

Chapter 5

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SHAN MONASTERIES IN NORTHERN THAILAND

5.1 Northern Thailand

Northern Thailand, one of the four regional groups of Thailand, usually describes the area covered by seventeen provinces.

5.1.1 History of Northern Thailand

The history of Northern Thailand is dominated by the Lan Na kingdom, which was founded in 1259AD and remained an independent force until the 16th century.

Lan Na, with the meaning of “One Million Rice Fields”, was a kingdom in the north of Thailand around the city of Chiang Mai. It consisted of several partly independent city-states. The kingdom was founded in 1259 AD by King Mengrai when he succeeded his father as the leader of the Chiang Saen kingdom. In 1262 AD he founded the city Chiang Rai as his capital, naming it after himself. The kingdom quickly grew by unifying the many local Tai rulers of the area under his leadership, as well as by enlarging to the south by annexing the Mon kingdom of Haripunchai in 1292 AD which is the area around the modern-day cities of Lampang and Lamphun.

In 1296 AD, he founded the city of Chiang Mai as the new capital of the kingdom.

Lan Na kingdom reached its utmost prosperity in the 15th century. In 1477 AD, the 8th of the Buddhist councils was held near Chiang Mai, which worked on improving the Buddhist scriptures. The previously independent city-state Nan, capital of a Tai Lue people, was added to the kingdom in 1449 AD.

The decline of the kingdom started in the early 16th century, and became worse after the death of King Phraya Kaeo in 1526 AD. There was fighting over who should succeed him. Some of the kings were assassinated; others had to abdicate. This

political instability invited an invasion from the neighboring Myanmar kingdom, and in 1558 AD, Lan Na had to surrender and thus became a vassal of Myanmar. When Mengrai dynasty became extinct in 1578 AD, the Myanmar sent their own princes to serve as rulers of Lan Na.

The Siamese kings of Ayutthaya tried to capture Lanna several times, as the Myanmar posed a threat to their kingdom as well. Even though around 1600 AD, King Naresuan, and later in 1662 AD, King Narai as well, succeeded in occupying Chiang Mai, they were repulsed by the Myanmar after a short time. In the early 1700s the Myanmar divided the kingdom into a northern part, ruled from Chiang Saen, and a southern part, ruled from Chiang Mai. The northern part was for all practical purposes annexed by Myanmar, while the southern continued to be a vassal state.

After the Myanmar conquered Ayutthaya, King Taksin drove the Myanmar out of Siam or Central Thailand. In the North, King Taksin helped Prince Kawila of Lampang to successfully drive out the Myanmar. In 1775 AD, Chiang Mai fell to the Siamese then Prince Kawila became the first King of Lan Na under Siamese rule. Later, Kawila becomes the King of the Northern Kingdom who ruled 57 cities. In 1874, the government sent a commissioner to be stationed in Chiang Mai and that introduced a new form of local government for Lan Na which was renamed Monthon Phayap¹.

5.1.2 Geography of Northern Thailand

Northern Thailand begins where the broad plains of Chao Phraya River and its tributaries give way to the hills. The grain of the land is north-south, but because of the complexities of the hill and valley, it was largely a world apart until the arrival of railway in the 1920s. The main rivers of the Northern Region are the Ping, Wang, Yom and Nan which flow south into the Chao Phraya River, the Kok and the Ing, which drain North to the Mekong, and the Pai and Yuam in the far west drain to the Than Lwin River.

Neither Siam nor Lan Na had clear boundaries prior to the beginning of absolute monarchy in the reign of King Rama V. Lan Na referred to an area

¹ The official Siamese name for Lan Na during (AD 1893-1899) and (AD 1901-1933). See Sarassawadee Ongsakul, *History of Lan Na* (Chiang Mai: Silk Worm Books 2005), p. 251

comprising a group of principalities whose southern boundary extended as far as Tak and the top part of the Sukhothai Kingdom. To the west, Lan Na reaches Than Lwin River, to the east it extended to the Mekong River, and to the north, Chiang Rung. Western Lan Na included Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Lampang, Chiang Rai and Phayao while eastern Lan Na comprises Phrae and Nan. The southern section of Lan Na included the upper part of Tak and Uttaradit provinces (Ongsakul, 2005). Today Lan Na is understood to cover the area comprising eight provinces in Northern Thailand: Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Lampang, Chiang Rai, Phayao, Phrae, Nan and Mae Hong Son.

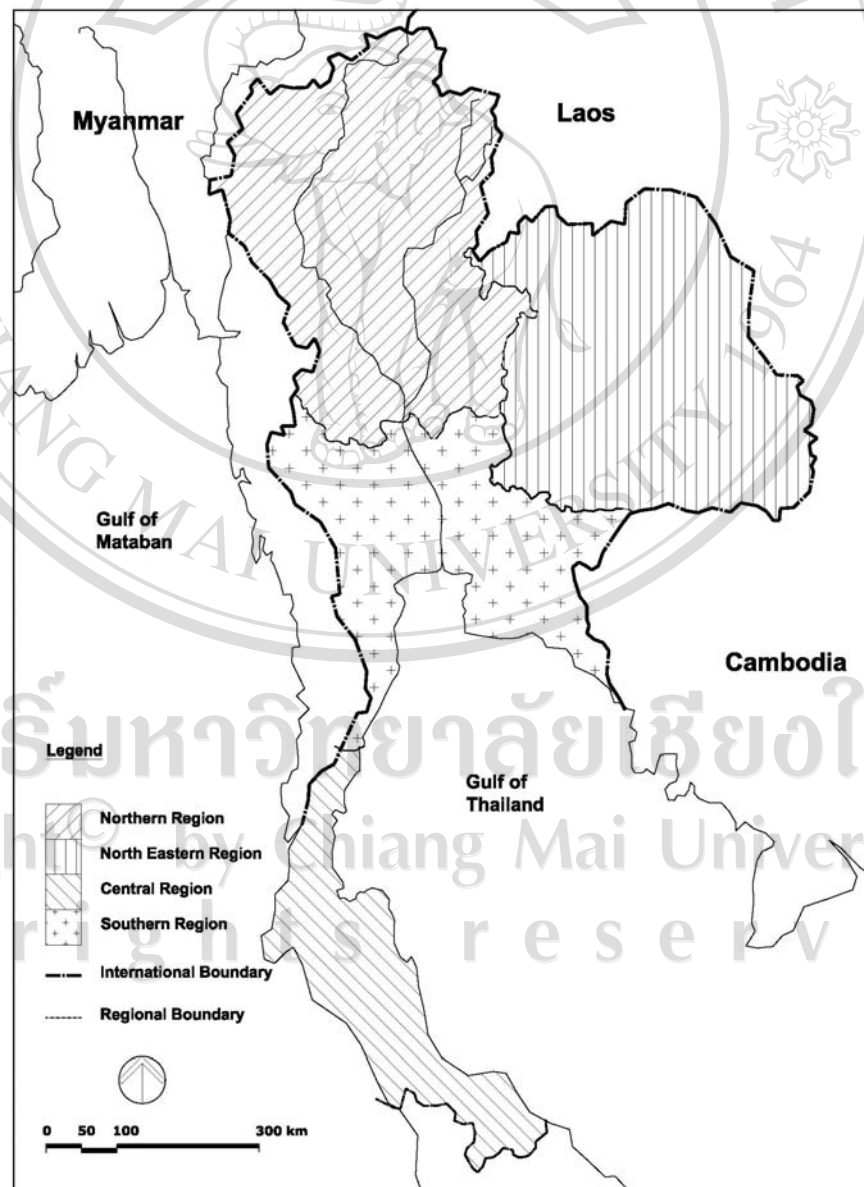


Figure 5.1 Map of Thailand

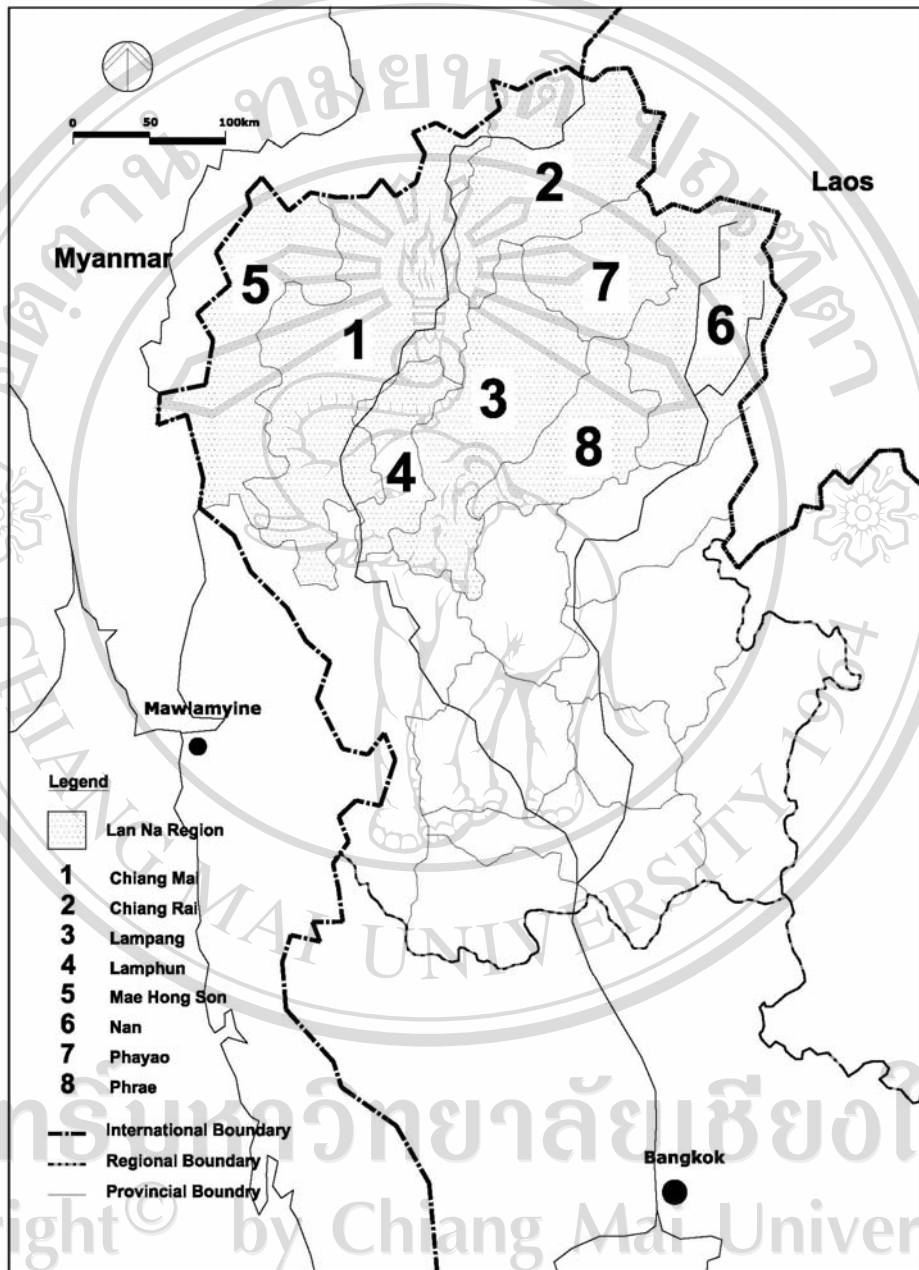


Figure 5.2 Map of Northern Thailand

5.2 Samples

Although the monasteries in Thailand can be classified into Royal and commoner's monasteries, the study of Onsiri Panin (1996) divided the Shan monasteries in Northern Thailand into urban and rural monasteries according to the location they are situated and probably because none of them appeared as royal donation. Rather, most urban monasteries were built in memory of important people or on sites sacred to the community. The size, plan, architecture and decoration of a monastery reflect the importance. Rural monasteries referring the village monasteries have simpler architecture and are built of whatever materials are available in the locality.

Altogether ten monasteries were collected around Northern Thailand including Mae Hong Son, Khun Yuam, Lampang, Phrae and Chiang Kham. The earliest one built in 1867 AD while the latest one built in 1925 AD. The donors included wealthy Shan traders, and Shan communities. Because the settlement of Shan people in Northern Thailand varied, the areas close to Shan State such as Mae Hong Son and nearby areas, Shan community can be regarded as local community while in Lampang and further more areas; they can be regarded as Shan community which is different from local community. Generally, the building and maintenance of these monasteries has tended to be a community effort rather than a prime interest and financial responsibility of a particular individual and his family. It appears that the funding of many monasteries has largely occur at the initiation of village leaders or wealthy individuals who have provided the original seed money to purchase the land and begin construction. Then the community donated for the necessary funds to complete the construction. People have traditionally contributed whatever they could afford, and names of donors are prominently displayed on erected part of the supporting structure, such as the walls, pillars or lintels, have had their names inscribed on them. However, there are some exceptional monasteries appeared as individual donation or a grouped donation. Wat Pafang in Lampang was donated as individual donation by wealthy former Taungoo governor named U Shwe At. Wat Sri Rong Muang was first donated by ten Pa-O teak traders and then later renovated by U San Toe, a wealthy sub-contractor of a British teak company in Lampang.

