THE CRAFT OF THE BAMBOO SCAFFOLDER

DAN WATERS

Admired by Taoists for its resilient beauty, tenacity and flexibility, bamboo symbolises endurance and the lifestyle of an upright, virtuous gentleman. It has rings marking, as it were, important events in a person's life. It is fast-growing and has great powers of survival. Not long after the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, on 6 August 1945, bamboo on the devastated site was said to have sprouted new shoots.

Bamboo also, with classical, delicate leaves like painting on porcelain, bends but seldom breaks. The tender sprouts are a popular vegetable. With its unbounded usefulness it is employed to make waterpipes, poles for hanging out washing, mats, incense sticks, wide-brimmed hats to offer protection from the sun, shields used by riot police, chopsticks, pillows, divination blocks for temples, carved ornaments and countless other types of utensils. The elderly will have slept in bamboo cradles as children. Their coffins will be conveyed at their funerals by bearers using bamboo carrying poles.

James Stewart Lockhart, a senior Hong Kong civil servant who played a major part in the taking over the new Territories by Britain, from China, at the end of the last century, described bamboo in a large, undated notebook, as follows:

To start with the bamboo has seven virtues of its very own: it is clean and unspotted in itself: a sheaf covers the stem as it pierces the dark earth so the bamboo has protection from the world: being hollow it is symbolical ...of a pure heart: it is strong and unyielding: the stem being divided into segments is orderly: the stalk is pure green without blemish: and is lastly eternal and enduring.

Although the Victorian naturalist, Alfred Russel Wallace, described bamboo as one of nature's most valuable gifts, the main purpose of this paper is to look at bamboo as a material for scaffolding, together with the methods of training and the role of the bamboo scaffolder.

A legendary sage named Yau Chao shi is said to have lived 5,000
years ago during the pre-historical period when the universe was created out of the 'great chaos'. Yau, a mythological character, is believed to have taught his people how to build crude bridges and construct huts. The latter were sometimes erected as 'nestlike' shelters in trees to afford better protection against wild animals. He built such a structure for his own mother. This, so some claim, marked the beginning of framed timber structures which led, naturally, to the erection of scaffolding. Yau Chao Shi’s birthday is celebrated on the 19th day of the first Moon.

During the Era of the Spring and Autumn Annals, about 500 years before Christ, a master builder, all-round craftsman and inventor, Lu Pan, who today remains the patron god of all workers in the building industry, is said to have brought into use more ‘scientific methods’ of scaffolding. Lu Pan was one of the first mortals to be raised to the level of a deity.

Osmond Tiffany Junior, traveller and author, wrote during Hong Kong’s first decade (the 1840s) as a British Colony:

... before a house is commenced a staging of bamboo is erected and covered with matting. As the building rises the bamboo poles are run up story (sic.) by story, the matting elevated, and the whole house completely protected from the glare of day until the last nail is driven.

Although one sometimes comes across a similar practice in Hong Kong today, when the substructure or a site is protected from the weather, with high rise buildings such a shelter as Tiffany describes above is not generally practicable. Such a practice is, however, sometimes employed in Britain using steel scaffolding covered with tilts.

Today, seemingly flimsy, ‘low-technology’ bamboo scaffolding in Hong Kong, together with the agility and traditional skills of scaffolders, contrast markedly with the modern technology of multi-storey buildings. This invariably earns admiration in Hong Kong from both tourists and locals alike. Bamboo scaffolders have been aptly likened to spiders weaving their webs. Bamboo scaffolding may be considered as primitive without being old-fashioned, time-saving without being insecure, and economical without being impracticable.
It was, in fact, used as one of the main features of the Hong Kong stand at the Exposition at Vancouver, in 1986 (see Plate 1). Bamboo scaffolding was also erected in Edinburgh, Scotland, by two master craftsmen, including Choi Keung of the Construction Industry Training Authority, in 1996, as part of the ‘Hong Kong Tomorrow’ exhibition (see Plate 2). Although bamboo is used in some other Asian countries as well, nevertheless it does typify Hong Kong.

