

พื้นที่อัตลักษณ์ของชาวไทพวน ในเขตจังหวัดเวียงจันทน์ สาธารณรัฐประชาธิปไตยประชาชนลาว กรณีศึกษาเรือนและหมู่บ้าน

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พิลิต สีหะลาด สิทธิชัย อินสีเชียงใหม่ และชนนະพะโพน พะขุนทอง
อาจารย์ประจำคณะวิศวกรรมศาสตร์และสถาปัตยกรรมศาสตร์
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บทคัดย่อ

บทความชิ้นนี้มีจุดประสงค์ต้องการรายงานอัตลักษณ์เด่นๆ บางประการของหมู่บ้านและเรือนชาวพวน ซึ่งเป็นชนกลุ่มน้อยในสาธารณรัฐประชาธิปไตยประชาชนลาว (สปป.ลาว) โดยมีพื้นที่การศึกษาอยู่ในเขตจังหวัดเวียงจันทน์ ตอนแรกของบทความได้กล่าวถึงอัตลักษณ์และลักษณะทางสังคมของหมู่บ้าน จากนั้นจึงเป็นการจำแนกเรือนในหมู่บ้านเวียงคำเป็น 3 กลุ่ม ตามวิวัฒนาการของรูปทรงและการใช้สอยในแต่ละแบบ โดยสรุปเราพบว่าหมู่บ้านพวนดังกล่าว

มีการจัดพื้นที่อัตลักษณ์โดยคำนึงถึงแนวคิดเรื่องระบบศูนย์กลางเป็นสำคัญ
รูปทรงของเรือนก็เปลี่ยนแปลงไปที่ละน้อยจากแบบดั้งเดิมไปสู่เรือนที่นิยม
กันทุกวันนี้ทั่วประเทศ

คำสำคัญ: หมู่บ้านเวียงคำ, ชาวพวน, เรือนชาวพวน, หมู่บ้านชาวพวน,
สปป.ลาว

Spatial Characteristics seen among the Phuan in Vientiane Province, Lao P.D.R., Especially focusing on the house and village.

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ABSTRACT

This article reports some remarkable characteristics of the village and house of the Phuan, who is one of ethnic minority groups in Laos, based on field research in Vientiane province.

In this article, first, we will describe the village spatially and socially. Second, we will show three kinds of models of house built in Vieng Kham by typological categorizing and how to use it

in each model. As the conclusion, we point out that the village is spatially organized based on center oriented perception and the house form has been gradually changing from conventional style to nation-wide style today.

Keywords: Vieng Kham, Phuan, village of the Phuan, house of the Phuan, Lao P.D.R.

1. Introduction

a. Background

The Mekong River, which is known as an international water resource and originated from the Tibetan Plateau, flows through mainland Southeast Asia. People are living with high affinity with the basin or the tributary of the river. This study is focusing on villages and houses of the area, especially central lowland of Lao People's Democratic Republic (Laos).

Laos is known as landlocked country, with about 6,000,000 populations. Tropical monsoon climate covers the whole part of the country. People's main livelihood is agriculture such as paddy rice cultivation or slash and burn agriculture. In addition to these, they are very active to do fishery, hunting, and gathering through a year. For example, people do fishery not only in rivers and lakes, but also in paddy rice field in rainy season.

Man made habitat includes village, house, forest, river, and rice field and many kinds of natural resources such as trees, bamboos, and grasses, are used as building materials. In this sense, village and house are relied strongly on ecological environment and there

must be close interaction between ecological environment and people's activity on architecture.

b. Objective of this article

This article reports notable characteristics of the village and the house of Phuan from architectural and ethnographic viewpoints. Phuan, or Tai Phuan (in case referred as Phouan), is one of ethnic minority groups in Laos and originally come from Xiangkhouang. Xiangkhouang once used to be called Muan Phuan, literally translated as the Land of Phuan, and Thai-speaking group who inhabited there was called Phuan. About the population of Phuan, there is no accurate census. However, it was reported that around 200,000 Phuan inhabit in northeastern Thailand and central Laos. The Phuan is known by the practice of religious belief of Theravada Buddhism, which is widely faith in Laos, and wetland paddy cultivation. In this article, first, we introduce a Phuan's village as research site briefly. It includes the history of migration and the use of natural resource for livelihood. Second, we will focus on spatial characteristic of the village. The issue in that part is to clarify mutual relationship between village, religious belief, and socio economic situation. Third, we will show three kinds of models of the house by typological analysis of the houses that are currently

built in the village and how to use it in each model. Finally, as a conclusion, we will point out characteristics of the village and the house of Phuan today.

c. Review

Studies about the house in Laos are little and most of them are on the house of the Lao, majority ethnic group in Laos. Charpentier and Clément studied Lao's traditional houses in Vientiane and Louang Prabang. They clarified spatial model of the house and mutual relationship between spatial organization of the house and perception of nature by analyzing orientation, which is widely shared among the Lao (Charpentier 1982, Clément 1982a, 1982b). However, the house that was treated in their study is conventional and house today might change both in form and meaning in rapidly changing society of Laos. On the other hand, Chantanee and FUNO's group made recently several academic articles on the house in Laos (see Bibliography). They picked up house of Phuan in Xiangkhouang in the article published in 2010 (Chantanee YAMADA ENOMOTO and FUNO 2010). The article reports briefly the use of house space but detailed information was not fully described. As a whole, the spatial characteristics of the village and the house

of Phuan have not been fully studied in former researches. In this article, we try to clarify current spatial characteristics.