Table 5.1 List of Samples in Northern Thailand

Sr.	Name	Location	Main Monastery Building		Donor	Remark
			Year of Construction	Area (m ²)		
N-01	Wat Chong Klang	Mae Hong Son	1867	75	Common	
N-02	Wat Muang Pon	Muang Pon Village (Khun Yuam)	1867	80	Common	
N-03	Wat Monchamsil	Lampang	1881	30	NA	
N-04	Wat Pafang	Lampang	1892	80	U Shwe At	
N-05	Wat Mon Puyak	Lampang	1899	70	Common	
N-06	Wat Khum	Khun Yuam	1899	60	Shan Community	
N-07	Wat Sri Rong Muang	Lampang	1905	130	10 Pa-O Teak traders	
N-08	Wat Chom Sawan	Phrae	1910	70	Shan Community	
N-09	Wat Tor Pae	Tor Pae Village (Khun Yuam)	1918	70	Common	
N-10	Wat Nan Taram	Chiang Kham	1925	135	Shan Community	

Source: Field Survey 2007

ลิขสิทธิ์มหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่
 Copyright© by Chiang Mai University
 All rights reserved

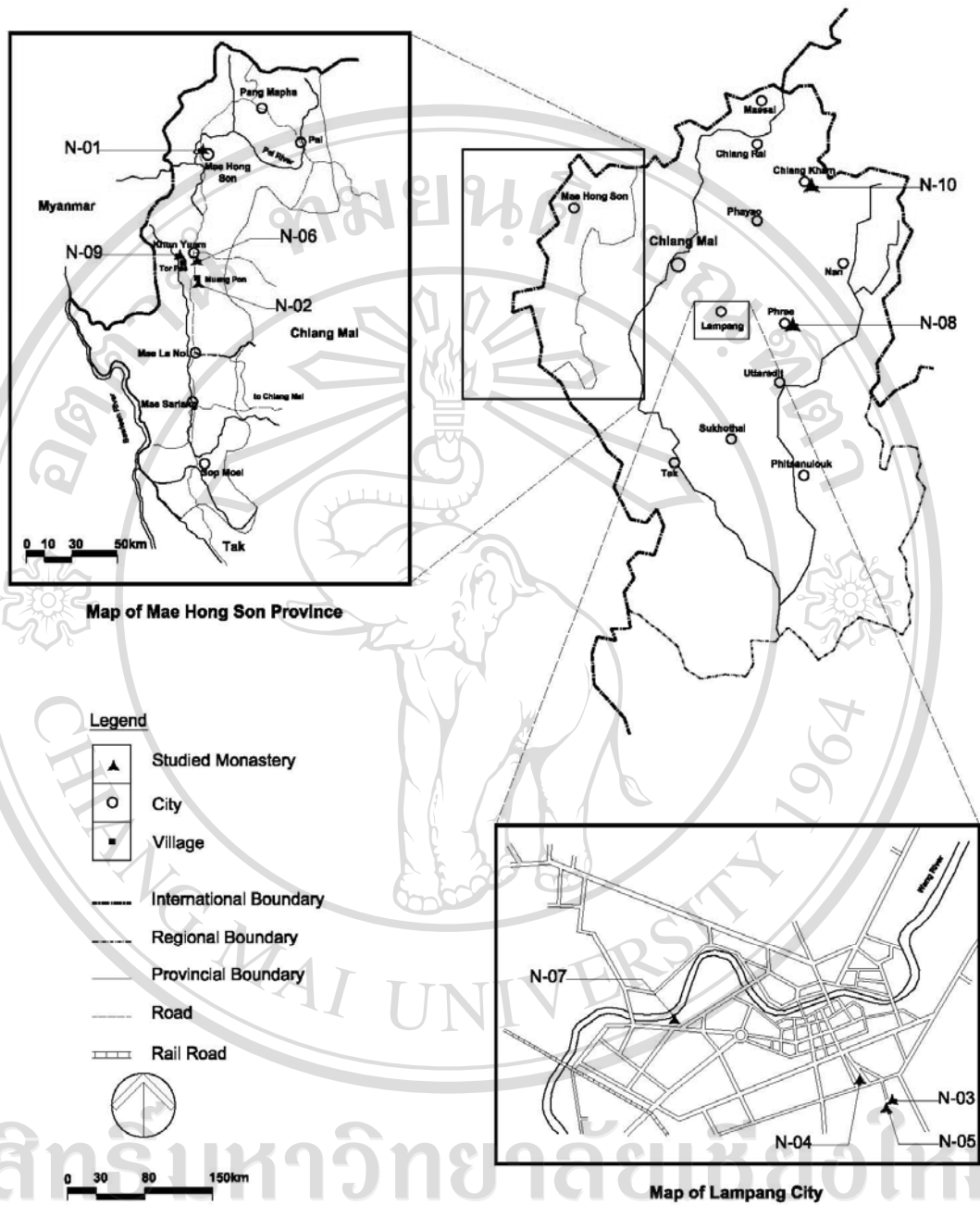


Figure 5.3 Location of Samples in Northern Thailand

ลิขสิทธิ์มหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่
Copyright © by Chiang Mai University
All rights reserved

The following are the historical and physical information of each sample which has been gathered by both literature and field survey.

N-01 Wat Chong Klang

Wat Chong Klang is located in the southern part of Mae Hong Son city. It is situated on the North of Nong Jong Kham Lake next to Chamnan Satit road and provincial electricity authority of Mae Hong Son. On the East of Wat Jong Klang is Wat Jong Kham and on the West is Phara Patirat School. According to Pomthongkham et.al, the present day monastery has been a place for laymen pavilion or rest house of adjacent Wat Chong Mai (old temple replaced by Phara Patirat School). Once, the son of Parasinghanaraja (the first ruler of Mae Hong Son) got seriously ill while he went teak trading in Mawlamyine. The ruler ordered to take him back to Mae Hong Son by boat along Thanlwin River through Pai River and the wharf at Ban Hta Pon Dang. The son died on the way back to Mae Hong Son then the corpse was taken and put in this pavilion which was renovated in order to hold the funeral.



Figure 5.4 Photo of Wat Chong Klang, Mae Hong Son

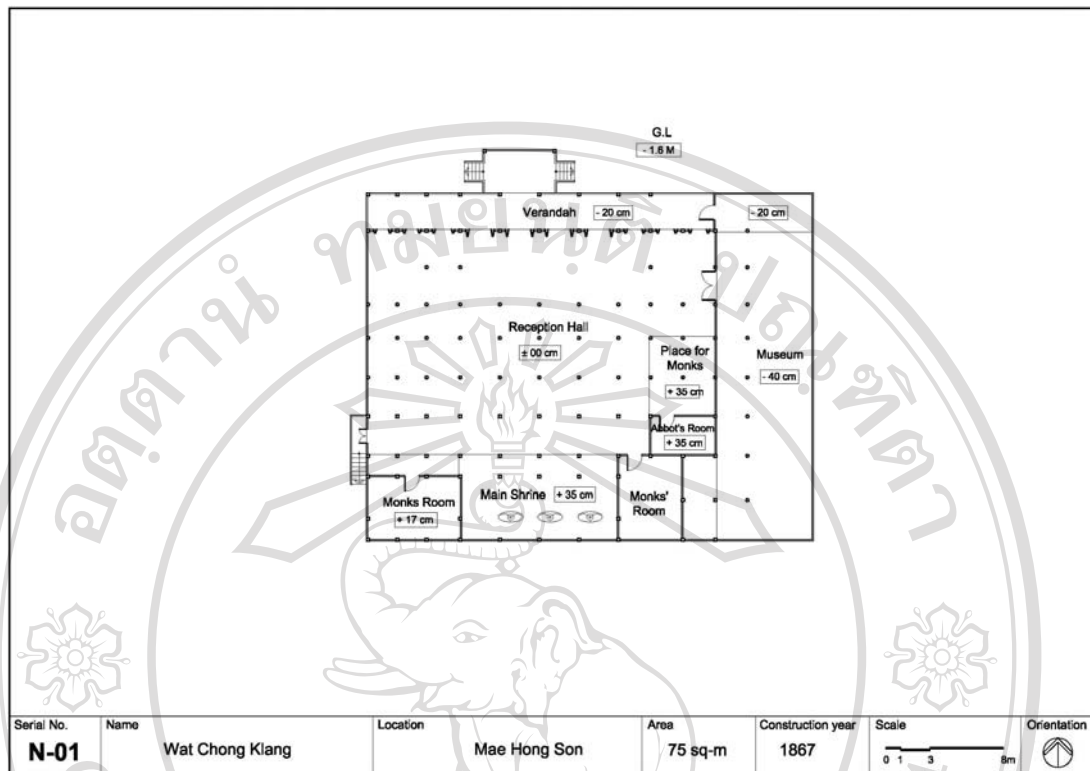


Figure 5.5 Plan of Wat Chong Klang, Mae Hong Son

Later, when the abbot of Wat Chong Mai passed away, the devotees from Mae Hong Son and Myanmar including a monk came to the cremation ceremony. The guests stayed in that pavilion during the ceremony. However, they did not go back to Myanmar after the ceremony was finished since they believed in Buddhist religion of Thailand. And also the Monk was asked to stay in the pavilion. Then the old pavilion was replaced with a new one which can be seen as the present monastery as Wat Jong Klang. The pavilion has changed as a temple in 1867 AD. Lun Jan Nu or Khun Phian donated the front roof and Lun Jong Chor and Lun Pakaja donated the back and the west roof respectively. The temple construction was finished in 1871 AD.

N-02 Wat Muang Pon

It is located in No. 9, Moo 1, Muang Pon Village, Muang Pon Sub-district, Khun Yuam District, Mae Hong Son Province. The monastery belongs to Maha Nikai Sect of Thailand. The monastery was established in 1867 AD.



Figure 5.6 Photo of Wat Muang Pon, Muang Pon Village, Khun Yuam

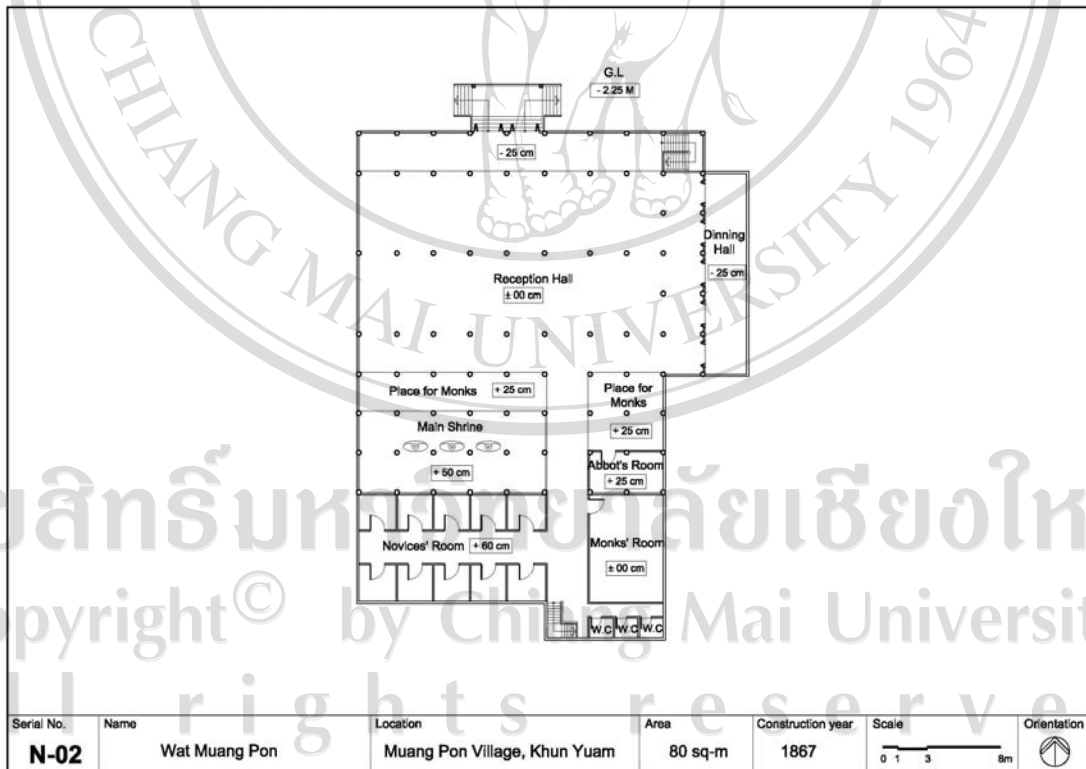


Figure 5.7 Plan of Wat Muang Pon, Muang Pon Village, Khun Yuam

According to the history recorded at Wat Muang Pon, Payanoisiri Prisan, Jong Mong (the village head of Muang Pon village) and the villagers worked together in

building the meditation hall and the main monastery building. A monk named Aokkong was invited to stay in the monastery during 1867-1871 AD when he became the first abbot of this monastery. In 1973 AD, a donor named Tung Aung donated a new monk residence. In 1947 AD, the King donated Wisukamasrima and the monastery received the Sema area in the compound. The Muang Pon monastery acts not only as the community and religious center of Muang Pon village but also acts as the main institution to preserve and distribute the Shan culture to the new generation.

N-03 Wat Monchamsil

Wat Monchamsil is located at No. 211, Monchamsil Road, Pa Kham Village, Phra Bart Sub-District, Muang District, Lampang Province. It was said to get the major support from Shan and Pa-O communities in the past. The main elements in the compound are the stupa and main monastery building. According to the history recorded at Wat Monchamsil, the stupa in the compound was first built in 1867 AD. It was renovated such as changing the shape of the stupa, gate and fence by a Burmese donor. The stupa was renovated again in 1917 AD by putting the Buddha images inside the niches of the stupa. The main monastery building was first built in 1881 AD. Some building parts of the monastery were once dismantled by the head monk in order to build for his residence. However, these parts were replaced back to the original monastery in 1974 AD. No particular extension except a new toilet on the western verandah can be seen.



Figure 5.8 Photo of Wat Mon Chamsil, Lampang

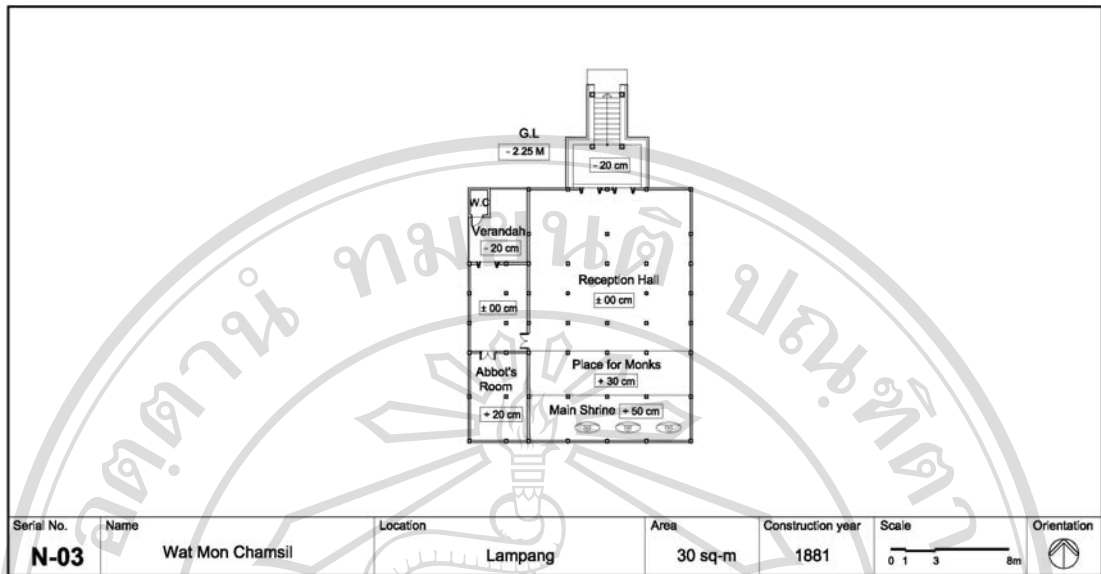


Figure 5.9 Plan of Wat Mon Chamsil, Lampang

N-04 Wat Pafang

Wat Pafang (Sarsana Jotikayone) is located at No. (69), Thanon Sanambin Road, Phra Bart Sub-District, Muang District, Lampang Province. According to the history recorded at Wat Pafang, the main monastery building of Wat Pafang was first built in 1892 AD during the reign of King Rama V. It was donated in by U Shwe At, a Myanmar ethnic who was the previous Taungoo governor, and his Mon wife named Warn. They settled in Lampang for doing forestry business. A monk was asked to stay in the monastery after the construction was finished.