Bamboo, which has a long history for use as scaffolding in southern China, is imported into Hong Kong from the neighbouring province of Guangdong. But most of the bamboo comes from the adjacent, humid province of Guangxi, where it is cultivated. It takes about one year to grow to a useable size but in a very dry year with little rain it will take two years. Much is floated down the Pearl River with lengths lashed together to form rafts. From Guangzhou the bamboo goes to Macau from where it is shipped to Hong Kong. There are different kinds. Yellow bamboo is considered better than the grey variety. Lengths, on average, vary from 23 to 33 feet (the trade still tends to work in imperial measure rather than metric) and it is from 2 to as large as 10 inches in diameter. For extra compressive strength, on tall buildings, China fir poles are sometimes used as standards (uprights) every 20 feet or so as well as for main cross-bracing members. These take three to four years to grow to a useable size.

Training

The skill of erecting scaffolding has, by tradition, normally been passed on from master craftsman to apprentice. ‘Tricks of the trade’ are seldom made known to people outside the trade or written down. The traditional period for an apprenticeship was three years, although this has since, generally, been reduced to two years because of a shortage of scaffolders. In the old days being an apprentice, Chinese style, meant one was almost a slave to one’s master. Even as late as the 1950s, this included being the master’s cook, servant, laundryman and general dogsbody. The pay at the time was HK$10.00 a month for the first year, HK$20.00 for the second, and HK$30.00 a month for the final year. In addition to making obeisances and burning joss sticks to the three patron deities, in those days life was hard and for the first year or so the job of a new apprentice was largely fetch and carry. Only later was he allowed to climb and taught how to tie a knot. If he
disobeyed he would be scolded or beaten. At that time an employee was compelled to register with the only union of scaffolding workers in order to get a job.

Some apprentice scaffolders will tell you they enjoy the view from on high, where they are 'king of all they survey', although others maintain that, unless one has a natural head for heights, at first, being a scaffolder takes a lot of getting used to (Plate 3). Many youngsters are put off from taking up the trade by their parents who see it as a dangerous occupation.

A short evening course entitled, 'The Craft of Chinese Scaffolding' was run by the Morrison Hill Technical Institute in the early 1970s, when the author served there as Principal. This course was taught by the late Mr Ho So, an experienced bamboo scaffolder and the editor of The Craft of Chinese Scaffolding. Unlike the usual practice of learning on the-job, a certificate was issued on the successful completion of this course.

Mr Ho left Kao Yao, Guangdong Province, as a boy of 15 and came to Hong Kong to serve a three-year apprenticeship. He gained considerable experience as a master scaffolder before setting up his own business which he ran for upwards of 30 years. Later, he taught not only at the Morrison Hill Technical Institute, but he also became a full-time scaffolding instructor at the Kowloon Bay Construction industry Training Authority Centre.

When the author visited the premises of the Hong Kong and Kowloon Bamboo Scaffolding Merchants Association, in Spring Garden Lane, Wanchai, in August 1997, the late Mr Ho's photograph was prominently displayed. This was placed alongside pictures of other persons who had made significant contributions to the Association and to the scaffolding industry. An altar and pictures of groups of scaffolders were also displayed in the Association's Headquarters. Opposite, on Spring Garden Lane, on the top floor, are dormitories where a number of elderly scaffolders reside. Earth god shrines are in evidence together with bundles of nylon lashings, for tying bamboo scaffold poles together.

As at 1995, with a highly fragmented trade which relies largely on
subcontracting, no vacancies were supposed to have existed. There were said at the time to have been 724 working scaffolders. Of these, 4 (all employed by 1 firm) had received education up to Secondary School Form Five; 160 had craft certificates (they were employed in 19 different firms); and 519 (employed in 45 different firms) had received education up to Secondary School Form Three or below. Still today, many of the older scaffolders have frequently only received a few years of Primary education as, was not uncommon until up to the 1960s. Many were young when they started learning the trade. Employment figures vary considerably depending on the state of the economy. During a building recession scaffolders sometimes move into other forms of employment, such as hawking or driving a taxi.

A shortage of scaffolders and the danger factor in the trade results in higher wages being paid. Wages for scaffolders are in the region of 10 per cent more than other principal trades, such as carpenters and bricklayers, in the building industry. If a group of scaffolders decide to 'take work', for a price, they can usually earn even more. In October 1997, the going rate for a scaffolder, at HK$890.00 a day, could not attract workers. It was necessary to pay HK$1,000.00 a day.

A shortage of scaffolders is brought about, too, partly because the work is of a casual nature, depending on the number of jobs available, with employees working somewhere between 20 to (but seldom more than) 25 days a month. Once erected the scaffolding is 'hired out' at a set rate, depending on the time it is left standing before being dismantled.

