

## Chapter 7

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter includes a summary of the study and a review of the limitations involved in this task. The thesis will conclude with a discussion on the implications of the study and recommendations for the further study.

#### 7.1 Summary of the Study

This study is an extended research on Shan monasteries conducted in the field of vernacular architecture. The researcher examined the Shan monasteries built during late 19th to the early 20th centuries in Northern Thailand and Southern Shan State of Myanmar, and documented their architectural characteristics. From the aspect of vernacular architecture, the researcher observed several variations in the appearance of so called Shan monasteries in Northern Thailand. The previous researches generally described these variations as the regional influences where the donors and builders were associated with. This researcher wanted to identify the Shan influence in their architectural characteristics especially in their spatial planning.

A summary of the history of Shan and the Shan monasteries was provided as background. The war with China made the first settlements of Shan to Myanmar. Then in 19<sup>th</sup> century, the British annexation, the internal conflict in some Southern Shan principality states and teak trade booming in Northern Thailand led the influx Shan migration to Northern Thailand. One of the cultural interests shared between Thais and the Shans was the Shan monasteries built during 19<sup>th</sup> century, a unique form of Architecture. The study of Shan vernacular architecture was initiated to assist the conservation of Shan (Tai Yai) culture not only in Northern Thailand but also in Shan State of Myanmar. Research into the history of Shan Monasteries, including Shan monastic architecture indicated it was an important aspect of Shan culture.

The anthropological approach, architectural approach and diffusionist approach in the study of vernacular architecture were chosen to assist in identifying

and classifying the Shan monasteries and their relationships associated with it at different regions. A survey method is used for collecting the data.

A comparative analysis between the architectural characteristics of the Shan Monasteries between Southern Shan State and Northern Thailand is carried out through their site planning, main monastery building planning, roof forms and detail decorations.

The samples for the study were the 19th and 20th century Shan Monasteries built From Southern Shan State of Myanmar and Northern Thailand. The samples were limited to those built between 1830 and 1930 in Nyaung Shwe and Innlay area of Southern Shan State (Myanmar) and Mae Hong Son, Lampang, Phrae and Chiang Kham of Northern Thailand.

It is found that the Shan monastery compounds in Northern Thailand adapted the local traditions and religious regulations of the host country by adding prescribed and related elements. The spatial planning and orientation of the Main Monastery Building between the Southern Shan State and Northern Thailand samples has no big differences from the aspect of space utilizations. However, the additional structures varied according to the need of custom and tradition of the regions they are located.

As for the transformation, the Southern Shan State samples are found to be much extended than those in Northern Thailand. The extent of extensions appeared in Southern Shan State samples were much associated with World War II which had had no effect on Northern Thailand. The variations in their primary planning appeared according to the topographical and regional changes of which the Southern Shan State samples associated with topographical changes and Northern Thailand samples associated with regional changes.

The roof forms seen in the Southern Shan State samples have not much variation. It is found that they normally follow the traditional hierarchical order of the roof types. However in Northern Thailand samples the roof types can be seen in several variations because they are free from the Myanmar feudal administration which controlled the architectural features of the monasteries including roof forms. Moreover, the British colonization of Lower Myanmar turned out the innovations of new roof developments. Consequently, the Shan monasteries which were

exceptionally associated with trading between Lower Myanmar and Northern Thailand freely reveal the sophisticated roof combinations.

The decorations found in Southern Shan samples are gold and red lacquer although plain and simple since commoners in the Shan State did obey the restrictions to use glass mosaic decoration till the end of the feudal system. In contrast, the Northern Thailand samples are lavishly decorated by means of gold, lacquer and glass decoration. In Northern Thailand, since it was free from Myanmar and Shan feudalism, the Shan devotees who were not royalties lavishly embellished their works of merit as much as they can afford during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Another reason for lavish decoration seen in Northern Thailand Shan monasteries is the material inevitability and advancement of tools. They are imported from European countries to Mawlamyine of Lower Myanmar having more connection with Northern Thailand than Southern Shan State. Thus, the sophisticated and advanced material and techniques appeared in the decorations of Northern Thailand Shan monasteries.

The hypotheses for the study suggest that the architectural characteristics of Shan monasteries in Northern Thailand has transformed and varied from those of Southern Shan State of Myanmar due to trading and migration effects and the Shan influence in Northern Thailand Shan monasteries is identified by the spatial arrangements of main monastery buildings which have been inherited from Southern Shan State.

The summary of the study suggests that the architectural characteristics of Shan monasteries in Northern Thailand appeared with the Southern Shan State influence is due to migration only. The commonalities in the main elements in the compounds and core spatial arrangement of the main monastery buildings are the traditional features which they carried over. The variations found in the features are the influences acknowledged from the Lower Myanmar via trade links. The influences from Thailand's religious rules and socio-culture also reveal the variations in the elements in compound, site compositions and spatial needs in the Main Monastery Building. The results advise how Shan monasteries in Northern Thailand responded and varied to time, region and socio-cultural changes along the history until recent past.