Figure 5.10 Photo of Wat Pafang, Lampang

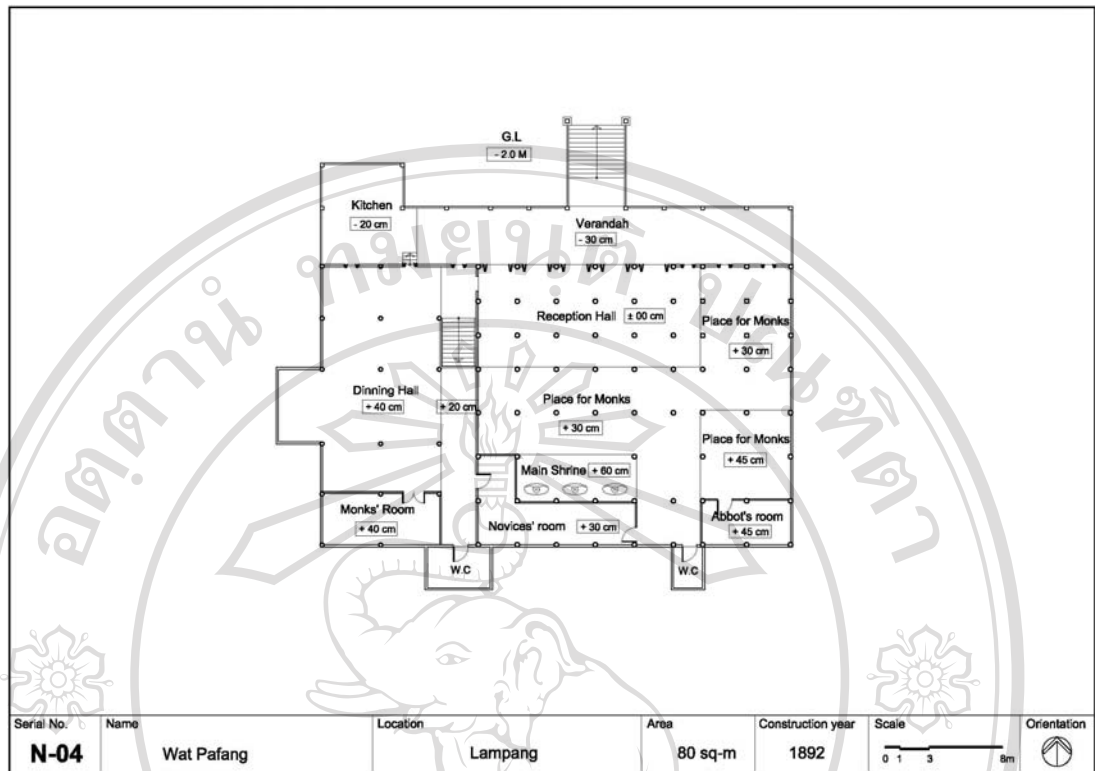


Figure 5.11 Plan of Wat Pafang, Lampang

U Shwe At asked Maung Ti and his members to help in getting the permission of Sima area from the mayor of Lampang City in 1907 AD. Wat Pafang became a registered monastery on the 30th of July, 1907 AD. The son and later, the decedents of U Shwe At look after the monastery till the present time. The restorations were made time by time. A main element in the compound is a stupa enshrining Buddha image brought from Mon State of Myanmar in 1907 AD. The stupa was gilded and can be observed from quite a far distance. The base of the stupa is in octagonal shape with niches in which eight marble Buddha images are placed representing the Eight Meg of Buddhism. The perimeter and the height of the stupa is the same. The main monastery building is in half wooden and half brick. The ordination hall was constructed in 1907 AD. It is a brick structure with Buddha Images inside. The interior walling has paintings of the Buddhist lore. Near the stupa is a swan pillar. It was brought from Mon State and said to be the representation of Wat Mon (monastery of Mon community).

N-05 Wat Mon Puyak

Wat Mon Puyak is located on a hillock in the south eastern part of Lampang City which is on the eastern part of Wang River. It is located at No 213 Pakham Road, Mon Puyak Village, Phra Bart Sub-District, Muang District, Lampang Province. On the north of the monastery is Lampang- Denchai Phrae Road, on the south is ceramic factory named Sathian Phap and on the East is Mon Puyak village and canal and on the West is Bann Rom Phongam School.

According to the History of Temples in Thailand, Volume 8 published by Buddha Sahtan Grom Sasana (department of Religious affairs) in 1982 AD, Wat Mon Puyak which is officially known as Wat Mon Sathan was built on the 5th September 1899 AD. Phor Tao Nanta Noi, Phor Tao Nanta Kai and three other relatives tried to get Wisukhasima area (permission to get land registered as religious land) in 1899 from department of religious affairs. In Wusukhan area, there are three main buildings inside the compound of Wat Monpuyak. They are a stupa and a brick western style viharn built on a high podium, a wooden monastery (Sala Karnparin and Kuti) and an Ordination Hall (Ubosot). Besides these three, there are some small new buildings inside the compound.

History from the book named History of Wat Mon Santhan written by Phor Kham Man Maninan in 2536BE (1993 AD), said the old name of Wat Santhan is Wat Mon Puyak Located in Pakham village in the south eastern part of Lampang. In the past, the temple site is forest. In the rainy season, there are some annual crops grown. Since there were a lot of tamarind trees around this area, it was called Pakham (tamarind forest) which later became the name of the village. Because there were a lot of tamarind trees, the merchants came to settle around this area since tamarind paste is the best medicine for their elephants.

There was four temples in Pakham Village namely Wat Mon Santhan (Wat Mon Puyak), Wat Jong Kham, Wat Monchamsil and Wat Romphongam (Wat Pakham). It is believed that the locations of the monasteries are holy places related to Buddha. It is said that once upon a time, Buddha surmounted a giant who blocked Buddha at Phra Bart forest on his way to the East. Buddha moralized the giant and the giant did the good deeds in Monchamsil forest and died in Mon Puyak forest. Later, people found the Buddha footprint and giant foot print in Phra Bat forest. People

established a temple in this area and built viharn on the foot prints. Thus they built temples in Monchamsil forest and Mon Puyak forests as well.

It is said that the original construction of Wat Mon Puyak was wooden pavilion build during AD 1792-1795 by four teak merchants. They are Jan Nan Ti, Jan Witcha, Jan Ban Jum, Jan Intha, (Jan is the title for donor of the temple). The word Mon means hills/mountains in Lan Na dialect. The four merchants and the villagers joined together building the temples around this area which was too hard for a construction because of hilly topography and the forests. They used elephants, horses, cows and buffalos in the construction process. All of the buildings and the fence of the temple were built by the skillful builders from Burma. The decorations are done by the craftsmen from Burma as well. The style of decorations in the temple is Burmese style decorations. The temple construction was finished in 2338 BE (1795 AD). The first abbot of the monastery was a Myanmar monk. The administration of the monastery was later transferred to the Thai government so as to observe the Thai temple rules such as there must be an Ordination Hall inside the temple area. The smallest existing Buddha Hall (Viharn) with Portuguese style was changed its function as Ordination Hall and the name of the monastery was changed to Thai name as Wat Santhan.



Figure 5.12 Photo of Wat Mon Puyak, Lampang

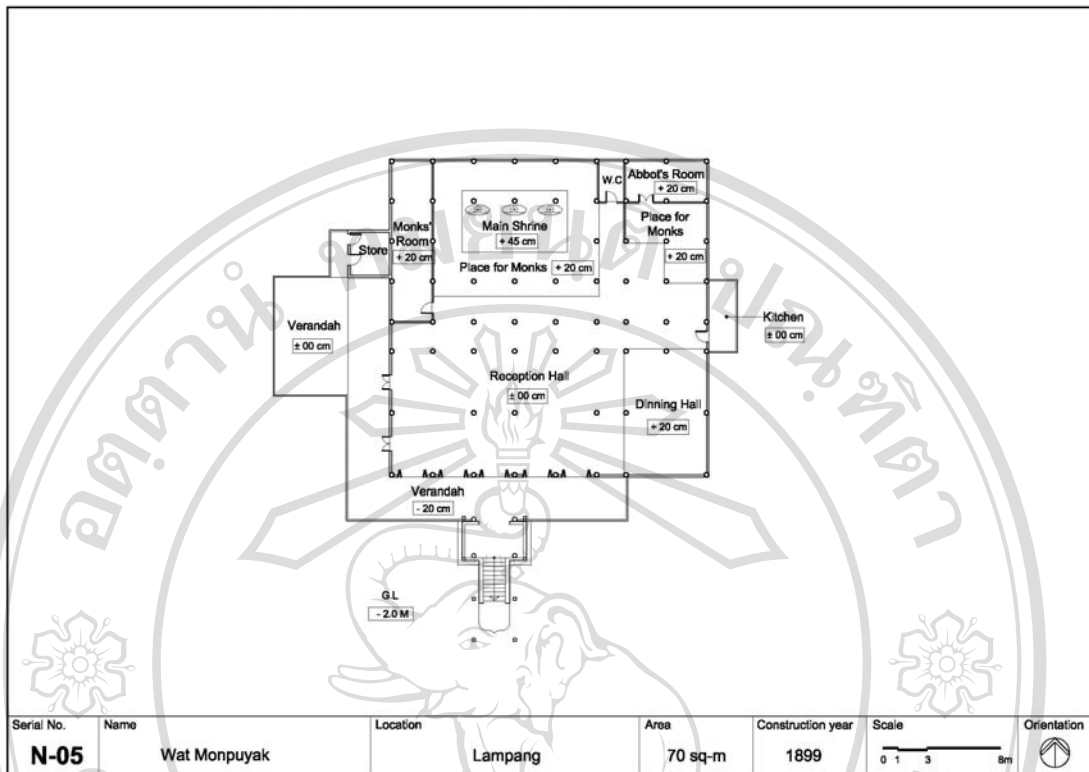


Figure 5.13 Plan of Wat Mon Puyak, Lampang

N-06 Wat Khum

Wat Khum or Wat Chong Khum is located in the eastern part of Amphur Khun Yuam, Khun Yuam District, Mae Hong Son Province. The surroundings of Wat Khum are water supply station of Khun Yuam town on the North, the fields on the South and East and neighboring Wat Dam Nai (Jong Kham) on the West. The name of Wat Jong Khum represents the location of the monastery since it is the lowland area of Khun Yuam. Khum means lowland hence the name of the monastery. According to Mrs. Chin Ju Bon Phithat², Jong Jan La U Maung Nai was the donor of Wat Chong Khum. However, the record said the monastery was established by an old lady named Jong Yort and the well wishers from the village. However, the surviving material and design of the present day monastery witness that it was built not much earlier than the contemporary monastery such as Wat Muang Pon. Besides, an

² An 82 years old relative of Jong Jan La U Maung Nai, who live in No.65, Moo 2, Ban Khun Yuam. See Surasa Pomthongkham et.al, *Tai Architecture of House and Temple in Mae Hong Son Province* (Mae Hong Son, Mae Hong Son Cultural Center, Hong Siksa School)

inscription on one of the Buddha Hall columns reads “year 99”. Thus, it can be concluded that the monastery compound was first established in 1824 AD, however, the present day monastery building is supposed to be built in 1899 AD.



Figure 5.14 Photo of Wat Khum, Khun Yuam

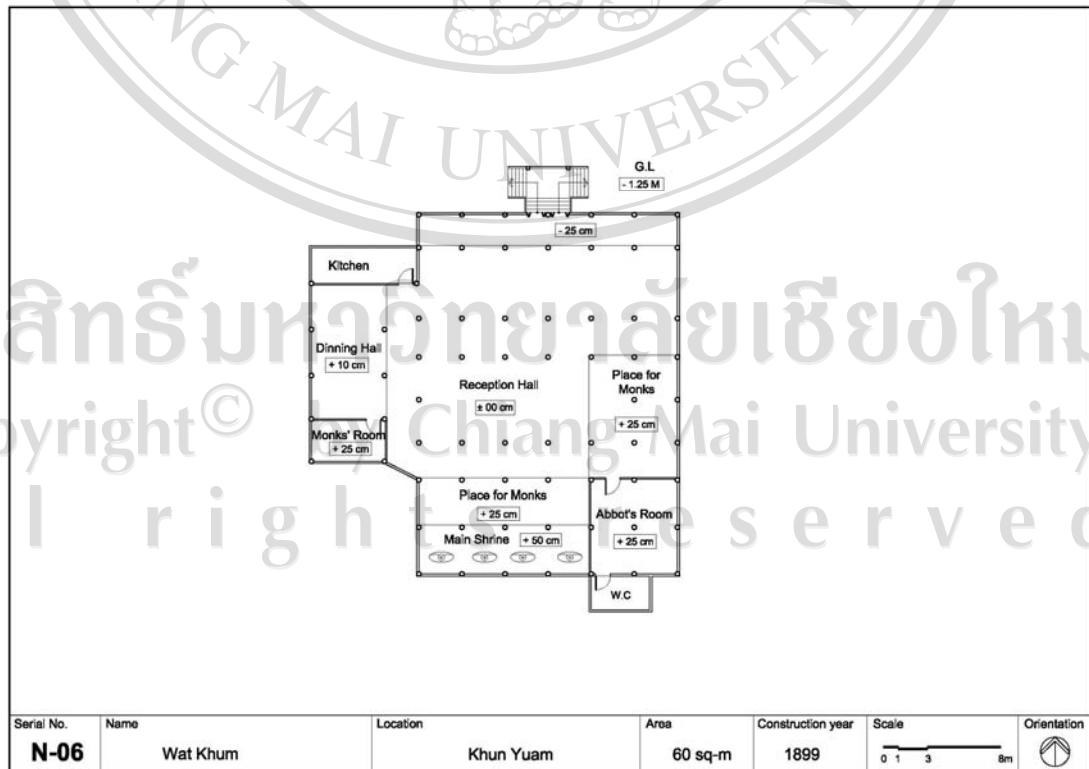


Figure 5.15 Plan of Wat Khum, Khun Yuam

N-07 Wat Sri Rong Muang

Locating at No (80), Taa Kraw Noi Road, Sob Tui Sub-District, Muang District, Lampang Province, Wat Sri Rong Muang was once know as Wat Taa Kraw Noi. The monastery is situated on the bank of Mae Wang River in the southern part of Lampang City. It was first donated in 1905 AD by ten Pa-O workers of British teak industry in Northern Thailand. The construction was finished in 1912 AD taking seven years of period. The invitation³ of the completion ceremony of the monastery reads the eastern triple wing was donated by U Wureinda, U Kyaung Pan Sone and Shin Air. The western triplex wing was donated by Sayar Eineda, Sayar Gandamar and Sayar Khatti. The double roved front reception hall was donated by U Kan Thar and U Wunna. The Buddha Hall, corridors, terraces, kitchen, toilets and fencing were donated by U Nandar Pay and U Nandar Noi. In 1930 AD, U San Toe (a wealthy subcontractor of a British teak company) and his wife Janfong lead an extensive restoration of the monastery together with building a new ordination hall in the compound. The main monastery building was registered as a national heritage in 1980 due to its elaborate structure and ornaments.



