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SINCE 5 JANUARY 2003

# Tanjong Tokong Tua Pek Kong Temple 海珠嶼大伯公廟

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**Tanjong Tokong Tua Pek Kong Temple** (14 November 2017)

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**Tanjong Tokong Tua Pek Kong Temple** (GPS: 5.46381, 100.30778) is the tokong ("Chinese temple") that gave its name to Tanjong Tokong (<https://www.penang-traveltips.com/tanjong-tokong.htm>). Officially known as the **Thai Pak Koong Temple**, is one of the oldest and most important Tua Pek Kong temples in Penang, and is also one of the oldest in the region. Incidentally, "Thai Pak Koong" is the Hakka pronunciation of Tua33 Pek1 Kong1, which is the Hokkien pronunciation.

The official name of the Tanjong Tokong Tua Pek Kong Temple (in Taiji Romanisation (<https://www.penang-traveltips.com/taiji-romanisation.htm>)) is

Hai1 Choo3 Su33 Tua33 Pek1 Kong3 Beo33 海珠嶼大伯公廟. "Hai Choo" means "sea pearl". That's the Hokkien name of Tanjong Tokong. This Tua Pek Kong temple is believed to be original Tua Pek Kong temple that eventually sprouts the worship of Tua Pek Kong (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tudigong>) throughout West Malaysia, Singapore and East Malaysia.

The name Tua Pek Kong means "Great Grand Uncle". Although there are Tua Pek Kong temples all over the country, this one venerates the deified form of a historical personality known as Zhang Li (<https://www.penang-traveltips.com/whos-who.htm#zhang-li>) (also written Chang Lee and Chang Li), a mid-18th century scholar of Hakka (also called Khek by the Hokkiens) descent. Zhang Li left a troubled China along with two other companions (in some documents, they were described as his brothers) Qiu Zhao-Jin and Ma Fu-Chun.

Enroute for Sumatra, their boat was blown off course and they landed in Penang instead. There they settled and established a Chinese settlement in Tanjong Tokong. After they passed on, they were buried in graves that today is to the left of the Tua Pek Kong Temple. This happened in the mid-18th century, some forty years before the arrival of Francis Light (<https://www.penang-traveltips.com/francis-light.htm>) to establish George Town.

Fifty years after the death of Zhang Li, the local Chinese began to venerate him as a god of prosperity, bestowing upon him the honorific title of Tua Pek Kong, meaning Great-Grand Uncle. The tombstones and temple dedicated to Zhang Li was built in 1799, during the 4th year of the reign of Ruidi, the Jia-Qing Emperor (1796-1820) of the Qing Dynasty. This makes the Tanjong Tokong Tua Pek Kong Temple one of the oldest Chinese temples in Penang.

As the worship of Tua Pek Kong is directly related to the accumulation of wealth, management of Tua Pek Kong temples is often fought over between Chinese communities, especially the Hokkien and the Hakka. The Tanjong Tokong Tua Pek Kong Temple was managed by the five branches of the Hakka association, namely the Hui Zhou, Jia Ying, Da Pu, Yong Ding and Zeng Long.

To ensure a place of worship for their respective community in George Town, the Hokkiens, under the Hock Teik Cheng Sin society, built the Hokkien Tua Pek Kong Temple (<https://www.penang-traveltips.com/hock-teik-cheng-sin-temple.htm>) at its premises at Armenian Street. It is managed by the Poh Hock Seah, a society that came into being after the Khian Teik secret society was outlawed by the British authorities in 1890.

The Hakka and their Cantonese brethren erected the Cantonese Tua Pek Kong Temple (<https://www.penang-traveltips.com/cantonese-tuapekkong-temple.htm>) at King Street. Every year, the two communities held processions from their respective town temples to the Tanjong Tokong Tua Pek Kong Temple.

The Tanjong Tokong Tua Pek Kong Temple is noted for its annual flame watching ritual, called Chneah Hoay. This takes place on the 14th night of the Chinese New Year, which is the eve of Tua Pek Kong's Birthday. In this ceremony, embers in a ceremonial urn are fanned until the flames leaped up. The coming year's fortune is divined in the conflagration.