Erecting bamboo scaffolding is normally seen, naturally, as a man's job, although, since the Construction Industry Training Centre opened in 1976, it has trained two girls (Plate 4). One of those later took over the managing of her father's scaffolding firm. With running the business in mind that was why she undertook the course in the first place. However, although scaffolding is normally seen as a man's job, of the trainee-places on the Training Authority's course, only nine were taken up in the 1997-98 intake. Severity per cent of the graduates from the course, which has been running for about 20 years, still work as scaffolders.
Tools

The tools used by bamboo scaffolders are simple, few in number and have changed but little over centuries. They comprise a timber bow (frame) saw, about 30 inches long, with a steel blade and a cord, made up of several strands, stretched along the back of the saw. A piece of timber, about four inches long, is inserted in the strands of the cord. This is turned around so the cord is twisted, tightened and thus shortened. As a result, the blade becomes taut. The bowsaw is used to cut bamboo to appropriate lengths. Other tools include a rule, a pair of snips to cut wire used to secure the scaffolding to a building, such as for cantilever scaffolding. Wire is also used, for additional strength to fasten China Fir poles together. A folding knife with a hooked end, to cut through lashings when dismantling scaffolding, is also used by scaffolders. The hook is employed to unravel knots. A length of rope is used to hoist lengths of bamboo up to the upper floors of a building. A narrow bladed spade is sometimes used when uprights are sunk into soil.

Types of scaffolding

In addition to ordinary scaffolding forming working platforms for a building, bamboo may also be used for a variety of other purposes. For example, to construct a frame for a ‘matshed’ in which to perform Chinese opera (see Plate 5). The frame for the stage inside the matshed will also be fashioned out of bamboo. Years ago the matshed would have been ‘clad’ with palm leaves, canvas or rattan mats. Today, thin steel sheets are normally used with their greater fire resisting qualities.

Bamboo may also be used to form raking or flying shoring for strutting up a building which is in danger of collapse. In addition bamboo may be used for constructing ladders or trestles, to build a spectators stand at a public function, or to construct a pai lau, a celebratory archway. Sometimes bamboo is used to form a frame on which to mount fireworks or it can be used to fashion a screen to protect property when blasting of rocks is carried out.

A variety of types of scaffolding are used to form working platforms. These include a cantilever (‘truss-out’ or ‘flying’ scaffold, fei paan, 飛
The main types of scaffolding, however, which surround a building, are what are known as ‘single platform’ or ‘double platform’ (double row scaffolding). ‘Single platform’ consists of just one layer of scaffolding surrounding a building. This means that, although it is easy to erect and less expensive, scaffold boards cannot be laid out on it to form a continuous working platform. The single platform scaffolding, therefore, really becomes a ‘scrambling unit’ over which men clamber and hang on to, with hands and legs, in order to work.

‘Double platform scaffolding’, on the other hand, is made up of an inner and an outer frame of scaffolding surrounding a building. Such a scaffold is more substantial, it can carry more weight, and it is safer because scaffold boards can be laid out to form a continuous working platform complete with handrails and ‘kicking boards’. These toeboards prevent materials, such as bricks, being kicked off the scaffold when they may fall on people below. The Department of Labour of the Hong Kong Government encourages the use of the double platform variety. The 1995 Code of Practice for Scaffolding Safety, drawn up in Hong Kong, was based largely on a version in China.

With each ‘plane’ of bamboo scaffolding surrounding a building, two types of bamboo uprights are used. First there are the thicker mao chuk (lance bamboo 樵竹) which form major ‘empty’ squares about 10 feet or so across. These provide the main supports. Then, between, are the thinner and lighter ko chuk (tall bamboo 柱竹), spaced at about 2 feet 6 inches apart, to form the secondary, intermediate frame.

Up until the latter half of the 1970s bamboo uprights (standards), ledgers (horizontals), transoms, braces, and other members used to form scaffolding, were lashed together with strips cut from the sheaths of bamboo. These strips were often mistaken for rattan. These were pre-soaked in water and used wet so they were flexible. In the late 1970s, there was a switch to seven-foot-long nylon lashings which, as before with bamboo strips, dangle in an accessible position from the belts of the scaffolders working aloft. After the plastic lashings have been cut through, when the scaffolding has been dismantled, the lashings are often left lying about. Unfortunately, they are not biodegradable as were the old bamboo lashings. For structures which
are left in position for a long time however, such as shoring, nylon withstands the weather better than bamboo lashings.