Needles to say, we see the house not only as the place for everyday life, but also as the set for religious practice in special occasions such as making merit as Buddhist or holding the offering to ancestral spirits. By these analysis and consideration, we would like to show remarkable characteristics of the village and the house of Phuan.

Table 1: Research contents

Period	Season	Collected primary data
30days September, 2010	Rainy season	Drawings of the plan, section of the house. Detailed drawings of the elements of the house. Map of whole village including forest, rice field, and river.
3 weeks February to march, 2011	Dry season	Natural resources used as building material
4 days September 2011	Rainy season	Tools used in house construction

d. Methodology

For this study, we conducted so-called fieldwork including participant observation among the villagers of researched site three times. Below is showing each researches.¹

2. Brief introduction of research site

a. Migration History



Fig.1 Map of Laos

¹

In addition to above mentioned researches, we participated in Buddhist ritual occasionally held in village temple several times and observed ritual process and roles of participants, etc.

b. VIENG KHAM village as research site is located in Kaewudom district of Vientiane province. The site is apart from Vientiane city, the capital of Laos, about 100 km. Almost all villagers are Phuan with population 292 and numbers of house 62.

Since 1964, the United States Army from the base in Thailand bombed territory of Laos to destroy what is called, Ho Chi Minh Trail, which was known as a supply route to the South Vietnam from North Vietnam. The Phuan in Xiangkhouang so suffered from extensive damage that they had to be evacuated to other place. Some Phuan agreed to move from origin village to Vientiane and they found a new village named VIENG KHAM in present place in 1969.

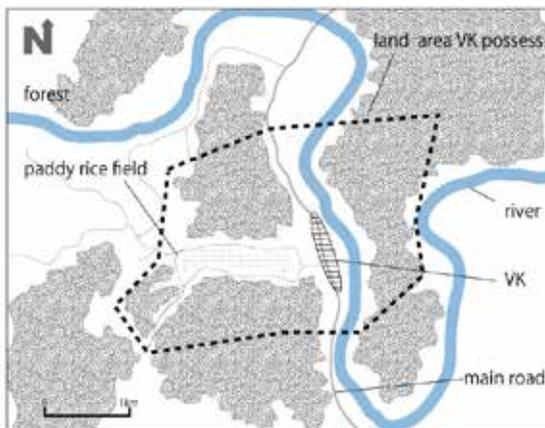


Fig.2 Location of research site

At the beginning, 42 households moved to new village. The population increased step-by-step to 383 (about 600 people) until 1970. However, since the Vietnam War ended in the same period, those who return to Xiangkhouang gradually increased. Some group moved to Vientiane.

Initially, they built houses along the river. After great flood occurred in 1982, in order to avoid damage from that, whole villagers moved to current site and temple was rebuilt in present site then. Main road was constructed in 1972 and paved in 2006. Electric supply started in 1993. After the road paved and electric supply completed, they began to take a frequent contact with capital by transportation network such as car, public bus, and motorbike. They bought goods in the market and used them in everyday life. It enabled them to keep life relatively easy to spend.

c. Social Organization

In VIENG KHAM, there is a headman (Nai baan), who leads political and economic affairs of the village.² There also is one vice headman (Horn nai baan) designated by the headman. In addition, there are other official groups or committees

² The headman is selected by election every 4 years.

such as Youth alliance (Sao num), Women's alliance, Village police, Vigilante alliance, Village administration committee (Khammakaan baan), and Conflict resolution committee, etc. Elder alliance (Neo home) is most important for decision-making and making ritual, ceremonial practices.³ This aged group includes instructor (Sala wat) of religious affairs concerning Buddhism and spirit priest (Mo porn).⁴ Both are responsible for the protection of VIENG KHAM's traditional customs. In other words, they keep the relationship of villager's faith and belief through variety of rituals and ceremonies. There are 13 members in VIENG KHAM within.

Irrigation committee is also important for agriculture. The committee is responsible for managing irrigation and proper water resource of VIENG KHAM. Maintenance of the equipment is likewise main work to do for this committee.

d. Livelihood

Widely spreading paddy rice field surrounds VIENG KHAM. The landscape shows that main livelihood in VIENG KHAM is paddy rice cultivation. Only small numbers of villagers do slash-and-burn

³ There is no age limit, but elderly in many cases.