Figure 5.16 Photo of Wat Sri Rong Muang, Lampang

³ See Appendix B

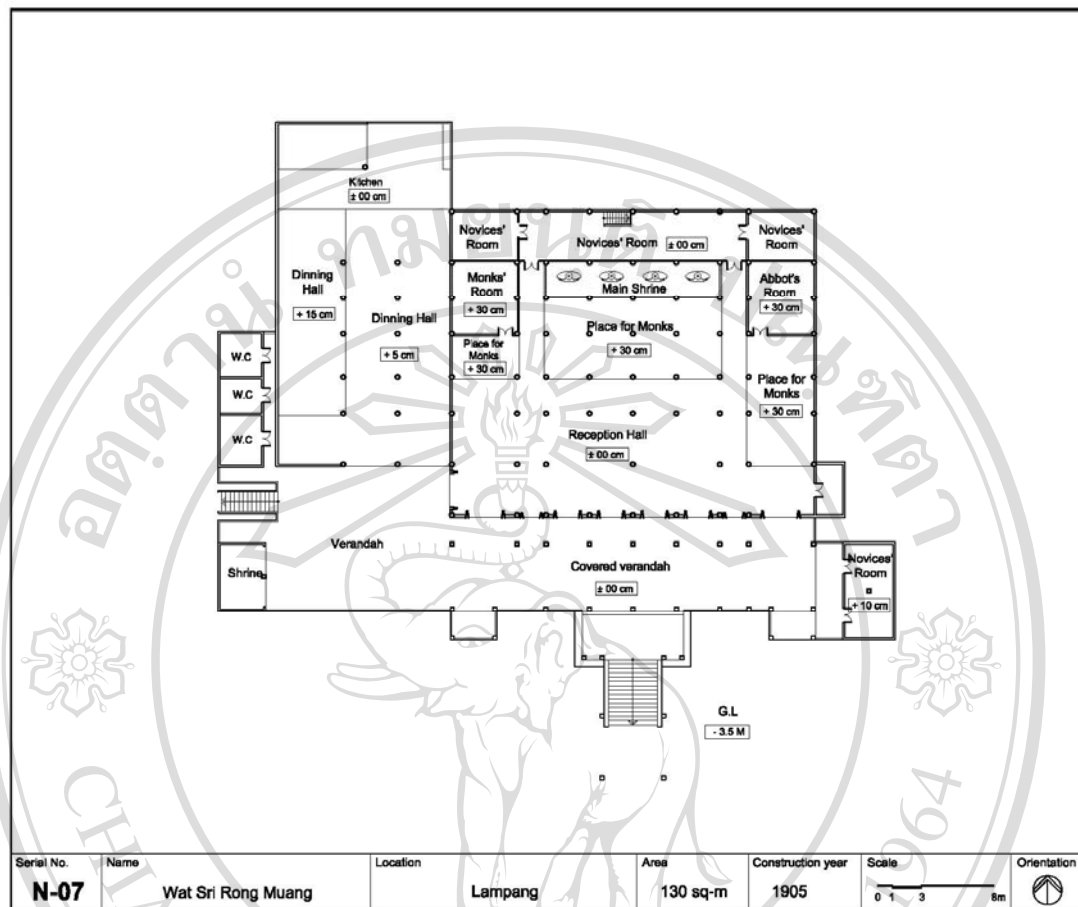


Figure 5.17 Plan of Wat Sri Rong Muang, Lampang

N-08 Wat Chom Sawan

Wat Chom Sawan (The Monastery of the Highest Heaven) is situated on the North-East of the old city of Phrae. Built between 1910 and 1912, it is said to be one of the purest surviving Shan monasteries in Lan Na (Freeman, 2002). It was built by Shan community in Phrae. The main elements in the compound are stupa and the main monastery building. Both are registered to be national treasure in 1980 AD. The stupa is placed at front part of the compound with fourteen small surrounding stupas. It was built by Por Tao Yod Kum in Mon style. The main stairs are on the west side of the stupa. The main monastery building was built by Por Toa Gun Tee and Por Tao Jong Nanta. The construction was finished in 1914 AD. The completion year of the construction was written in every columns of the monastery building. The lean to roof on the eastern verandah is supposed to be new structure.



Figure 5.18 Photo of Wat Chom Sawan, Phrae

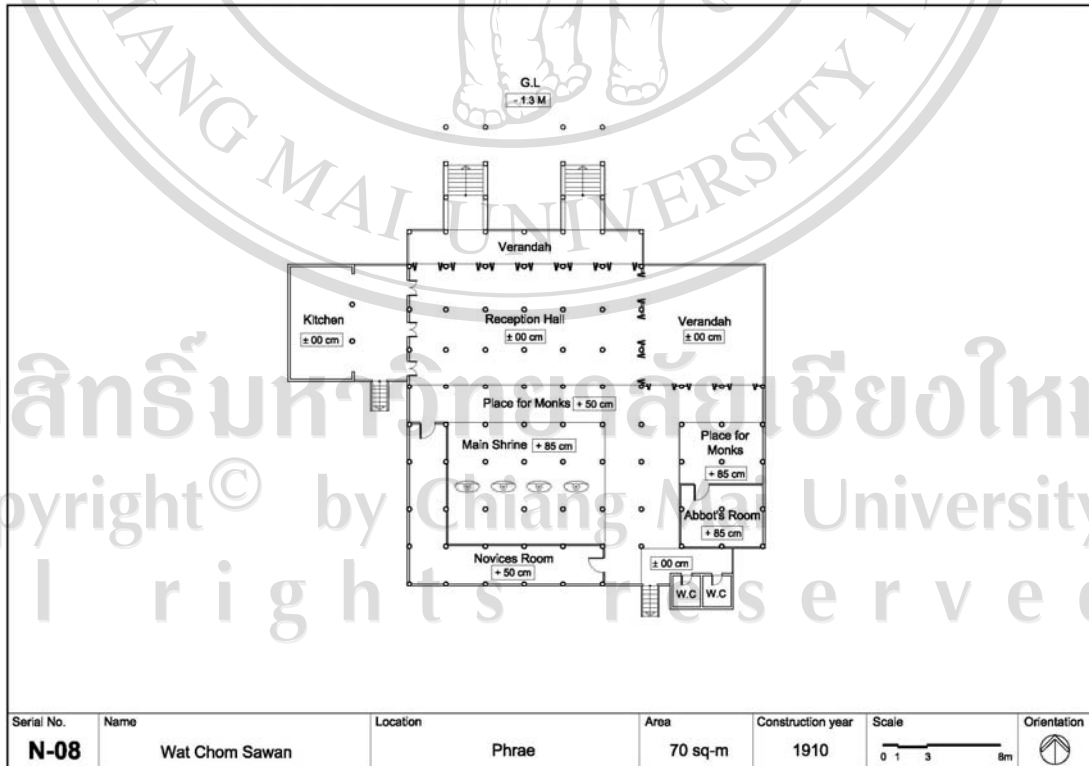


Figure 5.19 Plan of Wat Chom Sawan, Phrae

N-09 Wat Tor Pae

According to Pomthongkham et.al, Wat Tor Pae is an ancient monastery situated in the plain and valley of the Yuam River, established many hundreds years ago by Lawa people. When the people come to live in the near by place, they found that there was an old chedi having big tree at the center in the abandoned monastery compound. No one wanted to go to the site since it was thought to be haunted. Phrathamthani, the first abbot has sojourned from Shan State of Myanmar and practiced meditation in this monastery. In 1918, Phrathamthani had asked the Tor Pae village community to renovate and constructed this monastery. Some traders who ran their trading from Tor Pae to Myanmar via Maesariang had donated a large sum of money to build the maon monastery building. Jong Kuna, a Shan layman, had built the east wing for visiting monks, Luang Jong Kham and Luang Jong Jai had built the Abbot Room and the south east wing. Luang Jongher had built the Novices' Room in the south west wing. In the temple compound, there are some old buildings such as the pavilion to put Buddha image for people to offer water during the water festival called Jong Son, Viharn and Chedi built in 1920 AD and old surviving monks' toilet can be found.



Figure 5.20 Photo of Wat Tor Pae, Tor Pae Village, Khun Yuam

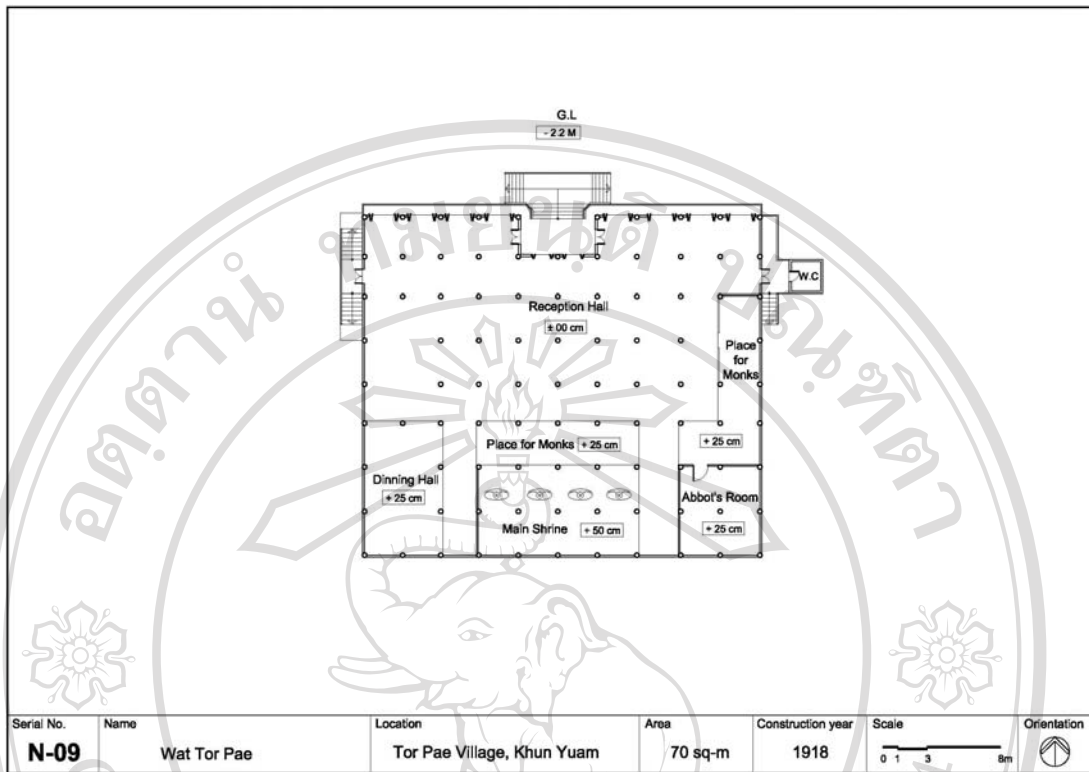


Figure 5.21 Plan of Wat Tor Pae, Tor Pae Village, Khun Yuam

N-10 Wat Nan Taram

According to the history recorded at Wat Nan Taram, it is located near the municipal market of Chiang Kham Sub-District in Phayao Province. There is no record of when exactly the monastery was founded. It is a community temple for Shan (Tai Yai) people. It was previously called Wat Jong Kha since the roof of the old monastery was covered with Ya Kha or lalang grass. Locating in the northern part of Chiang Kham municipality, the monastery is locally well known as Wat Jong Nuea (North Temple).

The present location of Wat Nantaram is used to be an abandoned temple in the past. People in this area believed this site as a sacred place since a person saw the light soar in the site in one full moon day. Besides, the site also has an old Bodhi tree and no one dared to occupy or trespass through it. It was next to the house of an old man named Pho Thao Ubon. When a Tai Yai monk visited to this area, Pho Thao Ubon and Phor Mong Pho Khin built a temporary residence on the temple site and let the guest monk to stay. In 1908 AD, Phor Mong Pho Khin invited a Shan monk

named U Wunna from Taunggyi and built wooden monastery for the monk to stay with Ya Kha grass thatch (*Imperata andiancea*) roof beside the Bodhi tree. The monastery was called Wat Jong Kha representing its roofing material.

In 1924 AD, Mae Nang Cham Hoeng donated more land to the monastery in order to expand the temples area. Later in 1925 AD, Phor Tao Nanta donated a large amount of money and solicited the others for donations then built new wooden temple which still be seen. It was a copy of the monastery from of Wat Ban Huad, Ngaio, and Lampang. Phor Tao Sanga Tan from Ban Pakam, Lampang Province, was the chief builder and Phor Tao Ubon was the consultant in building the temple.

Phor Tao Nanta Wong Anan was a Taungthu (Pa-O) race from Wong Anan family which is an old family in Chiang Kham. He was born in Taunggyi and immigrated to Chiang Mai (Ban Wua Lai) trading silk, gems and jewelries between Chiang Mai, Nan, Phrae, Chiang Rai and Lampang. He got married to one of the relatives of the ruler of Nan and was assigned to take care of the teak trading business with Bombay Burma Company in the area around Chiang Kham. He moved to Chiang Kham and appointed as an English headman to responsible for the English subjects in Chiang Khon. Phor Tao Nanta built the townhouses for teak trading workers as their lodgings. Later, the teak trade workers expanded the townhouses in Business center of Chiang Kham. These areas later become a community and developed as Chiang Kham municipal market.

After construction of the monastery was finished, in 1933 AD, a principal teak Buddha image of Wat Jong Mae Tha, an abandoned Tai Yai temple in Pon District of Phayao Province, was brought to place in the newly constructed temple. The first merit making ceremony of new temple was celebrated from 1-15 March 1934 AD when the name was changed to Wat Nan Taram in dedicating Phor Tao Nanta and the Wong Anan family.

A regular polygon stupa in Shan style was built in the monastery compound in 1957 AD. In 1970 AD, the ground floor wood columns of the monastery were replaced with concrete columns and a new Ubosot (ordination hall) was constructed in 1972 AD. On the 8th of November 1971 AD, the temple was transferred from the control of Tai Yai sect to Mahaniguy Sect (Thai religious sect) and received Sema.



Figure 5.22 Photo of Wat Nan Taram, Chiang Kham

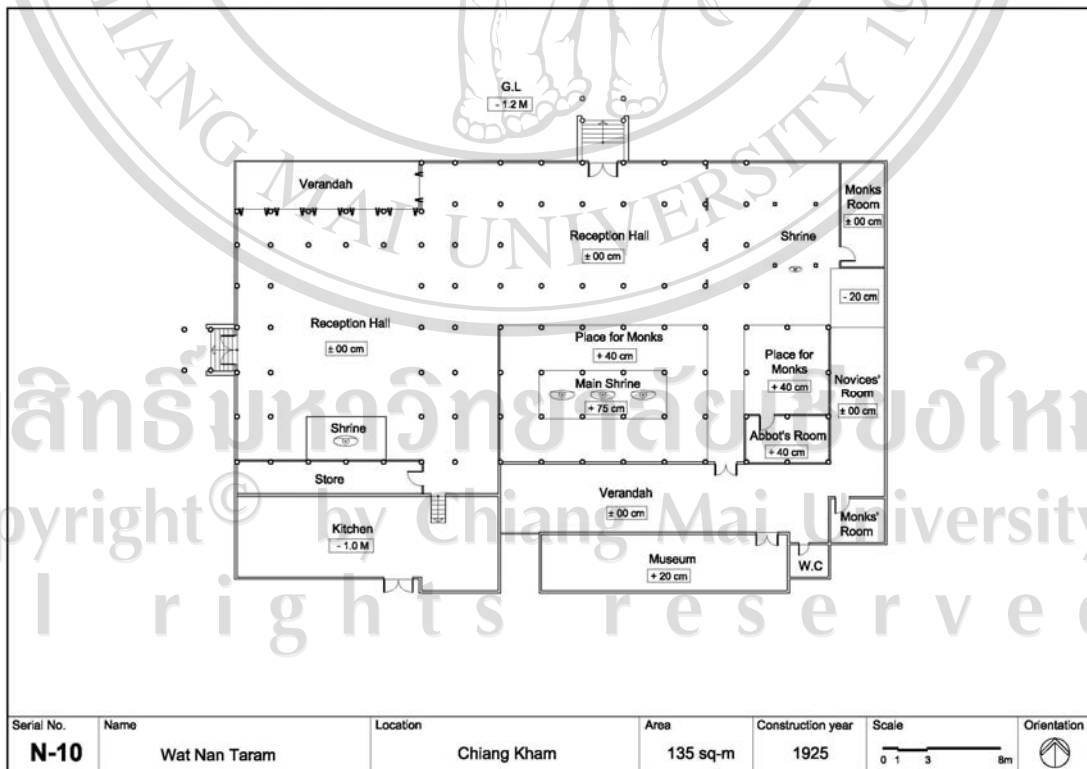


Figure 5.23 Plan of Wat Nan Taram, Chiang Kham

5.3 Site

The monastery compound (Wat in Thai) is a building complex containing a variety of religious structures and related elements. The layout of the elements can be known in studying the site planning of the monastery compounds.