The author recalls taking a group of building students, in 1957, on to what was then an open building site in Central District, where the Furuma Hotel now stands, to see an exhibition of tubular steel and aluminium scaffolding. Some people prophesied at the time that, before many years would pass, western style scaffolding would replace bamboo. Others, wisely, shook their heads, The author recalls as a fairly typical example, in the late 1980s and the first half of the 1990s, when many buildings along Conduit Road were pulled down and rebuilt. In almost every case, bamboo scaffolding was employed, even for buildings of 40 storeys or more. Little western style scaffolding was to be seen.

Reasons for the popularity of bamboo scaffolding are several. Most contractors in Hong Kong do not have builders yards and bamboo, unlike steel or aluminium scaffolding, can be stored on a hillside with little risk of being stolen. Also, after scaffolding has been dismantled, bamboo does not have to be cleaned and oiled like steel scaffolding. It is, in other words, maintenance free and can, on average, be reused three times. Poor ventilation and dampness in storage are major factors to watch for and bamboo should not be left lying in direct contact with the ground.

Bamboo scaffolding is also flexible, and light and fast to erect. Although figures quoted naturally vary depending on conditions, a trained scaffolder, with a mate or mates to hoist the bamboo, can erect up to 20 ‘wells’ of single scaffolding, or nine wells of double scaffolding, a day. Since the intersecting uprights and horizontal members resemble the Chinese character for a ‘well’ (井), scaffolding is usually costed in units of ‘wells’. A well is nine ‘empty’ squares, divided by lengths of bamboo, with an overall size of about 10 feet by 10 feet. At lower levels however, naturally, because it is easier to climb up and hoist the bamboo, work proceeds faster.

Accidents

Bearing in mind the high-risk factor, in the old days especially, before becoming a scaffolding apprentice one would find out if one's
life bore evil influences. One could visit a soothsayer or some such person. He could advise whether one should perform rituals or what one should do to dissipate any evil influences. Once on the job of scaffolding, early in the morning especially, it is important that no inauspicious words are spoken. If something inappropriate is said it could be that it will actually come about. In addition, in the old days scaffolders wore a special belt which was believed to keep evil away and ensure safety. This belt was worn all day except when eating or going to the toilet. At night, it was hung by the bed in a special position where it can offer protection. Today, a scaffolder’s ‘belt’ normally consists of a length of the same nylon that he uses to tie the scaffolding members together. A bundle of these nylon ‘thongs’ are tucked into his ‘belt’ and he pulls them out, one at a time, while he works aloft. His knife and his snips he will carry in his pocket.

Although bamboo appears to be rather flimsy, and structural analysis has never really been a practical proposition, the advantage is that, as a material, it bends before it breaks. Few accidents have been recorded which are the direct result of faulty bamboo or insecure scaffolding. The Hong Kong Government Labour Department groups all accidents, which are classified as ‘falling from heights’, together. It does not have a separate category concerning bamboo scaffolding.

Visitors to Hong Kong often take an interest in scaffolding and Mr Malcolm Goodieson, from Mildura, Australia, raised, among other points, the following:

Are sufficiently high safety standards enforced with regard to scaffolding?
Is there a need to impose further control measures in the interests of public safety?

Mr Goodieson continued:

I have never before visited a place which had bamboo scaffolding. Nor have I been to a place where so many workmen behaved more like daredevil acrobats than construction workers.

More recently, an “Occupational Safety and Health Council”, complete with an education and Information Centre, has been set up. As mentioned before, however, little has been written about bamboo
scaffolding. The Construction Industry Training Centre, in conjunction with the Vocational Training Council, does conduct trade tests for bamboo scaffolders at Aberdeen. A *Guidebook to Trade Tests for Bamboo Scaffolders* has jointly been produced by the Vocational Training Council, the Building and Civil Engineering Training Board, and the Construction Industry Training Authority.

According to the 'Code of Practice':

...every scaffolder should therefore be required to wear a safety harness or belt (plus suitable lanyard) attaching to an independent life-line or a secure anchorage or fitting, or a secure fixing point at all times.31

This is how they are taught in the Construction Industry Centre. Actually, outside on the job, few scaffolders use safety belts. Most say that, because when erecting or dismantling a scaffold they have to move around so much, if they are 'anchored down' with a safety belt and attachments, it slows them down. In practice, a scaffolder puts his leg over or around a bamboo member and 'secures' himself like that (see Plate 4).