⁴ Eldest leader of the group has done most of the guidance in ritual situation in house or village temple.

agriculture, vice versa. Except for paddy rice, villagers are doing cultivation of corn, field mustard, cabbage, peanut, banana, papaya, mint, potato, sugar cane, pepper, and so on. Even though those cash crops are indispensable, almost all are mainly used for consumption at each household as well.

In VIENG KHAM, villagers are able to do double cropping of rice a year after the irrigation facilities were set in 1998 by the aid from government. During rainy season, they carry out paddy cultivation only by the rainwater. On the other hand, in dry season, they use irrigation facilities. Steel pipes are set around the paddy rice field and draw up water from the river. The fields for other cash crops prevail next to paddy rice field. Besides, they often shift the rice field to the field for cash crops in dry season. During dry season, the water level of the river reduces and the land along the river appears. Villagers use the land as field for cultivation of cash crops or some sorts of herbs consumed in everyday life.⁵

Livestock such as chicken, duck, pig, buffalo, and cattle are raised. Almost all households keep dogs and cats. They sell cattle or

⁵ In order to possess or transaction the land for house site, field, and forest, certificated document of ownership is required. Nevertheless, there is no need for the land along the river.

buffalo to nearby market and earn income, if necessary. They can afford to buy tiller or slushier or any other equipment required for agriculture by that.

3. Spatial organization of the village

a. House site

Typical house site of VIENG KHAM is shown in Fig.3. Fences that are made of woven bamboo surround the site. Generally, main house (Heuan) is built closer to the main road (Tan luan) and rice granary (Yun khao), small hut for toilet and shower (Hong naam), and another small hut for cooking or domestication of animals are placed in secluded part of the site as shown.

b. Center oriented spatial perception

Deep forest surrounds VIENG KHAM's paddy fields and residential area (Fig. 2, 4). Villager's house sites are gathering at the center. House sites are lined about 400m in length from north to south along main road and most of the sites are adjacent to the road.

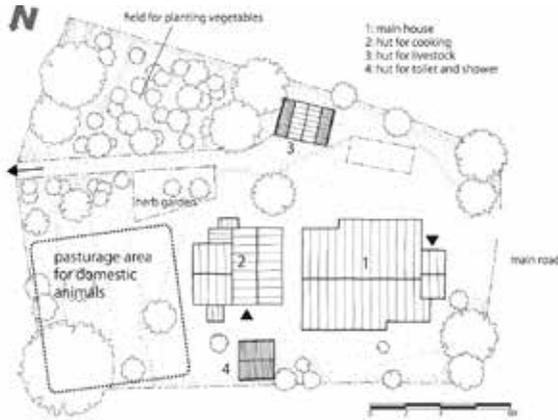


Fig. 3 Typical house site model

However, some sites are not facing the road simply because of land shortage.⁶

There are one temple, one primary school, one kindergarten, and four small shops that are run by villagers as public sites or common facilities. When VIENG KHAM was founded in 1969, the temple and the school were built first as well. It suggests that the faith and the education were well recognized as important for villagers. Exclusively, since reconstruction after the flood in 1982, the temple has been a hub of Buddhism.⁷ We can see that villagers go to make merit every day in general at the temple. villagers.

⁶ In case of needing new house site in the future, land at the back of current house sites will be used.

⁷ In Theravada Buddhism, only those who load with virtue will be saved.



Fig.4 Map of whole VIEHG KHAM

Exclusively, since reconstruction after the flood in 1982, the temple has been a hub of Buddhism.⁷ We can see that villagers go to make merit every day in general at the temple. On the construction of the temple, hired carpenters decided the shape and the size of the temple. However, certain kinds of provisions such as setting the temple parallel to the main road are followed. Decoration on the surface has been gradually applied by donation from villagers. Within about 30 minutes after monks drum at 11:00 am every day in the temple, villagers, mainly women, take the lunch as donation to the temple.⁸ In the forest behind the temple, there is cemetery. Outsiders are prohibited to enter into the area. After being cremated there, the remains will be buried.

⁸ The contents are, for instance, cooked meal such as skin of buffalo and river fish, or any other ingredients of good quality got on the day by each household.

There is another shared or common area among villagers at the approximate center. An office of the village headman is built there. In recent years in Laos, the headman is positioned as public officials and responsible for the connection between village and local administration. In VIENG KHAM also, the headman has such an important role in obtaining grants related to education or irrigation equipment.