Facing the temple is an abandoned lookout with sitting area. These were sponsored by Aw Boon Haw of *Tiger Balm* fame. Nearby is the Sea Pearl Lagoon Cafe (<https://www.penang-traveltips.com/sea-pearl-lagoon-cafe.htm>), a seafood restaurant. The retaining wall along the coast was badly damaged in the 2004 tsunami, but has since been repaired. The rocks and seaside pavilions are a favourite spot for anglers.

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# Sea Pearl Lagoon Cafe

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## Sea Pearl Lagoon Cafe

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**Entrance archway to the Tanjong Tokong Tua Pek Kong Temple (27 November 2005)**

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**Tanjong Tokong Tua Pek Kong Temple** (27 November 2005)

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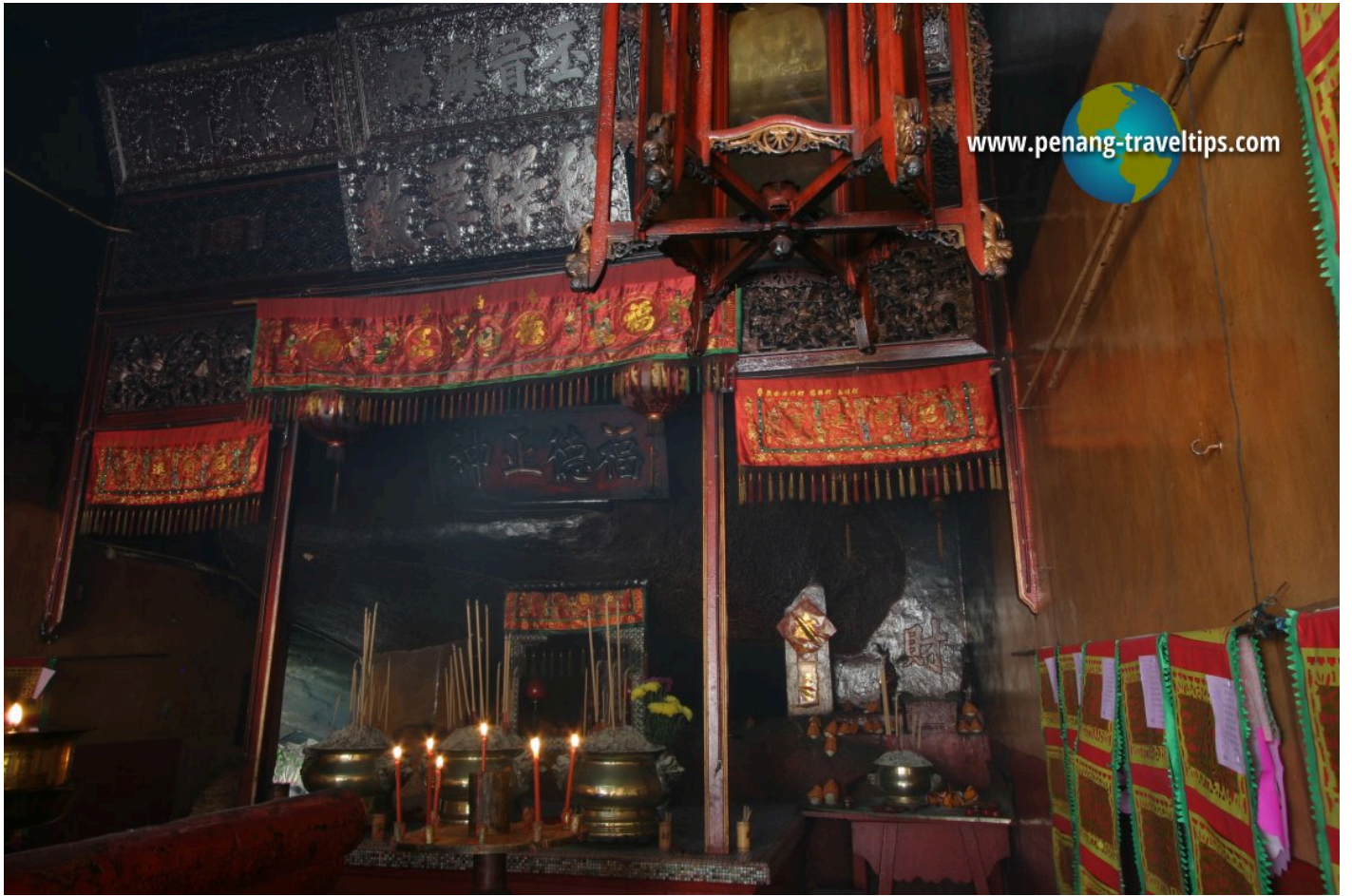
**The front porch of the Tanjong Tokong Tua Pek Kong Temple (27 November 2005)**