## 7.2 Limitations of the Study

All findings must be weighed in light of the limitations of the study. The limitations appear not only in the pre-categorization but also in collecting the field data.

One limitation is the size and topographical nature of the research area. Since the migration of Shan immigrants in scattered around Northern Thailand, the evolution of Shan monasteries also scattered within the Northern region. The limited availability of the Shan monasteries built in Northern Thailand from AD 1830 to 1930 resulted in a relatively small sample. Since the analysis chosen is comparison, it is essential to get the same amount of sample from each group. Therefore the size of research area in Southern Shan State may be somewhat proportional to the population of the sample. In Southern Shan State, the chosen research area with the aquatic nature which is areas around Inn Lay Lake becomes a constraint for the result to be appeared as variations according to the topographical changes.

Another limitation of the sample is the possibility of identity produced in the samples. They are classified as Shan monasteries built by other ethnicities such as the monasteries built by Shan and Pa-O ethnic in Northern Thailand and those built by Shan and Inntha ethnic in Southern Shan State. Thus, the conclusions regarding to identity may also be limited to regional identity in Southern Shan State and style identity in Northern Thailand. Hence the samples can be identified as Southern Shan State style in Shan State and as Shan style in Northern Thailand regardless of who built them.

As discussed in the analysis, the samples in Northern Thailand may have received the monastic architectural features from Mandalay of Upper Myanmar or Mawlamyine of Lower Myanmar. It is not known whether these features flowed from Mandalay together with the artisans or developed in Mawlamyine. The Shan monasteries used all of the features they received or made selections from it. They may have also developed their own. This limitation applied to both the two groups of samples.

In relation to the sample variables, a few limitations existed. The Southern Shan State samples were extensively altered with extensions which make difficult to figure out the original planning and forms. The plausible planning and forms are

assumed by comparing with surviving original structures and interviews with local elderly people and the abbots. To get the tangible analysis, the roof forms and detail decorations are determined only on the present structures and elements which can either be originals or alterations.

The two more limitations seen in the variables are material and construction techniques. The samples were built across a history with social and political changes both in Southern Shan State and Northern Thailand such as British colonization, World War II, trade booming and declination. These occurrences largely impact the samples both in material usage and construction techniques. However, the in dept study related to these concerns are limited in this study.

Concerning with the analysis procedure, classification of typologies by each region prior to the comparison may leave some detail similarities behind. However, the classification of typologies in each region not grouped the similarities of all different type which have been appeared during the process. Hence, the comparison between two groups of typologies is supposed to be coped with the necessary information.

An awareness of the limitations to the study allowed the researcher to more carefully conduct the analysis.

### **7.3 Implications of the Study**

The study itself documented not only the architectural characteristics of Shan Monasteries built during 1830 to 1930 in Southern Shan States and in Northern Thailand but also their transformations and variations according to time and regions. The findings may have several additional implications.

The architectural history of Northern Thailand is more like a patchwork design according to its political changes throughout its history. Although, the evolution of Shan monasteries in Northern Thailand starts and flourished between late 19th to early 20th century, the remarkable form and appearance of their architecture are still recorded. However, the lacking of thorough understanding makes them difficult to comprehend in the architectural history of Northern Thailand. This study fills up one of the missing pieces in the whole picture of the biography of Shan monasteries in Northern Thailand.

Often, when a migrant group tries to adapt a new situation and culture, emphasis is placed on change versus tradition. The Shan monasteries in Northern Thailand experienced several alterations in their move from Shan State to the Northern Thailand. Through comparative analysis between the architectural characteristics of Southern Shan State and Northern Thailand samples, it appeared that changes in Northern Thailand samples placed more emphasis on appearance than spatial arrangement. The researcher believes that by documenting the variations that have occurred, a record would exist for the researchers of Shan vernacular architecture who will express interest in what the Shan monasteries were first like.

The Shan monastery represents a rich religious and cultural illustration of architectural skill. The structures are artistically appealing through their incorporation of plan, roof forms and detail decorations. An increased awareness of the architecture of Shan monastery may create a common artistic bond between Shan State, Upper Myanmar, Lower Myanmar and Northern Thailand. This heightened recognition may then lead to increased appreciation and conservation for cultural diversity in both countries.

A review of the variation in their characteristics may reflect how the Shan monasteries respond to regional and socio-cultural changes. The findings illustrate that although the Shan monasteries transformed and varied to meet the increasing spatial needs and to adapt the new developments in appearance, the principal spatial arrangement is maintained. This insight into the spatial planning of Shan monastery building could be incorporated into contemporary architectural practice.

The findings in this study illustrate the ability to measure variations in architectural characteristics more accurately than in typically done in traditional vernacular architectural research since most vernacular research on Shan monasteries carried out individually in each region. This method also provides a way of decreasing complexity in classifying and identifying the wider scope of Shan monastic architecture in the future.