Pic.1 *Buddhist ritual at temple*

A small hut called Ho pii is also built in the same area. It is used as shrine for spiritual being or landowner spirit called Pii baan (spirit of the village) or Pii luang (greater spirit), which protects VIENG KHAM. Villagers make offering to the spirit every one-year or three years at the shrine. Villagers say that there are many spirits called Pii (the spirit) and the spirits often go through the road within VIENG KHAM,⁹ chiefly

⁹ Alternatively, some villagers said that the spirit was called Tevada, the Buddhist angel.

the main road. Some spirits are so good that protect lives of the villagers, but the others are evil one and cast a spell for irreverent practices. There seems to be plurality of the spirits in VIENG KHAM and villagers must make offerings and beg to each spirits in each time, for example, to some sorts of spirits to be safety on the trip from VIENG KHAM to another place or beg disaster not occur.

Wide variety of rituals performed through a year include Buddhist rituals and rituals based on animism. Common Buddhist rituals such as Wan Sin, which are one of the most important rituals and held four times a month,¹⁰ are performed inside the temple. Then, monks and villagers make ritual together. After that, villagers donate foods, money, or valuable things to the monks. After that, villagers take foods all together inside the temple. This shows that the temple is not only a place for ritual but also the place for villagers to host a banquet or chat to each other. It means that, as well as being religious center, the temple has the function as a meeting place for villagers.

The temple is in many ways significant and its location represents the significance spatially. Except for the temple, small shrine for landowner spirit, office of headman, cemetery, and school also

¹⁰ The dates are decided by phases of the moon.

locate around approximately the center. This spatial organization can be associated with the concept as ‘center oriented’ and it suggests close relationship with villagers’ lives to religious belief and outside of society such as local government.

Instead, animism based rituals apt to associate with the house. Next, we will see the house as the set both for everyday life and ritual practice.

4. House

a. Types of house form and the use of space

In VIENG KHAM, there are 62 houses in total. We can classify these all houses into three types as follows:

36 are raised-floor or on stilts houses (type 1), 9 are two-storied, half-concrete and brick (first or lower floor) and half wooden (second or upper floor) houses (type 2), and 17 are one-story houses with concrete post and brick wall (type 3). Within these, type 1 is considered conventional among Phuan according to interview with villagers.

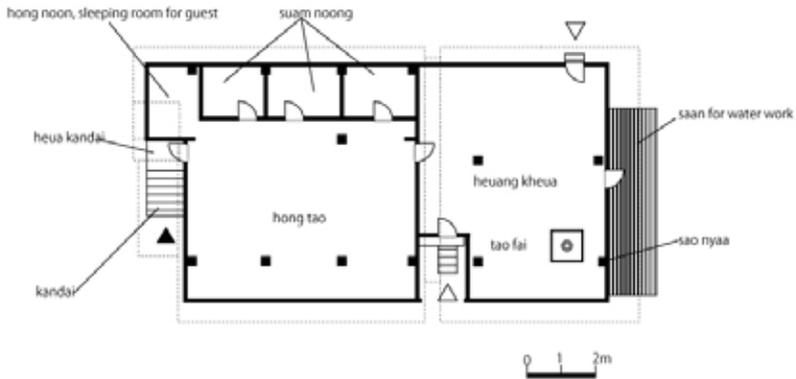


Fig.5 How to use the house

Spatial organizations of each type of the house are, to some extent, similar to each other. Fig.5 shows typical spatial organization. When entering into the house, we access from stairs (Kandai), which is set at gable side of the house. After climbing up the stairs, there will be a small open space (Heua kandai) in front of the entrance door. Both the stairs and the small space are believed important and closely related to the harmonious life of household. For example, there are proscription on the name and the size of each element composing a stair. Both sides of beams are called mothers and each footplate is called the child. The number of footplates of a stair should be odd. On the contrary, even number is thought to be bad. Villagers say that residents will go out from such house with the stair of even number footplates.

Stairs are set both on the main house and the small hut for cooking (Heuan Kheua). Each entrance and stairs should not be arranged in a straight line. It is so inauspicious that money or any other valuables of household go out or can cause to be sick or die in household.

After passing the Heua kandai, we can go step inside the house. There are plural rooms lineally arranged along one side of the wall, usually opposite side of the main road. These rooms are used for residents' sleeping and called Suam noong, literally translated as sleeping room. As well as being a place for sleeping, these rooms are also available for storage of goods and place for ancestral altar, which is called Pii pop ii mae.

There are conventional sleeping orders. The room that is closest to entrance and stairs in a row should be served for guests. Household head and his wife use the room next to it. Sleeping room for children is most far side from entrance. Infants and kids sleep with their parents. Even been brothers and sisters, men and women of adolescence should not be in the same room when in sleeping. Further, those who are not relatives of the family are prohibited to go into the room.

In sleeping room of household head, there should be a post that was raised first in building the house. The post is called Sao khwan,

the post of soul (of ancestors). However, some villagers explain that the souls of daily necessities such as chopsticks, bowls, and dishes or any other things used in everyday life dwell in the post.