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**Prayer hall of the Tanjong Tokong Tua Pek Kong Temple (27 November 2005)**

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**Alcoves within the temple where the deities are installed. (27 November 2005)**

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Prayers of the worshippers are hung on the wall of the temple. (27 November 2005)

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Ancient graves. The one at top right is probably the one of Zhang Li (14 September 2008)

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Zhang Li's grave is probably the one on the right (14 September 2012)

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This seaside pavilion near the Tua Pek Kong Temple was erected in the 1950s by philanthropist Aw Boon Haw. It is now used as part of the Sea Pearl Lagoon Cafe. (14 September 2008)

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## Getting there

To reach the Tanjong Tokong Tua Pek Kong Temple, take Rapid Penang (<https://www.penang-traveltips.com/rapid-penang-bus-routes.htm>) bus **101**, **103**, **104** from Weld Quay. Get off the bus near the pedestrian bridge at Tanjong Tokong (ask a local for help). Cross the road and then go down a off-shoot road. You can see low-cost flats to your right. Walk along the road until you reach the temple which is located within its own compound by the seaside.



The temple administrative building (16 December 2012)

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## What to see and do there

The Tanjong Tokong Tua Pek Kong Temple provides a glimpse into the Taoist-inspired beliefs of the local Chinese. The temple itself is not as spectacularly ornate as those within George Town, but its lengthy history makes it a very significant place for devotees.

If you intend to witness festivity here, you must come on the 14th night of Chinese New Year, when the flame watching is performed. This is a Taoist divination ritual to provide "economic forecast" for Penang in the coming year. At other times, the temple remains quiet.

Within the compound of the Tanjong Tokong Tua Pek Kong Temple is the World War II relics (<https://www.penang-traveltips.com/tanjong-tokong-world-war-ii-relics.htm>) and look-out tower erected by the British in anticipation of Japanese invasion. From there, you can admire the seaside across the North Channel. There is also a pavilion built by local philanthropist Aw Boon Haw. It is now integrated into the Sea Pearl Lagoon Cafe (Hai Choo Hooi) (<https://www.penang-traveltips.com/penang-seafood.htm#3>), a seafood restaurant.

The Tanjong Tokong Tua Pek Kong Temple is [16](#) on the [Map of Tanjong Tokong](#) (<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1f-sPz3Y7ZtmF6KBaXWZaBXPTjzE&usp=sharing>)

List of [Tua Pek Kong Temples in Penang](#) (<https://www.penang-traveltips.com/tuapekkong-temples.htm>), [Penang Tourist Attractions](#) (<https://www.penang-traveltips.com/tourist-attractions.htm>), [Chinese Temples in Penang](#) (<https://www.penang-traveltips.com/chinese-temples.htm>) and [Chinese Temples in Malaysia](#) (<https://www.penang-traveltips.com/malaysia/chinese-temples.htm>)

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## About this website



Dear visitor, thank you so much for reading this page. My name is Timothy Tye and my hobby is to find out about places, write about them and share the information with you on this website. I have been writing this site since 5 January 2003. Originally (from 2003 until 2009, the site was called AsiaExplorers. I changed the name to Penang Travel Tips in 2009, even though I describe more than just Penang but everywhere I go (I often need to tell people that "Penang Travel Tips" is not just information about Penang, but information written in Penang), especially places in Malaysia and Singapore, and in all the years since 2003, I have described over 20,000 places.

While I try my best to provide you information as accurate as I can get it to be, I do apologize for any errors and for outdated information which I am unaware. Nevertheless, I hope that what I have described here will be useful to you.

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