5.3.1 Elements in the Compound

There are several elements found in the Shan monastery compounds of Northern Thailand. However, not all elements are found in every monastery compounds. The elements found in the Shan monastery compounds are;

- Stupa (Chedi)
- Pillar
- Ordination Hall (Ubosot)
- Main Monastery Building (Sala Karn Parian)
- Monks' Residence (Kuti)
- Layman Pavilion/Rest House (Sala Chamsil)
- Multipurpose Hall (Viharn)
- Water Pavilion (Jong Son)
- Tombs (Umai)
- Flag Pole
- Bell Tower
- Bodhi Tree
- Shrine
- Spirit Shrine
- School
- Shop
- Kitchen
- Well
- Toilet

Among them, Stupa, Ordination hall, Main monastery building and Laymen Pavilions are important structures.

The main monastery in which the multi- religious functions are performed is the most important structure in the compound.

Stupa and ordination hall are supposed to be the compulsory structures in order to become a registered monastery in Thailand. They can be seen in almost all studied Shan monasteries in Northern Thailand. They are built only after the monastery was constructed except the stupa in Wat Tor Pae. Wat Khum of Khun Yuam town has no stupa nor ordination hall inside the compound since it share these facilities together with adjacent wat.

Pillars are found near the stupa or in front of the main monastery building. The top of the pillar is decorated with a swan figure at the top thus it is called swan pillar. According to the biography of Wat Pafang, the swan pillar is the representation of Wat Mon (Mon temples). However, the Shan community monasteries such as Wat Tor Pae and Wat Nan Taram also have swan pillars locating near the main monastery building.

The main monastery building is the most important and biggest structure within the compound. It is known as Sala Karnparian in Mae Hong Son area but Viharn in Lampang and Jong Tor in Chiang Kham. It is a multi functional building for worshipping, studying and residence for monks, novices and lay students and for communities' religious activities.

Separate monk residences (Kuti) are found in every monastery building. They are the newly constructed structures in the compound.

The laymen pavilion (Sala Chamsil) is the rest house mainly for lay community. It can be seen in every monastery compound with one or more in number. The number and size vary according to the size of the monastery. Generally, the function of the rest house is to facilitate the pious Buddhists who come to the monastery during the Buddhist Lent period.

The Multipurpose hall (Viharn) can be seen in some monastery compounds. This is an open or semi open structure with a Buddha image or images placed at one end of the hall. The main function is for preaching. This structure can be seen especially in big monastery compound. It can also be used as the activities of the religious community such as noviciation ceremony or merit feast.

The water pavilion called Jong Son is found in some monasteries' compounds around Mae Hong Son Province. They are used to shelter the Buddha images temporarily during the water festival (Songkaran) where they are brought out from the monastery building to be ritually bathed. They are found in the compounds of Wat Tor Pae and Wat Muang Pon.

The toilets are situated quite far distance from the main building. They are separated between monks' toilets and laymen's toilets. Monks' toilets are known as "wet kuti". The surviving original monk toilets can still be seen in the monastery compound of Wat Sri Rong Muang and Wat Tor Pae.

The tombs (Umai) can be found in almost all the monastery compound. They can be seen individually or in group. These tombs are of the bone ashes of important person such as the abbots, the main donors and their relatives of the monastery. There are some wooden ceremonial flag posts found near the tombs.

The ceremonial flag poles known as Tung Kradang which are believed to be functioned as pathway or ladders to heaven for wandering spirits (Joe Cummings, 2006) are found in some rural monastery compounds around Mae Hong Son area. This is the influence of Lan Na cultural tradition.

Among ten monastery compounds, one Bell tower in Wat Nantaram and one Bodhi tree in Wat Tor Pae are found. Even though some monasteries consist of attached kitchen to the main structure, separate kitchen can also be seen in several monasteries. Some well can be seen in the vicinity of the compound.

There are some separate Buddha Shrines found in the rural monastery compounds of Northern Thailand. They are open pavilions in two types. One is to house permanent Buddha image and the other the Shan people has the culture to offer pouring water to the Buddha Images during the New Year (Song Kran) festival, the Southern Shan monasteries do not have the temporary shelter for the Buddha images.

These kinds of structures can be found in the rural monastery compound around Mae Hong Son area.

The shrines found in Northern Thailand Shan monasteries compounds can be the variants of shrine apart from Buddha image. They can be the shrine for Buddha disciple or the founder of the monastery or the late king. The rest are the shrines of guardian spirits.

A Pariyattitham schools in Wat Nantaram and and a nursery school Wat Tor Pae can be seen. The souvenir shop is the very uncommon structure in the monastery compound. There is only one seen in the compound of Wat Tor Pae.

An open pavilion was seen near a group the tombs, grave yard in the other word, which enshrined the bone ash of the donor and his family members at the corner of the compound of Wat Pafang. This pavilion is supposed to be built for people who come to observe the annual memorial service held at the yard.

5.3.2 Site Composition

The composition of the site planning found in two types: Main Monastery Building Center and Stupa center. In Main Monastery Building Center composition, the stupa, ordination hall, laymen pavilions, and other related structures located around the Main Monastery Building whereas in Stupa Center composition, the related structures including Main monastery Building located around the Stupa.

Although the typical Thai monasteries layout is divided into Buddhavasa and Sanghavasa the studied monasteries are not materialized as the monasteries in the royal capitals. Among the studied monasteries, only Wat Nan Taram contain a specific Buddhavasa enclosing both stupa and ordination hall. Since the entire studied monasteries' compounds were first established as Samnak Song, the ordination halls found are the additional structures. The monasteries were founded with the main monastery building for monks to reside which is supposed to be located as the center and later surrounded by other relating structures such as laymen pavilions (Sala) and preaching hall (Viharn). According to the Thailand's religious rule, to attain the full status, the monasteries applied for the permission to build an ordination hall within the compound. After the formal permission was granted an ordination hall was added. The stupas were also built at the same time with the ordination hall although some built earlier. They generally appeared in the Eastern part of the compound either at Northern or Southern corner. However, some appeared at the center of the compound such as those in Wat Mon Puyak, Wat Tor Pae and Wat Nan Taram.

Layman pavilions (Sala Chamsil) and monks' residences (Kuti) are located along the fence or boundary of the compounds. The common toilets are placed at the back of the main monastery building.

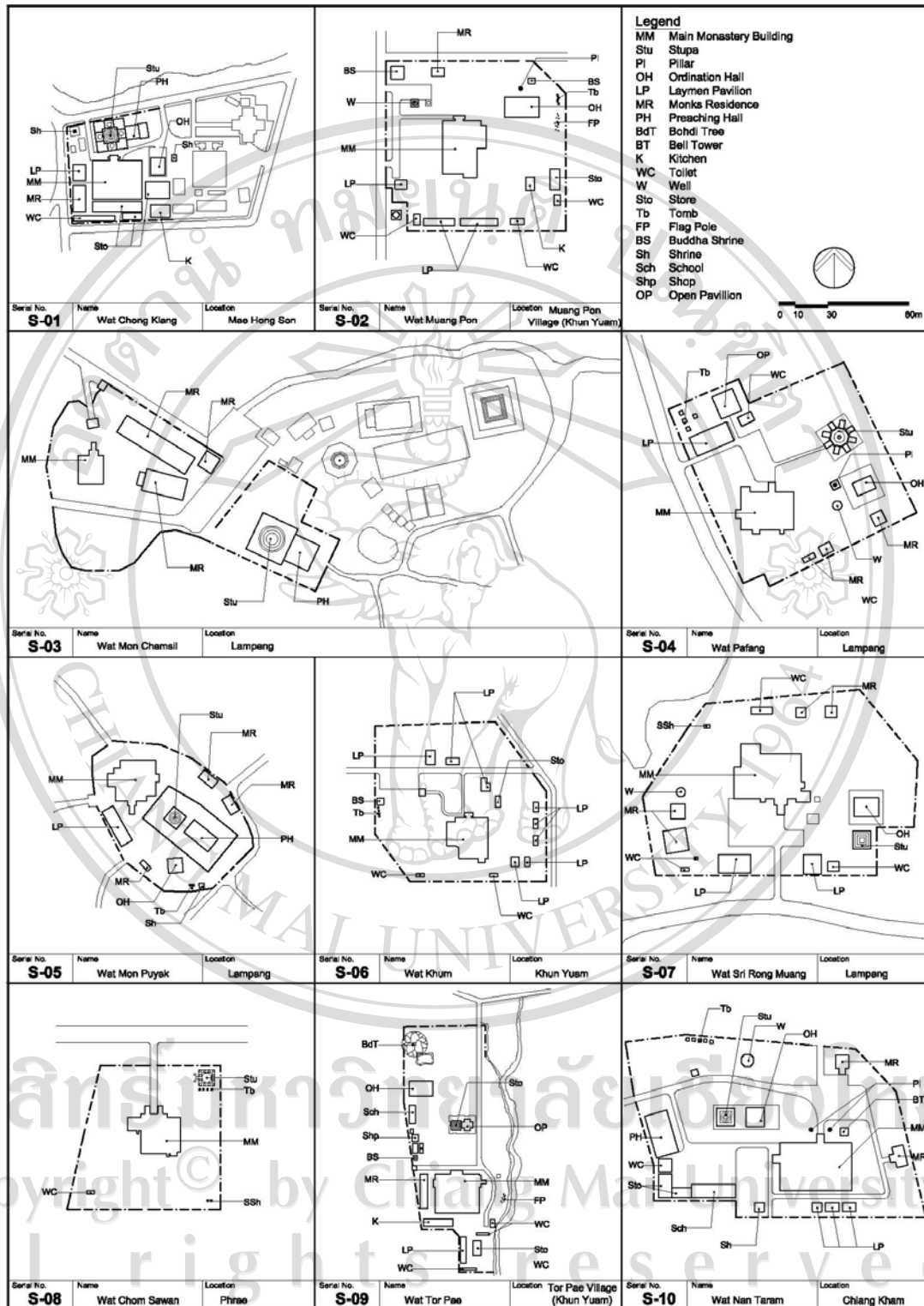


Figure 5.24 Distribution of Elements in the Compounds in Northern Thailand Samples

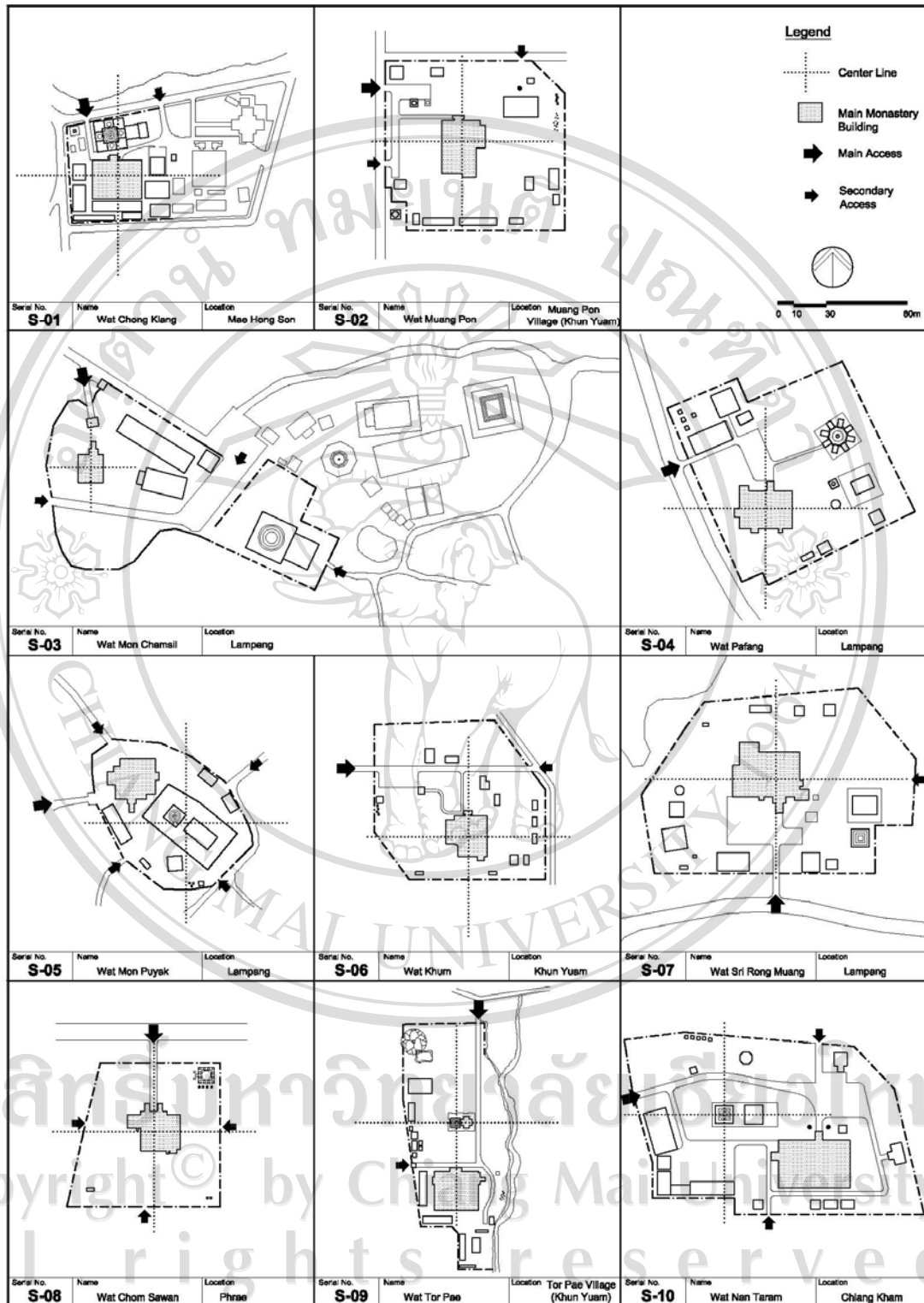


Figure 5.25 Site Composition and Site Access to the Compounds in Northern Thailand Samples

5.3.3 Site Access

One or more site access can be seen in the studied monastery compounds. The main access is from the major road near the monastery. The main access is usually from the direction where the main monastery building is being faced. If the main access is from the side where the major roads exist, there is a secondary access on the side where the main monastery building is being faced.