Opposite side of sleeping room is a wide room named Hong tao, which is used as parlor or eating place with setting round table on the floor. Villagers also accept guests there and serve a meal for them. In this room, electric appliances such as refrigerator, TV set are often placed. This room is used multi-functionary and the main place of residents' activity during the day. Funeral rite and wedding ceremony are also held in this room.

In Hong tao, Buddhist shrine called Han busa is placed on the wall. Unlike the altar for ancestor in the sleeping room, those who visit the house can see the shrine. Inside the shrine, small containers and gold colored Buddhist statues are placed. Residents make offerings at the shrine on Buddhist holiday annually.

b. Ancestral altar

Ancestral spirits are generally enshrined at alter in sleeping room. There are 24 of 62 houses with ancestral altar. The altar is usually placed near the head of household head in sleeping position. Villagers explain the placement order that Phuan believes the soul

(khwan) dwells in the head of man and the head is most important part of the body. This close relationship of household head and the altar is also represented in taboo on bodily contact to the altar, that is, only household head can touch the altar in ritual situation.

c. Small hut for cooking

Hut or house-like small building for cooking is built independently separated from main house. Specific post called Sao nyaa, translated as grandmother post, is raised next to the hearth (Tao fai). Villagers believe that the spirit called Nyaa hai khao, literally translated as the grandmother of small clay pod for keeping sticky rice seeds, dwells the post. Each household makes offerings to the spirit annually.¹¹

If they do not make offerings, the spirit feels hungry and brings disease or other inauspicious things to residents. On the contrary, if the spirit is treated properly, she prevents other evil spirits from entering the house to attack residents.

53 of 62 houses have this post in their cooking hut. Remaining 8 households do not have the post because of just starting building

¹¹ For example, during the ceremony such as New Year, household members offer cooked meat of the chicken, steamed rice, tea and rice liquor to the spirit.

their own new houses.¹² Further, people of non-resident or children should not go through near the post. This suggests that Sao nyaa is recognized as an important member of the house not only as part of physical structure but also as symbolic meaning.

d. Taboo relationship with wild animal

In VIENG KHAM, intrusion of wild animals into the house is inauspicious. If it occurs, monks practice specific ritual called Sia ko heuan to expel evil from the house. In this ritual, after the monks chanting inside the house, they wind a long white thread around the house and sprinkle water to all residents and the house in order to expel bad spirits that have been coming together with wild animals. After completion of the ritual, household head serves meal to the monks.

Eating wild animals that intruded into the house is not a sin, but it is also feared that bad things will happen without performing this ritual properly.¹³

¹² They all say that after completion of building, they will install the post .

¹³ Once in VK, there was a son-in-law died of a sudden illness after eating a wild deer that have been entering into cooking hut. Villagers believe that because the ritual was not carried out, he died.

5. Typological description of the house

As already described, house form can be classified into three types from the viewpoint of structure and the material. Here we describe each type in detail with residents' daily life as below.



Pic. 2 *Raised-floor house*

a. Raised-floor house (Type 1)¹⁴

1) Background

In Southeast Asian lowland society, this type is commonly seen. In Laos, this type is popular until today.

¹⁴ In Xiangkhouang, they had built same form of house.

2) Structure and material

Bamboo and wood are mainly used as building materials in this type with the roof thatched with grasses. These houses were constructed by labor exchange among villagers and they used simple method to make each elements¹⁵ and structure. At the beginning of construction, they assemble all posts and beams on the ground and fix structure there. Then, they pull up the structure with using ropes.¹⁶

3) Spatial order: See section

4) House.

Case 1

1) Number of residents: 6.¹⁷

2) Construction year: 1982. After the migration from origin village, they married and lived land along the river until the flood. Then, they moved and built current house.

3) Construction method: Two days of labor exchange.

4) Renovation: They changed roof material to corrugated iron sheet from bamboo 8 years ago.

¹⁵ Tools such as hand ax, saw, and chisel and so on, were used.

¹⁶ In recent years, houses with timbers, which lumbered by machine, is increasing in VK.

¹⁷ Male household head, his wife, their first son, his wife, unmarried two sons.

5) Sleeping order: First son and his wife use the room that locates most far side from the stairs. In addition, most of the left side of row is kept for sleeping room for unmarried third son, who are out of village and come back sometimes. The reason why 17 years-old youngest son is sleeping in Hong tao is not clear, but the same case as this is often seen if room is not enough. youngest son is sleeping in Hong tao is not clear, but the same case as this is often seen if room is not enough.

