through the pedestrian tunnel. When you exit the tunnel, turn right and continue walking until you reach the large red gates of the Sha Tin Park.

Tel: +852 8695 9253

Homepage: www.lcsd.gov.hk/parks/stp/en/index.php



5. City Art Square

The City Art Square is located at the Sha Tin Town Hall Plaza. With the aims to improve the public environment, develop the arts and culture, and promote the Beijing Olympic Games, world-class art displays were introduced in the City Art Square. These displays include original and uniquely-styled sculptures and public art installations designed and created by 19 world-renowned overseas, mainland and local artists and designers.

Directions: Opposite the Lek Yuen Bridge, take the staircase up to the podium level, walk past the Sha Tin Town Hall, then walk down the staircase in front to reach City Art Square.

Tel: +852 2694 2509 / 2694 2570

Homepage: www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/CulturalService/Shatin/city_art/eng/index.html



6. New Town Plaza

Take time out at the sprawling New Town Plaza. It contains a comprehensive range of shops and a host of eateries offering a wide variety of cuisines to suit just about every taste and budget. One must-visit is Asia's first outdoor Snoopy's World, with more than 60 Peanuts figures including the world's largest outdoor model of Snoopy atop his doghouse. New Town Plaza also features entertainment facilities including mini-cinemas.



Opening hours: 10am – 10pm daily.

Directions: New Town Plaza is just opposite to the staircase of Sha Tin Town Hall.

Tel: +852 2684 9175 / 2691 6576

Homepage: www.newtownplaza.com.hk

Did you know...

Hong Kong, Asia's world city has restaurants that cater to every conceivable culinary whim. **Lung Wah Hotel** (龍華酒店) in Sha Tin specialises in roast pigeon, which connoisseurs eat with their fingers! Their chicken congee is also famous. The hanging red lanterns and the red-checkered tablecloths add a lovely East-West ambience. There are other food outlets serving dishes like these around Hong Kong.



TAI WAI & SHA TIN