Although erecting bamboo scaffolding is a respected trade, one not only needs to be properly trained but also one has to be physically fit and mentally alert in order to prevent accidents. When one old master scaffolder was asked how he proved that he was properly trained without a certificate he burst into laughter 'If you are going to work 30 floors above the ground, standing on slim pieces of bamboo, you had better be properly trained,' he guffawed.

The trade of the scaffolder has been described as blending lofty ideals with a lonely life. Certainly 'up there', to a large extent you on your own. The danger is that tradesmen take short cuts to get the job completed more quickly. If workers have a fall or an injury they normally quit because of psychological pressures. Nevertheless, most accidents are caused by carelessness. Most of those injured are workmen of various trades who use the scaffolding after it has been erected, not the scaffolders themselves. Sometimes the scaffolding may have been altered or tampered with by other tradesmen. For example, a bricklayer removes a tie from the scaffolding to a building because it gets in his
way while working

More accidents happen when scaffolding is being dismantled than when being erected. Most trades have their written and unwritten rules and, with bamboo scaffolding, it is generally accepted that, whoever erects a scaffold, then the same scaffolders should also dismantle it. The argument is that the craftsmen who put it up know the peculiarities of the scaffold and they are in the best position to take it down. There, have been disputes between main contractors and scaffolding subcontractors resulting in the latter walking off the job. In the end, in most cases, the main contractor had to relent as no-one else was prepared to take the scaffold down.  

Deities

For all employers and employees in the building industry, Lu Pan is worshipped as a general deity. His birthday is celebrated on the 13th day of the Sixth Moon. In addition, the patron saint for bamboo scaffolders, performers in opera troupes, goldsmiths and silversmiths, and incense and funeral-paper shop staff, also worship Wah Kwong (Hua Kuang). He is sometimes describe as the God of Fire. As one mature scaffolder proudly told the author, 'We have three sz foo masters'. He included, of cour, Yau Chao Shi, who was mentioned at the start of this paper, as well as Lu Pan and Wah Kwong.

The last is said to have defied the Heavenly Jade Emperor’s order to destroy all bamboo opera stages on earth as punishment for an opera performance that had insulted his Majesty. As a result, Wah Kwong gained the undying gratitude of scaffolders. It is important to remember that Wah Kwong is a powerful, cleanshaven god with a third eye in his forehead. He often has a piece of gold in his hand. He is a destroyer of demons and is rarely prayed to by individuals, but, more likely, by groups. There is a. temple dedicated to Wah Kwong in Tai O, a small market town and fishing port to the west on Lantau Island. There is also an effigy of Wah Kwong Sz Foo in the Lit Shing Kung (temple”), adjacent to the Man Mo Temple, in Hollywood Road. Master Wah Kwong’s birthday is observed on the 28th day of the Ninth Moon. The author has, however, been told by scaffolders that the birthday of Wah Kwong is on the 18th day of the Ninth Moon. The author has, however, been told by scaffolders that the birthday of Wah Kwong is
on the 18th day of the Ninth Moon.

Bamboo scaffolders seldom use a rule. They set the spacing of the bamboo members by their eye, without the use of blueprints or plans. To do this, so many believe, they are assisted by Wah Kwong's third eye. Scaffolders, however, will usually submit a sketch to a client if they are going to erect, say, a matchet to house opera performances.

In the past, incense, fruit and pork were offered up to both Wah Kwong and Lu Pan on an altar at the time of starting work (hoi kung 開工) on a building project. Such rituals are frequently still carried out today. When the author asked the mature scaffolder mentioned earlier, who said scaffolders had three masters, whether he would be going to the Lu Pan Temple in Kennedy Town on the Sage's birthday (the 13th day of the Sixth Moon), which was due to be held the following day, he replied that he would not. But his employer would be going. The old scaffolder said, however, that he would be attending a dinner to honour Lu Pan, when everyone would pay their respects. The author recalls attending these annual dinners, from 1955 to 1972, on a regular basis.

