

Lou Pan Temples

Macao is a city where Eastern and Western cultures meet. It has many unique and beautiful historic buildings that have witnessed the harmonious integration of Chinese traditional culture and Portuguese as well as other Western cultures.

Master Lou Pan, a legendary figure in Chinese culture, is widely respected and admired by the Chinese. Hence, Lou Pan temples were built in many places in Macao, such as the Shipbuilders' Guildhall, the Plasterers' Guildhall, and the Carpenters' Guildhall, etc. Among them, the largest Lou Pan temple is the one located at Rua da Cal. Lou Pan temple is different from other temples because it worships the Master and emphasizes the importance of respect for the teacher and his teaching. Lou Pan is regarded as the master of Chinese architecture for his down-to-earth architectural spirits of "rules" and "principles". He was also such a highly revered figure that he earned the title of "Master" for all construction workers. Generally, "Master" is a title for teachers or professionals.

In the fourth year of the reign of Emperor Xianfeng in the Qing Dynasty, the shipbuilding trade union built the Shipbuilders' Guildhall, where the shipbuilders in Macao worshipped Master Lou Pan. It can be witnessed by the couplet on the gate of the Guildhall: "From the East, rules and principles, as the standards of all arts; To the West, respect and admiration, as the master for all generations."

In the main hall of the Plasterers' Guildhall, the statue of Lou Pan is enshrined. And the couplet on the front gate "With the ruler, one can make the rules; With the line, one can determine squares and circles" also praises the achievements of Master Lou Pan.

The Carpenters' Guildhall was built in the 20th year of the reign of Emperor Daoguang in the Qing Dynasty and was renovated by the Cultural Affairs Bureau and the Macao Carpentry Trade Union between 2013 and 2014. In addition to the Hall of Master Lou Pan, the Guildhall also has an "Exhibition Room of Master Lu Ban's Woodcraft Works" to emphasize his contribution and to display the traditional woodcraft in Macao.

Lou Pan Si Fu Temple, located at Horta da Mitra, Rua da Cal, n.º 41, Macao, was originally called "Ian Tak Tong Civil Office". It was constructed in the ninth year of the reign of Emperor Xianfeng in the Qing Dynasty (1859) and has a history of over 160 years. It is now listed as one of the Classified Immovable Properties (heritage buildings). In addition to its usage as a place for sacrifices, the Temple is also the best proof of the century-old architectural technology in Macao. In comparison with today's buildings, its architectural technology is still a symbol of excellence and its interesting workmanship is amazing. The Macao Association of Building Contractors and Developers, which has been responsible for the management and maintenance of the Temple, has carried out two major restorations on the venue so that it can remain relatively intact.

To develop Macao as a world centre of tourism and leisure, it needs distinctive cultures. Macao's cultural and historical attractions are tangible carriers that arouse people's appreciation from a cultural perspective. Lou Pan temple is an element to fulfil such an important mission in a long way.