The secondary accesses are from side and back. They are used to access with the surroundings conveniently. Almost all studied monasteries have at least one secondary site access except Wat Pafang which is surrounded by residences.

5.4 Main Monastery Building

The main monastery building is the most important structure inside the compound which can mainly reflect the characters of Shan monasteries. The study of architectural characteristics composed of the analysis on space utilization, main entrance and building facing, spatial transformation, roof forms and detailed decorations.

The space utilization of the main monastery building is analyzed through their spatial arrangements and main entrance to the buildings. Their transformation in planning through time mapped out to their original planning in the 19th century. By using their primary plan, the variation in their composition through different region in the period of study is distinguished.

5.4.1 Space Utilization

A Shan monastery building in Northern Thailand is a building complex built on stilt. It can have many functions. It is usually used as a preaching hall but it may also be partially partitioned to provide for a museum, living quarter for monks, or a Buddhist school. Most are rectangular in plan and are generally left open and screened off only in such areas where privacy and security needed, such as museum and monks' living quarters. The floor is divided into different levels reflecting the varying functions, with the highest level of Chan Buddha (well known as Kha Ban), being reserved for the presiding Buddha image and being adorned with various decorative designs. The next which is around or in front of Chan Buddha is the place for monks

and the lowest is for lay people. The columns in Shan monastery also serve to demarcate certain areas. However, the spatial planning of main monastery building consists of spaces defined as Buddha hall, Reception Hall, Abbot's Room and Place for Monks as primary spaces. Shrine, Monks' room, Novices' room, Students' room, Store and Kitchen are found as secondary spaces. Museums are found as additional structures.

Buddha Hall

Buddha hall composed of a main shrine area and a place for monks. The core of the building is Main Shrine area built as rectangular raised dais where several Buddha images are placed at the center. It usually has the highest floor level in the building and no women are allowed to step on it. The main shrine is surrounded by a lower or sometime same leveled dais which is a place for monks where the monks sit for preaching in special occasions or ceremonies.

There are some variations of Buddha Hall compositions found among ten studied monasteries. They are explained by the order of less to more complex composition which does not depend on the time line or the development process.

Type I composition contains only one step rectangular dais. The dais faces to the reception hall with its longer side. The Buddha images set on thrones are placed on that single dais so that the rest of the front part can be used as Place for Monk. This type can be found in Wat Chong Klang, Wat Sri Rong Muang. In Wat Sri Rong Muang, the Main Shrine and Place for Monks are divided by iron grided hand rail

Type II composition contains two leveled dais where the higher level one is for Main Shrine and the lower one is Place for Monks. The Main Shrine is opened to all four sides although the rare part of the Main Shrine is used as storage space to keep Buddha Hall utensils such as collected offerings and spare furniture. This is the most common type found in studied monasteries. It is used in Wat Muang Pon, Wat Mon Chamsil, Wat Khum and Wat Tor Pae.

Type III composition contains a Main Shrine and a surrounded lowered leveled Place for Monks. The front part of the lower level is used as storage for Buddha Hall utensils. This type can only be found in Wat Nan Taram.

Type IV composition is a modification of type III by adding a novice room on the western end. Hence this type of composition contains Main Shrine, Place for Monks and Novices' Room. This type can be found in Wat Mon Puyak.

Type V composed the same layout with type IV. However, the storage area on the rare part and Novices' Room on the west are combined to be a room with the same floor level. This type is found in Wat Pafang and Wat Chom Sawan.

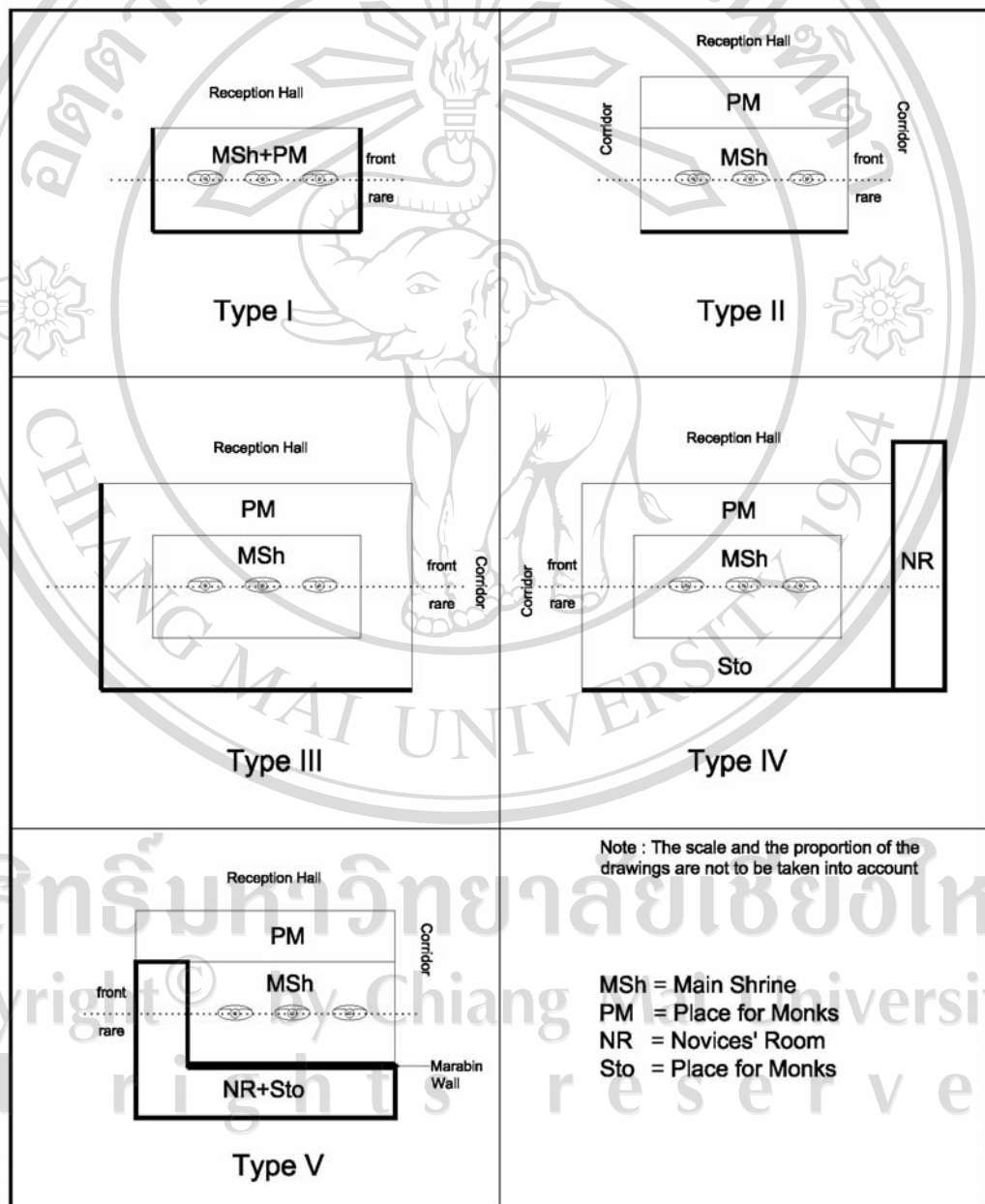


Figure 5.26 Buddha Hall Compositions of Main Monastery Buildings in Northern Thailand Samples

Abbot's Room

The abbot's room, which is always the same floor level as the place for monks, mostly located at the south eastern or north western corner. The attached toilets are the present time extensions for the abbot's convenience. There is another raised dais located on the eastern end which is also a place for monks. It sometime has the same level as place for monks around the main shrine area. It is always connected to chief monk's room probably acted as informal space for monks where the monk can relax during the daytime.

Main Hall/Reception Hall

The Main Hall or Reception Hall is located at the front part of the building. It is used as school and study hall for monks and reception hall for the monastic community. They can be assumed as rectangular open hall with a single pitch roof in their original construction but later extended and enclosed by wall on the facade. Its floor level is the lowest among the other rooms in the building.

Related Spaces

There are museums appeared as the new extensions. They are added to place the exhibits owned by the monastery which are mostly antique collections. They are found in Wat Chong Klang and Wat Nan Taram. Some separate shrines appeared as additional structures on pervious verandahs to house guardian spirits. These structures found in the plan of Wat Sri Rong Muang and Wat Nan Taram. They can be appeared either exteriorly or interiorly.

Since the dining halls of all studied monasteries are found to be extended structures, it is assumed that the original planning of Northern Thailand Shan monasteries contain no separate dining hall except Wat Sri Rong Muang. The Abbot, monks and novices generally used the informal place for monks as dinning space in the early periods. The dining halls are located on the western ends. However, the dinning halls of Wat Muang Pon and Wat Mon Puyak appeared on the eastern end. The Dinning Halls are usually separated into two levels. The higher one is for monks and the lower one is for students and lay peoples.

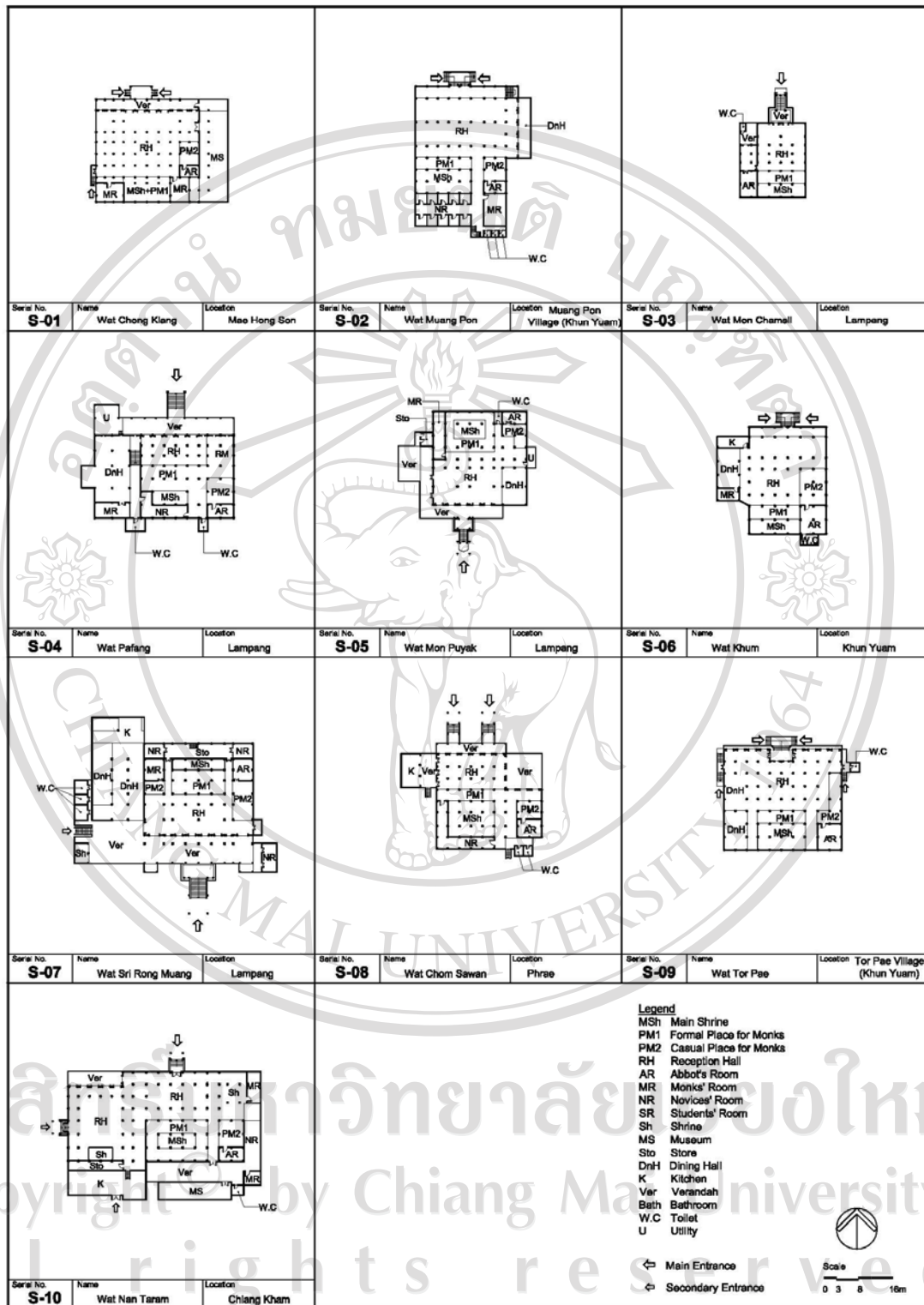


Figure 5.27 Main Entrance and Building Facing in the Main Monastery Buildings of Northern Thailand Samples

There are some monks residing in the monasteries together with novices and lay students. Monks' room, Novices' room and Students' rooms are located around the Buddha hall and main hall.

The kitchens appear as both attached and separated. The kitchens of Wat Sri Rong Muang and Wat Chom Sawan are attached on the western ends since their original construction. The original attached kitchen of Wat Tor Pae was altered as reception space. Although there is no attached kitchen in the original planning, small verandahs in Wat Pafang and Wat Mon Puyak were altered as utility spaces for food preparation. The newly extended toilets attached to the Abbot's Room or Monks' Room on the rear end show the requirements of the modern time.

5.4.2 Main Entrance and Building Facing

The samples are much more rectangular in plan facing with one of its longer sides. Almost every sample generally faces to the North while Wat Mon Puyak and Wat Sri Rong Muang face to the South. Main Entrances to the monastery building is typically through one porch. However, two main entrance porches with individual staircases can be found only in Wat Chom Sawan of Phrae.

There are two type of single porch design: with single staircase and two staircases joined with a landing. This style of entrance is popular in the monasteries around Mae Hong Son. Among them, Wat Muang Pon and Wat Tor Pae originally built with landings where those of Wat Chong Klang and Wat Khum are reconstructed and altered from single flight design. Secondary entrances are also found from side or back of the buildings. They are mainly for the easy access to the utility spaces in the compound such as separate monks' residence and kitchens. There are some internal staircases found to be connected between ground floor and the upper floor. They are found in Wat Sri Rong Muang, Wat Muang Pon and Wat Pafang. The first one is the original structure where the rests are additional structures. Hence the internal staircase is not a common element in their original design. It is supposed to be added to serve the increasing area of the monastery.

5.4.3 Spatial Transformation

All the samples were built during late 19th and the early 20th centuries when teak trade booming in Northern Thailand. Although they have passed more or less hundred years from their original construction time till present period, they do not have many alterations apart from some additions and a few reconstructions. Following are the study of spatial transformation in each sample which gives the idea in their original planning as well.