Conclusions

Some people prophesied, in the 1950s, that the end had come for scaffolding and that western style metal scaffolding would take over. Although there has been a move in that direction metal has by no means taken over. In fact, the switch to metal scaffolding has been faster in places like China and Singapore than in Hong Kong. Bamboo is light and flexible and has many advantages, especially for smaller jobs. These include 'Cantilevering out', from high up on a building, to erect, say, a signboard.

In addition to the trade having its up and downs, and being on the slow decline, bamboo is significantly cheaper. At mid-1997 prices single-layer bamboo scaffolding costs about HK$20 per square metre, double-layer bamboo scaffolding HK$36 per square metre and metal scaffolding HK$80 per square metre. Such figures are given only as a rough comparison. Prices vary, to some degree, depending on the job in question. For example, especially with metal scaffolding, the taller the scaffold the more expensive it will be.
Certainly, for heavy duty scaffolding laid out on a grid pattern, say when constructing a flyover and for other civil engineering work, metal scaffolding has advantages. Metal has already taken over in some cases from timber in areas such as hoardings around building sites and for site offices, when containers are sometimes utilised. Also, on large projects managed by the Government Housing Department, precast concrete units are used together with gondolas. This does away with much scaffolding.

Although the change from bamboo scaffolding to metal has been much slower than many people expected over the past 40 years, especially with a limited number of trainee scaffolders entering the trade, the changing to metal can be expected to continue. Nevertheless one can expect bamboo scaffolding, with its many advantages, to be in use for many years to come

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13 Lin, loc cit

14 Lee Ho Yin, 'Behind Bamboo, Low-Tech Relic is Still Indispensable', *Window* (Hong Kong, July 14, 1995), pp 30-31


16 1995 Manpower Survey Report, Building and Civil Engineering Industry Training Board, Vocational Training Council, P 34


18 Ibid

19 Lin, loc cit, and Ho, op cit, p 25

20 Ho, passim

21 One of the worst such disasters was when a moshed grandstand collapsed and caught fire in 1918 at the Happy Valley Racecourse. Over 600 people were killed

22 1995 *Code of Practice for Scaffolding Safety*, this is an approved code issued by the Commissioner for Labour under Section 7A of the *Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance*, Chapter 59 Laws of Hong Kong

23 Wong, loc cit

24 Lee, loc cit

25 Lee, loc cit

26 Lin, loc cit

27 Wong, loc cit

28 Naomi Szeto, loc cit

29 Wong, loc cit

30 Malcolm Goodieson, 'Bamboo Safeguard', *Hong Kong Standard*, letters to the editor (18 October 1995)

31 1995 *Code of Practice*, op cit, p 16

32 Lee, loc cit
The Li Shing Kung Temple adjoins the Man Mo Temple in Hollywood Road, on Hong Kong Island. Wah Kwong is the second god on the right as you enter. He has two attendants.

Barbara E. Ward and Joan Law, *Chinese Festivals in Hong Kong*, Guidebook Co. Ltd (Hong Kong, 1993), pp. 75 and 92.

The Author went to the Lu Pan Temple on Lu Pan’s birthday, in 1997. In spite of rain a large number of contractors and building trade workers came to pay their respects, including some scaffolders. There were also two television teams one of which interviewed the Author.

The Hong Kong stand at the 1986 Vancouver Exposition where bamboo scaffolding formed a main feature (photograph courtesy of the Hong Kong Government)
Bamboo scaffolding outside the exhibition hall at the 'Hong Kong Tomorrow' exhibition in 1996, at Edinburgh in Scotland. The scaffolding was erected by master scaffolder Choi Keung, instructor at the Construction Industry Training Authority, and another Hong Kong craftsman (photograph courtesy Hong Kong Construction Industry Training Authority).
Erecting scaffolding. A head for heights is required especially when one is 30 or 40 storeys above the ground (photograph courtesy of the Hong Kong Construction Industry Training Authority).
The trade of scaffolder is normally seen as a man's job. The Construction Industry Training Authority Centre, at Kowloon Bay, has, however, trained two women. Note here how this young lady places her leg over and around the scaffolding, so she can hang on, and her hands can be freed for tying and other work (photograph courtesy of Hong Kong Industry Training Authority).
A model of the bamboo skeleton for a ‘matshed’, such as those in which Chinese opera is performed. A stage and tiered-seating can be seen inside. A life-sized matshed is normally clad with thin galvanised-iron sheets (Photograph courtesy Construction Industry Training Authority by whose trainees the model was made).