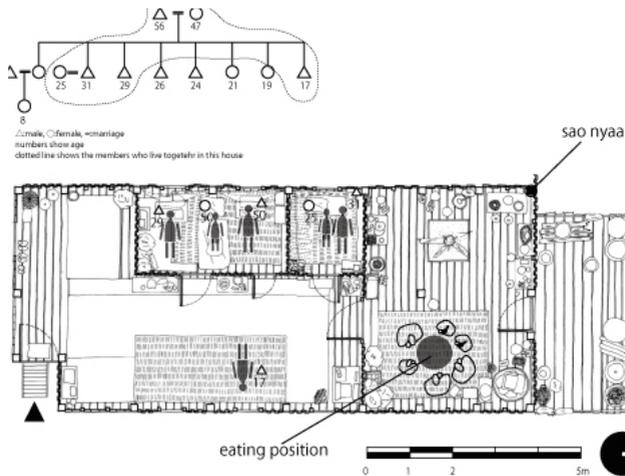


Fig.6 Case1

6) Eating order: They eat every meal in cooking hut and seating order is shown in Fig.6. Women take closest seats to hearth generally. In this case, closest post to hearth is not recognized as Sao nyaa. Instead, corner post is Sao nyaa.

Case 2

- 1) Number of residents: 4.¹⁸
- 2) Construction year: 1990. The couple married in 1984 and lived along the river firstly. Later in 1990, they moved to current site
- 3) Construction method: One day of labor exchange.
- 4) Renovation: Never.
- 5) Sleeping order: Household head and his wife use walled sleeping room inside the house.
- 6) Eating order: The hut for cooking is at the back of main house. Main house and cooking hut are connected spatially and structurally to each other.
- 7) Miscellaneous: Wooden weaving machine is set on border between cooking place and main house. Wife of the household head uses the machine daily.¹⁹

¹⁸ Male household head, his wife, unmarried daughter, son. In raised-floor house, in general, weaving machine is placed under the floor, where cool wind breeze through.

¹⁹ In this case, the reason why weaving machine is placed inside the house is, we guess, that the ground level of the house site is lower than main road and rainwater is easy to flow under the floor.



Fig. 7 Case2

b. Two-storied house (Type 2)

1) Background

This type is considered developed in recent years from conventional raised-floor house with putting the brick wall and concreted posts at the ground level floor. Villagers often say that the damage of termites is less than conventional one because they do not use wood materials at ground level floor. Instead, ventilation conditions inside the house changed drastically, for instance, temperature rises high at the second floor²⁰ during the day.

²⁰ Another common problem is that duck, chicken, dog, or any other livestock animals are easier to come into ground level floor and make the house become unsanitary.

2) Structure and material

The stairs of main house is set inside the house. At the second floor, windows are attached in lumber wall. Slate is thatched on the roof.

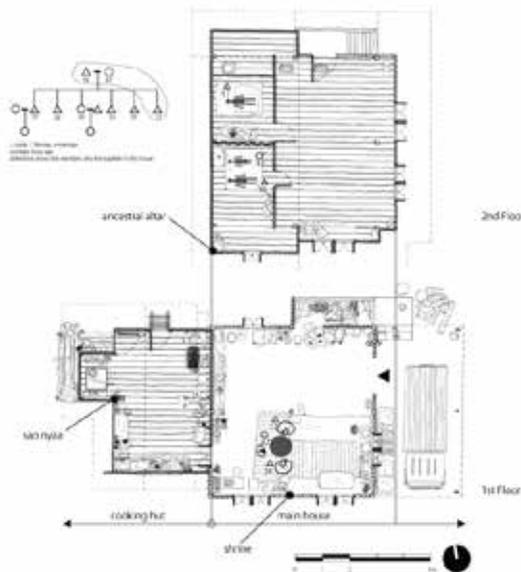


Fig. 8 Case3

3) Spatial order

Sleeping rooms is on second floor as well as conventional raised-floor house. However, the place and facilities for cooking and eating, place to take a rest during the day are moved to first floor. Cooking hut is independently built next to main house.

Case 3

1) Number of residents: 3.²¹

2) Construction year: 1997 - present. The couple once have gone to work in other district in Vientiane province after marriage in 1980 and spent several years. After that, they moved to VIENG KHAM and bought estate in 1991. They built a small hut next to current house site to live.²²



Pic. 3 *Two-storied house*

²¹ Male household head, his wife, unmarried son.

²² Current hut for cooking is built by reusing materials from the house that was built after the migration from origin village.

3) Construction method: Self build. In 1997, they started building only structure of main house and wooden part of second floor. Since then, father and his son have continued to build the house little by little.²³

4) Renovation: Never (under construction).

5) Sleeping order: See Fig.8. In elongated ambiguity space next to the walled sleeping room for household head and wife, there is an ancestral altar.

6) Eating order: Eating position is in front of television placed in first floor and sitting order is shown in Fig.8. Buddhist shrine is set in the same space. Hut for cooking is built at the back of main house.

Case 4

1) Number of residents: 7.²⁴

2) Construction year: 1994 - present. Around 1987, they built a raised-floor house at current site. In 1994, they rebuilt the second floor. Continued since 2000, they have been making the space of first floor.