N-01 Wat Chong Klang

Being constructed in 1867, Wat Jong Klang was a replacement of an old pavilion on the existing site. The separate compartments were built and donated by each donor such as Reception Hall by Lun Jan Nu or Khun Phian, Buddha Hall by Lun Jong Chor and the western compartment by Lun Pakaja respectively. The materials used make the interior having different look. It is said to be depended on the taste and wealth of the donors. The entrance porch used to be lead by a single flight stair which was altered as two stairs meet at a protruding landing. A brick walled museum and the monks' room at the eastern end are the additional structures of the recent past.

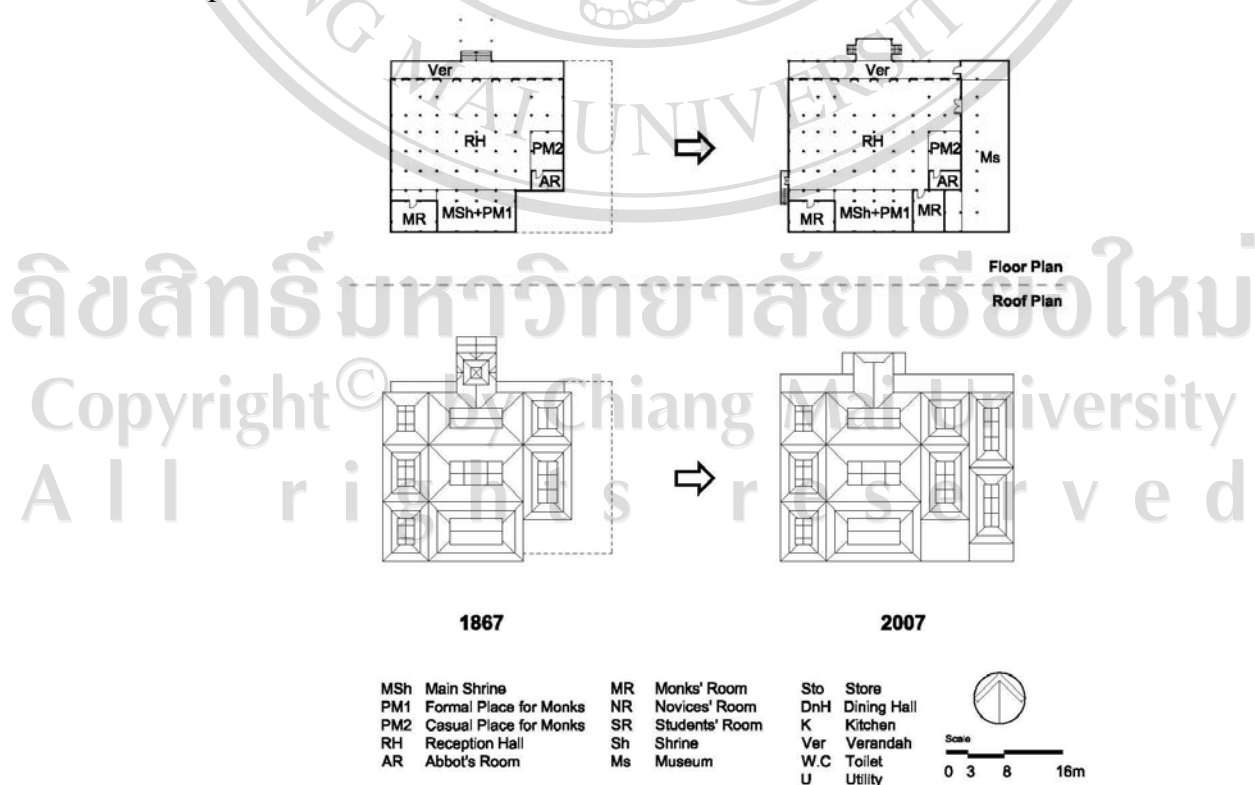


Figure 5.28 Spatial Transformation in Main Monastery Building of Wat Chong Klang

N-02 Wat Muang Pon

Wat Muang Pon was composed uniquely of three different compartments since the original time of construction. It was later extended beyond eastern and southern end. The eastern wall of Reception Hall was moved further in order to extend the hall and create a separate Dining Hall. The additional Novices' Rooms and Monks' Room on the southern end together with a row of concrete toilets are newly constructed structures.

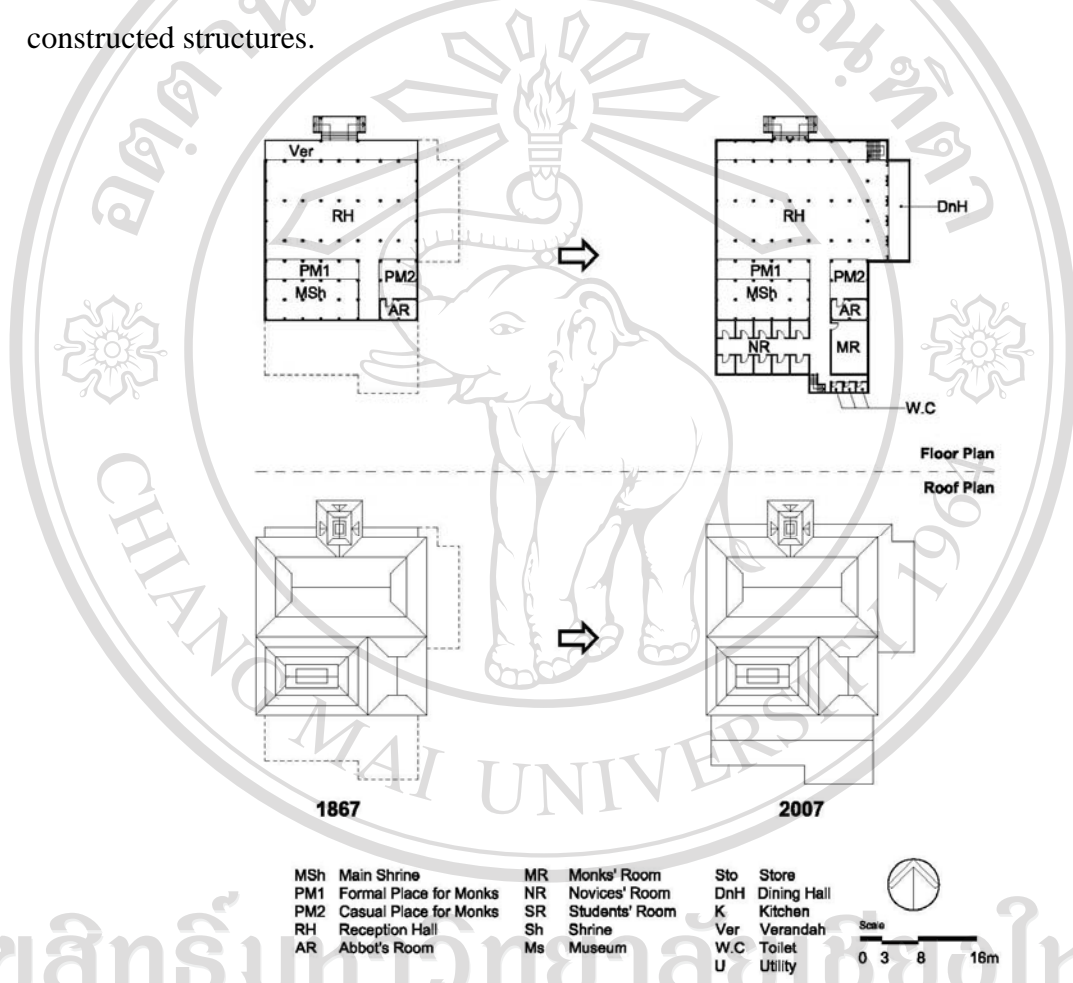


Figure 5.29 Spatial Transformation in Main Monastery Building of Wat Muang Pon

N-03 Wat Mon Chamsil

Wat Mon Chamsil which can be taken as abandoned building was once dismantled and reassembled as present one in 1974 AD. Apart from this, the monastery remains its original design and structure. Only a toilet on the north western verandah is additional.

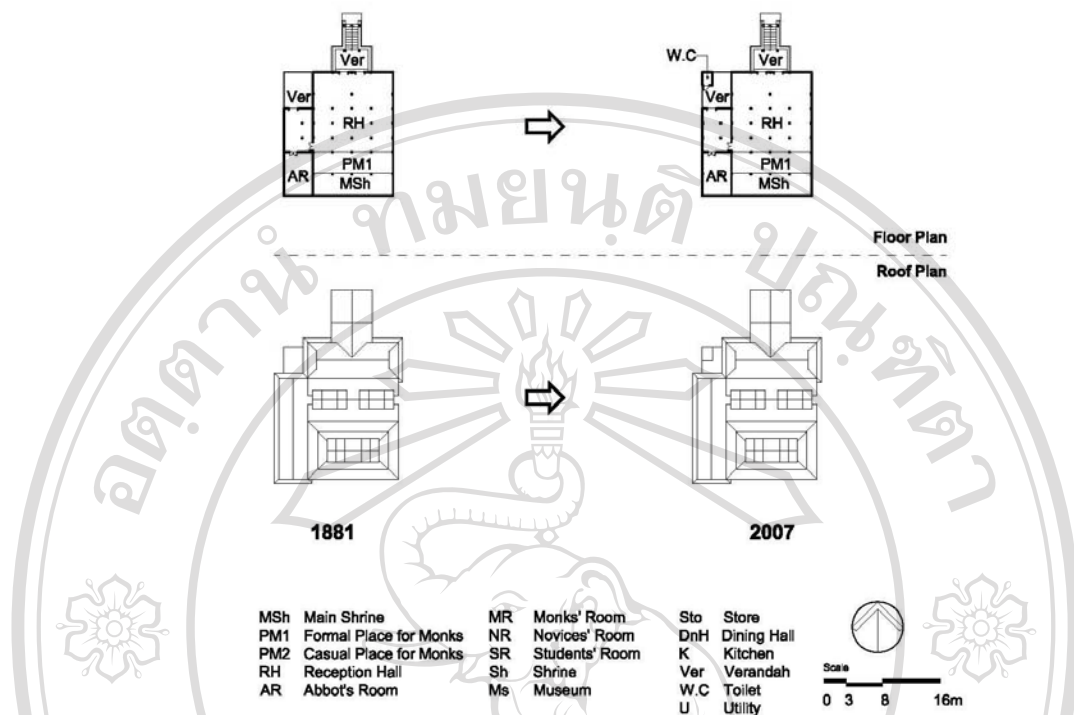


Figure 5.30 Spatial Transformation in Main Monastery Building of Wat Mon Chamsil

N-04 Wat Pafang

Wat Pafang was first built and donated by U Shwe At in 1892. It is assumed to be built with three compartments; the Buddha Hall, the Reception Hall and the Abbot's Room. It is the only one which was originally built with brick exterior wall. The western hall and the extension on the north eastern corner are predicted to be the extensions around 1906 together with the construction of a stupa and an ordination hall in the compound. The eastern extension was addition of a compartment on the existing wide verandah and combined as place for monks. The western end extension was a totally extended structure used as Dining Hall and Monks' Room. A stair case is found between old wall and the dining hall. It is used to connect the upper floor with the ground floor where the Novices' Rooms located. The existing verandah on the front façade was covered and combined with an additional verandah on the north western corner and it was used as a utility space for food preparations. The newly extended toilets on the back of the monastery show the materials and construction techniques of the present time.

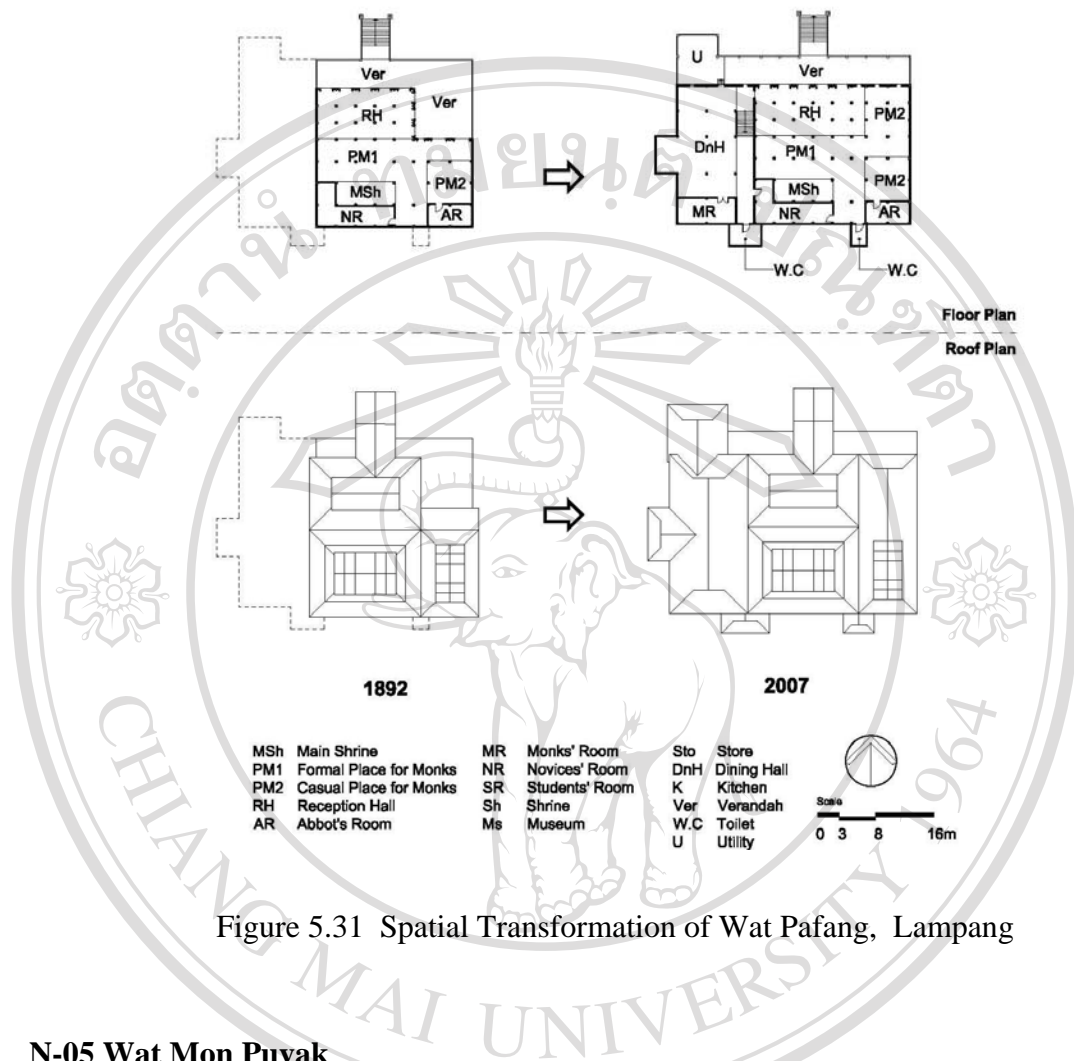


Figure 5.31 Spatial Transformation of Wat Pafang, Lampang

N-05 Wat Mon Puyak

Although the construction time of Wat Mon Puyak is not yet known, it can be predicted that it was built more or less the same period with Wat Monchamsil built in 1881. The structures and decoration of this monastery shows a few alterations. They are the replacement of verandah with a concrete structure and adding verandahs on space on the eastern and western ends. The eastern verandah is used as utility space where the foods collected by monks are being prepared. This is used as the space to store the monks' dining utensils as well.