#### **7.4 Recommendations for Further Studies**

Being the last portion of the report, this part focus on the recommendations related to tangible and intangible aspects. They are presented in contemporary

architectural practice and conservation of the old monastery buildings and factors to be considered in further studies related to Shan monastic architecture.

The innovations of contemporary architecture have been traced after the vernacular field not only in terms of cultural history but also as a practical source for contemporary architecture which is indigenous in spirit. Although new needs and material inevitability result in innovation, to understand and utilize in fresh ways, the building characteristics that were planned in response to environmental conditions, and also to conserve the aesthetic traditions of cultural heritage, are important considerations.

In Myanmar, Bamar, Mon and Shan associated with each other throughout their history especially the foundation of Buddhism. They use the common features in their religious architecture. Consequently, the roof typologies are difficult to differentiate among them since they commonly used the same roof typologies. This incidence leads the roof typologies of religious buildings in Myanmar not being classified as ethnic identity rather than regional identity. In the field of architectural practice, the architects should aware of this information in creating contemporary designs referring Myanmar religious buildings' roof typologies. It would be controversial to claim them as specific ethnic identity which so far is not yet cleared.

This case in point can be seen in the recently built Museum Wongwaen (Mon cultural museum) in Bangkok. The roof types used in the museum design which were said as traditional forms from Mon architecture are not only seen in the Lower Myanmar (predominantly Mon region) monasteries but also seen in the Upper Myanmar and Shan State monasteries. Thus, in creating a contemporary design, especially in monumental buildings, careful application of religious building roof typologies seen in Myanmar as specific ethnic identity is recommended.

The 19th and 20th century Shan monasteries, both in Northern Thailand and Southern Shan State, were generally wooden structures having more or less hundred years of age. Some of them are already registered as national heritage while some are unexplored and threatened by deterioration. Moreover, the Southern Shan State samples which are mostly set on water prone to be reconstructed since the old monastery structures are attacked by weather and insects. The recognition of such

monasteries as cultural heritage and the initiation of conservation tasks are urgent needs.

It is found that the monasteries in Southern Shan State are poorly maintained although they are thriving at the present day. The additional structures without regarding the forms of original structures such as the vast extensions and huge covered walkways at the front of the monasteries make them insignificant. The extensions should be controlled and permit with respect to the original structures. The construction of additional structures in the compound such as shops and covered walkways should be controlled not to disturb the main buildings and physical setting of the site.

In contrast, Northern Thailand samples has less altered and extended. They are better maintained and restored as extensions always pay respect to the original design. In addition, the significance in features turned them out to be tourist sites which make them more like show pieces than functioning monasteries. It is recommended that the Shan monasteries in Northern Thailand should not only be restored the physical setting but also the spiritual setting according to the principle of conservation ratified by ICOMOS<sup>1</sup> (1999).

*“The vernacular embraces not only the physical form and fabric of buildings, structures and spaces, but the ways in which they are used and understood, and the traditions and the intangible associations which attached to them.”*



Figure 7.1 Elevations of Museum Wongwaen

<sup>1</sup> International Council on Monuments and Sites





Figure 7.2 Perspective View of Museum Wongwaen



Figure 7.3 Replacement-prone Nyaung Oak Kyaung od Inn Lay



Figure 7.4 Abandoned Wat Mon Chamsil of Lampang

The relatively less in quantity and in depth quality of researches in Shan monastic architecture and the comprehensiveness of this study left several areas for further research come out as related questions which arose during this thesis.

Because of the time limitation and other risky factors, this research only conducted in the Nyaung Shwe Township representing Southern Shan State. There may be traces exist along the trade and migration route connected to Northern Thailand and Shan State in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Mawmai and Mone, the influential Southern Shan principality states, which greatly involved in Shan migration to Northern Thailand, are on the route. Moreover, the major trade route in 19<sup>th</sup> century connected Shan State not only to Northern Thailand, but also to Lower Myanmar. There were several Shan monasteries appeared in Lower Myanmar as well in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. What are the transformations and variations in the architectural characteristics of Shan monasteries along the trade and migration route from Shan State to Northern Thailand and Lower Myanmar?

Since Shan State composed of two more divisions such as Northern Shan State and Eastern Shan State other than Southern Shan State, the existence of monasteries with regional variations is undoubtedly. What are the architectural characteristics of Shan monasteries in these two more specific regions? What are the common architectural characteristics appear in Shan monasteries as a whole?

An area directly related to this study is the question of architectural identity in Shan monasteries. Since the Shan monasteries in Northern Thailand were built for Shan community versus Myanmar or Mon taste, is it still considered Shan style? Is there a separation between ethnic identity and regional identity? If so, when did the change take place and what influenced it?

The construction of monasteries is being developed together with the existence of Buddhism both in Shan State and Northern Thailand. The style of the monasteries within a certain period has been established according to the material inevitability and the advancement of construction techniques. The Shan monasteries built in the later period must have changed in their style. What are the changes and developments in architecture of Shan monasteries in Northern Thailand and Shan State built in later periods until recent past? What are the relationships between them and how?

The areas available for research on Shan Monasteries are limitless.