3) Construction method: Self build.

4) Renovation: Gradually repeated up to today. First, in 2006, they changed the wall of small cooking hut to brick wall from

bamboo-thatched panel. Garage and the place for wet work were made in 2011.

5) Sleeping order: First and second sons are sleeping on second floor. Other household members use sleeping rooms of first floor. Wife's parents are so old that it is difficult for them to up and down stairs. Therefore, household head and his wife use a room of first floor as sleeping room in order to take care of them²⁵ .

6) Eating order: They eat every meal at sofa set of first floor. Seating order is fixed only for the position of 15-years-old daughter and household head's wife. Except for them, anyone can sit any chair.

7) Miscellaneous: Sao khwan is unknown. Weaving machine is placed near the cooking place. This household runs a shop, which is likely to Kiosk in addition to agriculture. At first floor, Space near main entrance on the main road side is kept open widely in order to display the goods or commodity arranged. Around the chair in the shop, villagers gather and chat daily.

²³ Such as putting brick walls into ground level floor only when there is time.

²⁴ Male household head, his wife, three children of them, wife's parents.

²⁵ In VK, there is no rule concerning residence after marriage. Any children can live with parents.

c. One story house (Type 3)

1) Background

Construction of one-story house is increasing in VIENG KHAM today. Unlike two-storied house, this is completely new style.²⁶ According to villagers, this type of house seems to be built since around 1981, after flooding. It is the same period of appearing two-storied house.

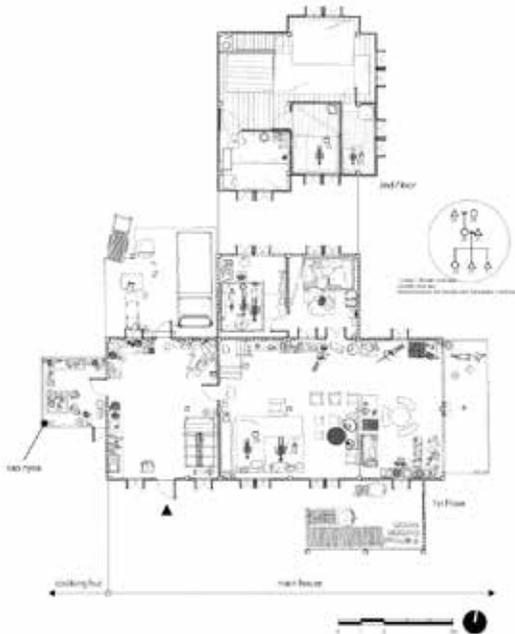


Fig. 9 Case4

²⁶ Villagers call the house Villa.

2) Structure and material

Mass produced building materials such as concrete post, beam, brick, and corrugated sheet and so on are used. For example, slate or roof tile is thatched on the roof and brick and mortar are used to make the wall. Villagers purchase these materials in cash at nearby market little by little. They go ahead the construction by the amount of purchase.²⁷ Concrete made post and beam are composing ramen structure.

On the contrary, grass, bamboo, and wood are not used normally.²⁸ Because wild trees grow very little around VIENG KHAM, it is hard



Pic. 4 *One-story house*

²⁷ It causes construction period long in general, in case several years.

²⁸ Any wood is not used as building materials, except for frame of windows and doors, or windows and doors themselves.

for most villagers to find available natural materials. In addition to that, government prohibited cutting down natural tree freely. Today, price of timber is rising in Laos and building one-story house is cheaper than building wooden two-storied house.

3) Spatial order

Positional arrangement or spatial order is similar to that of raised-floor house.

Case 5

1) Number of residents: 5.²⁹

2) Construction year: 2009-present. The couple married in 2004 and lived at house of wife's parent first. They spent there until establishing branch family of their own. After separating from the parent in 2009, they began to build current house. Construction has not yet completed. There is no wall in sleeping room now and residents use a pole or chest as partition of the room instead.³⁰

3) Construction method: In construction, husband hire a villager who was well skilled as carpenter³¹.

²⁹ Married couple, two children of them, sister of the wife.

³⁰ They have a plan to build a new house on adjacent site in the future and stock wooden materials at relative's house in VK.

³¹ Because the villager was schoolteacher, construction was carried out only at night and took two months as the result.

