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Activists pit strength against traditionalists

By Tonny Chan

THE election outcome in Sham Shui Po's two constituencies, East and West, will reveal the strongholds of traditional kaifong groups and liberal activists in the area.

Four candidates, two with liberal and two with kaifong links, are in the running - Mr Frederick Fung Kin-kee and Mrs Tse Ling Suk-yin in Sham Shui Po East; and Mr Ma Lee-wo and Mr Wong Ping-hon in Sham Shui Po West.

Of 420,000 residents 27 percent are voters, split evenly between the two constituencies.

Mr Fung, an incumbent Urban Councillor and Sham Shui Po District Board member, was first elected to the council in 1983. Mr Ma and Mr Wong are both elected district board members.

Mr Fung, 35, is a vice-chairman of the liberal Association for Democracy and People's Livelihood and Mr Ma, 28, is an aide to Urbco member Mr Lee Chik-yuet who is a Meeting Point member.

Mr Wong, 69, founded the Cheung Sha Wan Kaifong Welfare Society and is its permanent president. Mrs Tse, 49, a district board member between 1982 and 1988, has been nominated by kaifong leaders.

In Sham Shui Po East analysts tip Mr Fung for an easy win.

An on the spot investigation showed Mr Fung was known within the area while Mrs Tse was not.

Eight people interviewed said they knew Mr Fung's name and said his face was familiar.

But they shook their heads when asked if they had heard of Mrs Tse. Reporters touring Pak Tin and Nam Shan 15 days after nominations closed, did not see one poster belonging to her.

A social worker in Pak Tin, who did not want to be named, said Mr Fung enjoyed a good reputation in the area. "He is in close touch with the lower class," he said.

Mr Fung's Working Re-

Preview 1989 elections



Today we profile the two constituencies of Sham Shui Po in the run up to the Urban Council elections on March 9.

port claim he has processed 572 cases since 1986, on various issues.

The East constituency has 58,454 voters distributed between Nam Shan, Yau Yat Chuen, Pak Tin, Nam Cheong, Shek Kip Mei and Tai Hang Tung. About 40 percent are public housing tenants.

Mrs Tse said she had secured the endorsement of "a great number" of mutual aid committees in the public estates and other kaifong groups.

Mrs Tse, six years on the Sham Shui Po District Board, said: "Compared to the candidates Mr Fung has defeated in the past, I am in a much stronger position because the kaifong groups have matured after so many elections."

She said she had been personally involved in functions organised for public housing estates.

She said she only agreed to run after repeated requests from community leaders.

But analysts said experience of past Urbco elections showed that pledges of support from mutual aid committees or the kaifong welfare associations might not translate into real votes.

They pointed out that in the 1983 Urbco elections Mr Chan Foo-leung and Mr Ngok Wing-wah lost to Mr Fung by 5,500 votes even though they had secured

the names of "over 100" kaifong groups.

Mr Fung said his campaign would be based along the lines of civic education stressing the links between democracy and people's livelihoods.

Analysts have a trickier task in the Sham Shui Po West constituency, with no candidate having the edge.

The constituency has 56,043 voters evenly distributed among the private estate Mei Foo, and public estates Un Chau, Cheung Sha Wan, Lai Kok, So Uk, and Lee Cheng Uk.

Mr Wong has been a kaifong leader in Cheung Sha Wan for more than two decades and, the analysts believe, has prestige among older residents.

He has secured pledges of support from all three kaifong welfare associations and over 70 residents' groups, such as mutual aid committees.

The analysts said Mr Ma, who was elected in last year's district board elections, would need a high turnout rate to win.

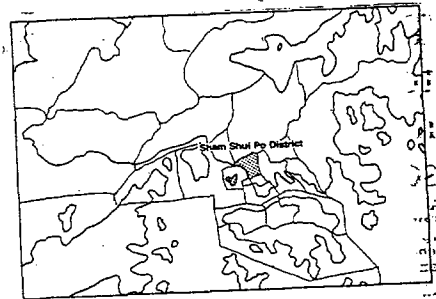
In the 1986 Urbco election, Mr Ma's sponsor Mr Lee Chik-yuet defeated rival Mr Ngor Wing-wah by 6,000 votes. Only 26 percent of the voters turned up.

The analysts believe that even though Mr Lee is backing Mr Ma, it is doubtful whether his supporters will give Mr Ma their blessing.

"It is almost impossible for Mr Ma to swing Mr Wong's traditional supporters to him. He needs the votes from a large number of young voters," said an analyst.

But he added that young voters were less influenced by kaifong groups. Voters such as like 25-year-old Mr Tsao Pui-sing in So Uk Estate said, kaifong groups had lost touch with their generation.

Mr Tsao, who voted for Mr Ma in the district board elections last year, said he intended to support Mr Ma again, but it had to be on condition that his platform appealed to him.



Sham Shui Po profile:
Population (East and West): 420,000.

East: Number of voters: 58,454. Voting history: 1989: Mr Frederick Fung Kin-kee; Mrs Tse Ling Suk-yin.

1986: Mr Fung, 12,036; Mr Ha Siu-kwong, 2,248.

Sham Shui Po West:
Number of voters: 56,043.

Voting history: 1989: Mr Wong Ping-hon; Mr Ma Lee-wo.

1986: Mr Lee Chik-yuet, 10,460; Mr Ngor Wing-wah, 4,051.