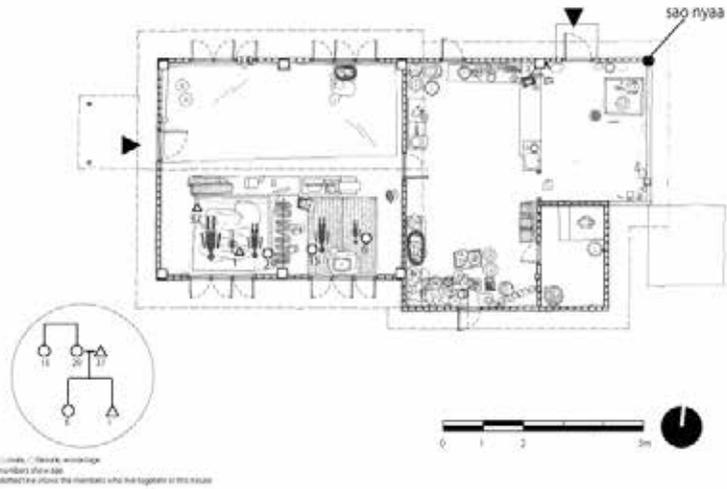


Fig. 10 Case5

4) Renovation: Never (under construction)

5) Sleeping order: See Fig.10.

6) Eating order: At the backside of main house, there is a cooking hut. Spatial arrangement is similar to that of raised-floor house.

Case 6

1) Number of residents: 5.³²

2) Construction year: 1999-2001. Since moved to VIENG KHAM in 1973, they have lived riverside until 1997. After the main road has

³² 65-years-old male household head, his son and the wife, two children of them.

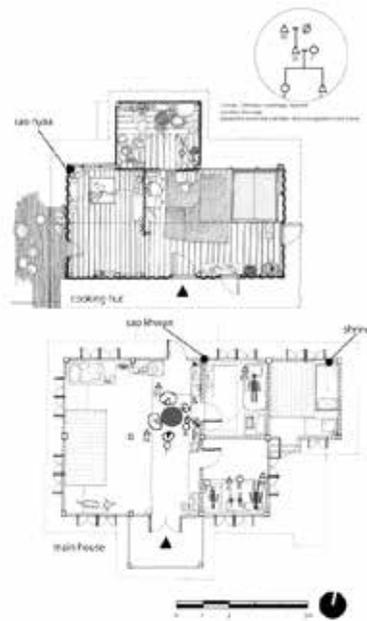


Fig. 11 case6

paved, they moved to current site and for four years, they lived in cooking hut. They continued to build main house from 1999 to 2001.

3) Construction method: Self build.

4) Renovation: Never.

5) Sleeping order: There is an entrance to a private room at the flat side of main house. Residents can enter the room only through the entrance. Residents do not use the room daily. The room is served as sleeping room only when relatives of household head visit. In the room, there is a Buddhist shrine.

6) Eating order: At the backside of main house, large cooking hut locates. Eating order is shown in Fig. 11.

6. Conclusion: spatial characteristics of the village and the house

a. Spatial organization of VIENG KHAM

VIENG KHAM is spatially organized around the center where temple, small shrine for landowner spirit, office of headman, cemetery, and school locate. In this point, VIENG KHAM has 'center oriented spatial organization' and it suggests close relationship with villagers' lives to religious belief and outside of society.

b. Changes of the house form

Since 1969 until now, the village has changed socio-economically. Keeping the same pace with it, house form also changed gradually. At the beginning after the migration, villagers built raised-floor houses as well as they built in origin place of Xiangkhouang. Great flooding and road development in early 1980's caused the movement of house site from land near the river to land along the main road. Then, new type of house forms, two-storied house and one story house, appeared.

As well as the changes of house form, the use of internal space also changed. For two-storied house, making walled room at lower floor was simple operation. However, increasing available room caused the changes of both spatial organization and the use of space. Cooking and eating place moved to first floor. Second floor tends to be used only when residents sleep at night because second floor is too hot to stay during the day. These spatial replacements influenced residents' certain activity in everyday life.

For one-story house, spatial organization, building materials, floor height, and construction method are all changed from conventional one. However, the use of house space is similar to that of raised-floor house. This house form is so widely prevailing in entire Laos that we can see it anywhere today.

Since founded in 1969, VIENG KHAM has been small society and marginalized in Laos, if prepared to other village of majority ethnic groups as Lao. However, village itself is not fragile or vulnerable. Overcoming social and economic change, village has flexibly existed based on religious belief and enterprise to make the connection to outside. It may be the same as houses. This article reported that even though forms, materials, and the use of space have changed, religious belief did not, in many case, changed. That is

represented in the practice on specific posts such as Sao nyaa or Sao Khwan, ancestral altar, and Buddhist shrine. It means that even now, religious belief is essence to organize house space among Phuan in VIENG KHAM.

c. Toward further research

Research on rural house in Laos has just about beginning. Currently, society has changed rapidly and house form is changing as described in this article. Research on house form and the way to live, we think, should be made as soon as possible before being lost.

In addition, a number of same language group as Phuan are living in Laos. Comparative study of the house of such other group is required.

For VIENG KHAM, participant observation of religious rituals is not yet sufficient but it is important to understand the house and village more precisely. In-depth participant observation and research on religious ideas and practice is required to understand how it affects spatial organization of village and house strongly.

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