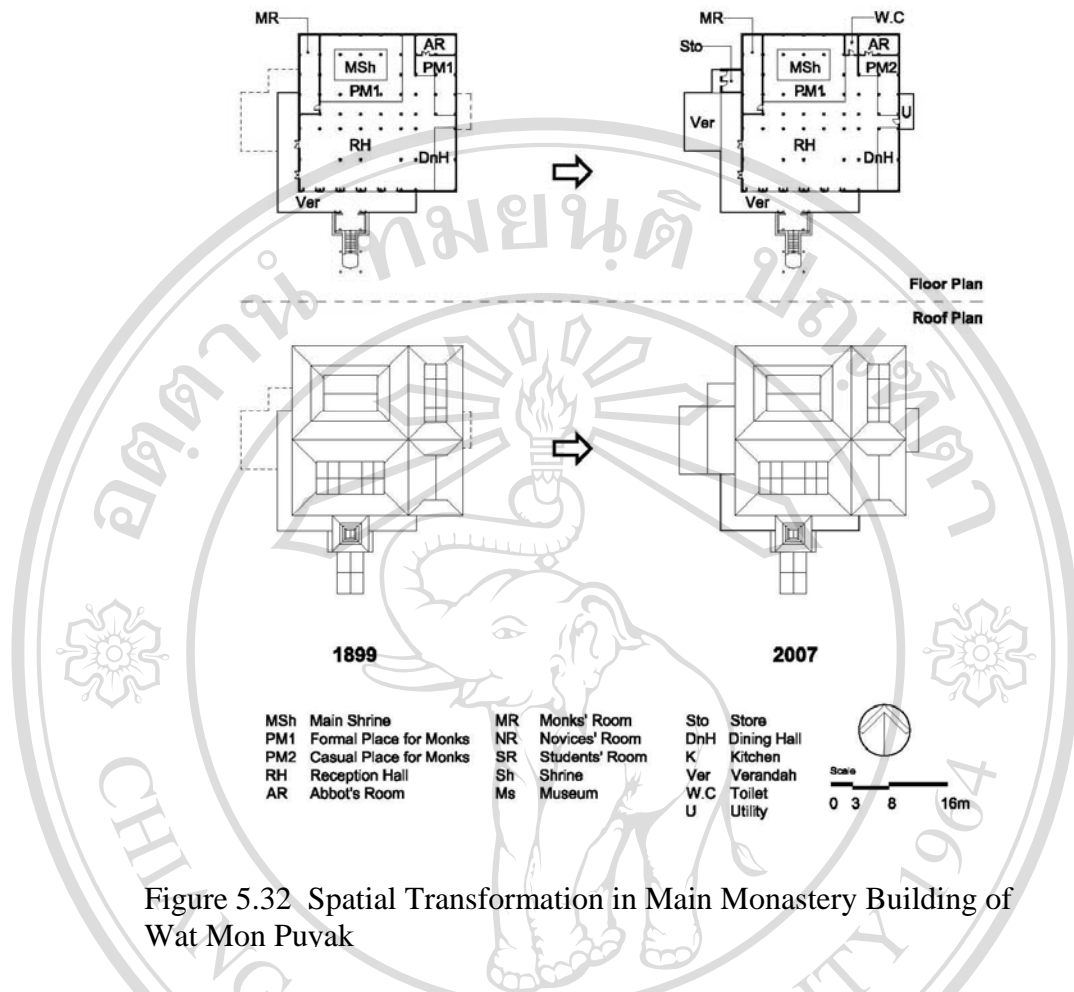


Figure 5.32 Spatial Transformation in Main Monastery Building of Wat Mon Puvak

N-06 Wat Khum

It was recorded that Wat Khum was founded in 1824 AD. However the present day monastery building shows it was built later period not much different with the other monasteries around Khun Yuam. Hence, it was assumed to be built around 1899 AD. By looking at the plan, it seems not many things have been changed. Although the front part of the monastery was reconstructed in the recent past. The front part of the monastery was constructed as two pavilions in its original design. These are used as reception halls separated for men and ladies. They have the same floor level with the main reception hall. They are combined as one big Reception Hall in the reconstructed structure. A single staircase lead to an open verandah which was later covered by roof and extended as part of the Reception Hall. The design of the stair case was also changed from single flight to double flight design. The flimsy additional on the front and also on the back are the kitchen and the toilets.

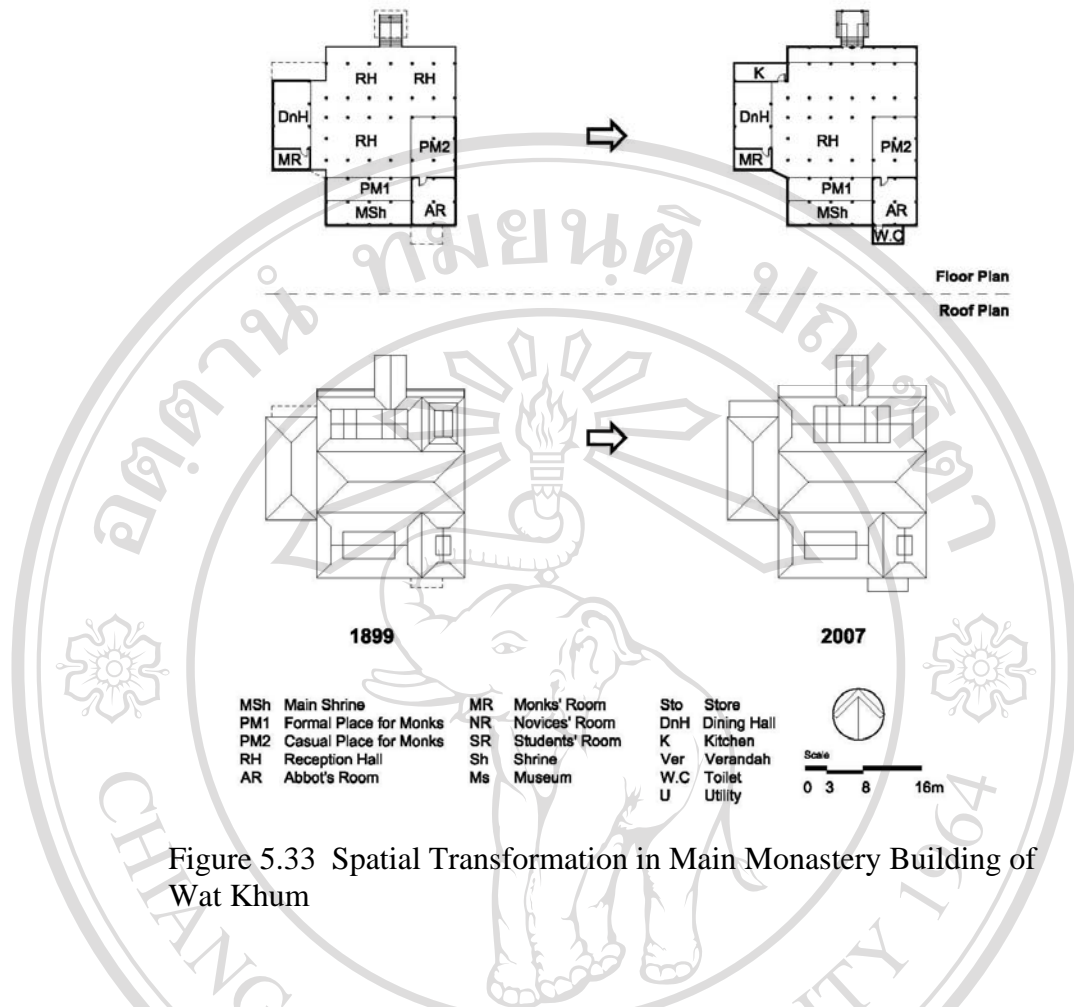


Figure 5.33 Spatial Transformation in Main Monastery Building of Wat Khum

N-07 Wat Sri Rong Muang

Donated by ten Pa-O teak traders in AD 1912, Wat Sri Rong Muang was built completely with all the required features of a monastery. However, in AD 1930, a wealthy teak contractor named U San Toe donated a stupa and an ordination hall inside the compound. He donated for the overall renovation to the monastery building as well. The row of toilets on the western end and the external brick wall to the ground floor are the additions of 1930 renovation. The kitchen on the north, the novices' room on the east and a shrine on the south western corner are the latest extensions.

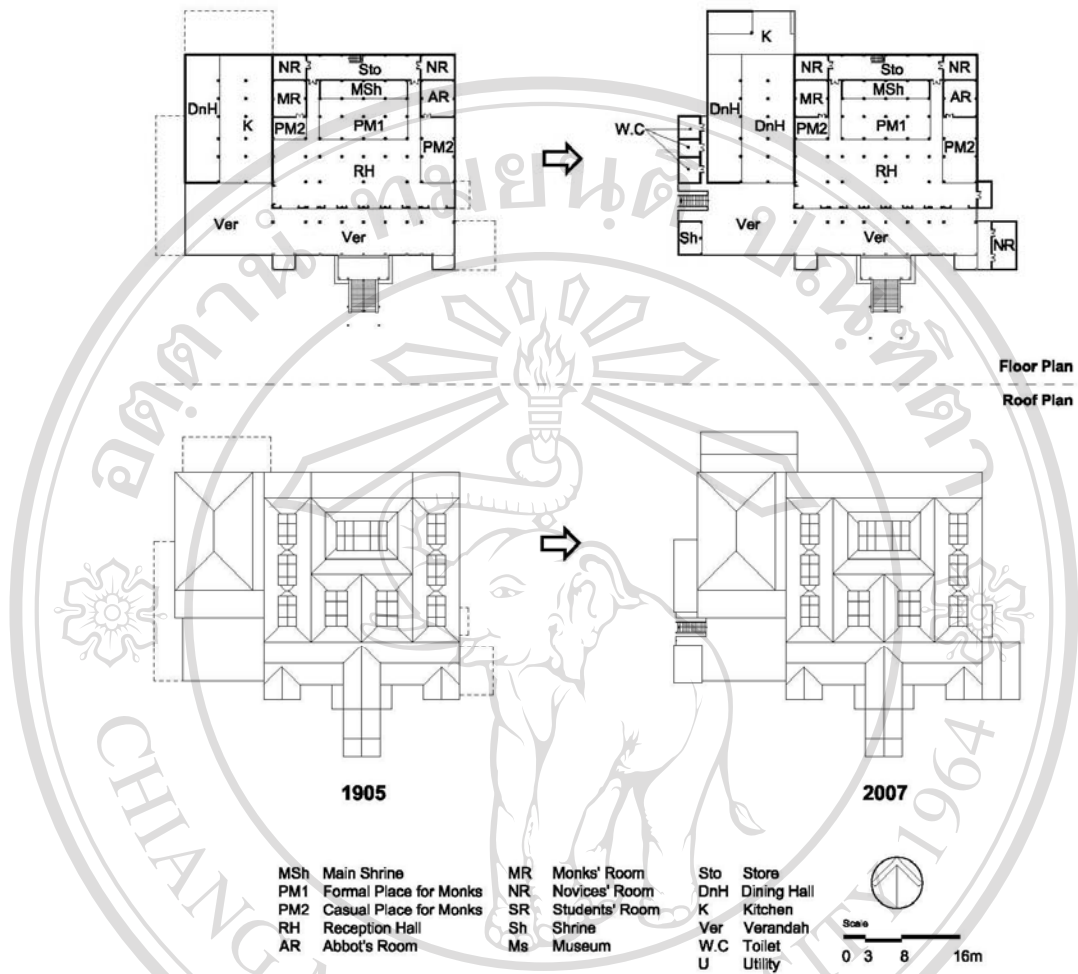


Figure 5.34 Spatial Transformation in Main Monastery Building of Wat Sri Rong Muang

N-08 Wat Chom Sawan

Being regarded as one of the purest surviving Shan monasteries in Northern Thailand (Freeman, 2004), Wat Chom Sawan has the least transformation among the samples. However, the roof on the north eastern corner and the attached toilets with a stair on the south eastern corner is found as additional structures. It is under complete restoration at present in 2007

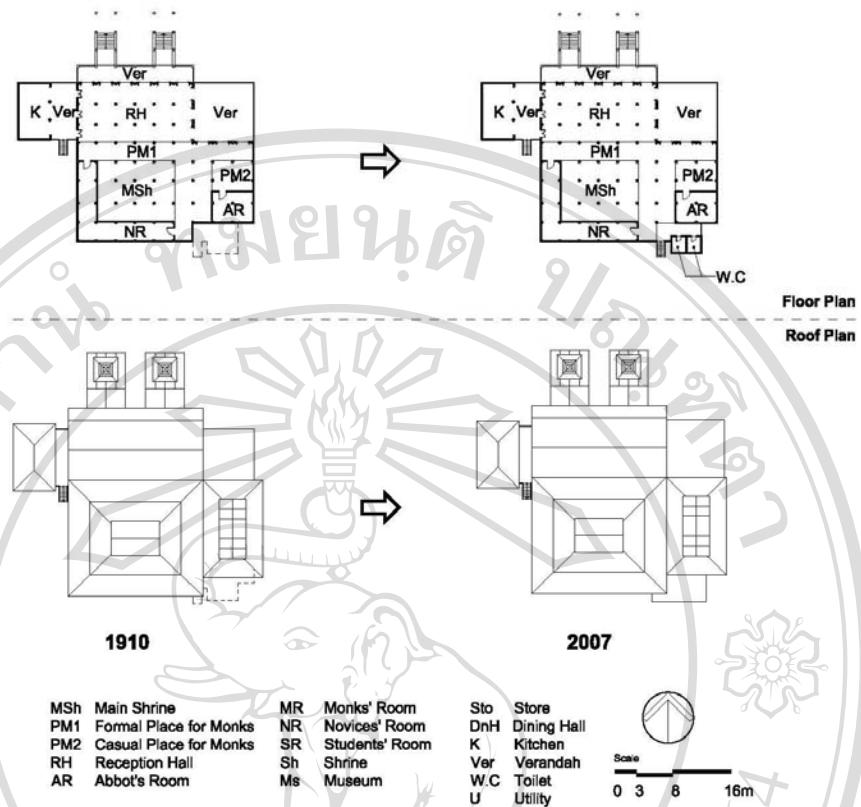


Figure 5.35 Spatial Transformation in Main Monastery Building of Wat Chom Sawan

N-09 Wat Tor Pae

In cooperation with Tor Pae villagers and Shan teak traders came from Shan States, Wat Tor Pae was first constructed in 1918 AD. The original structures were built on a single floor with different compartments. They are the north eastern wing as place for visiting monks, the south western wing as Abbot's Room, the south western wing as Novices' Room, the north western wing as Kitchen and at the center was Buddha Hall and Reception Hall. At present, the Novices' Room was changed as Dinning Hall and the kitchen was altered its function as part of the Reception Hall where food storage cabinets and dinning utensils are being kept. The toilet attached on the north eastern corner is still survived with its original design and structure. The elaborative original entrance porch was replaced by extended Reception Hall.

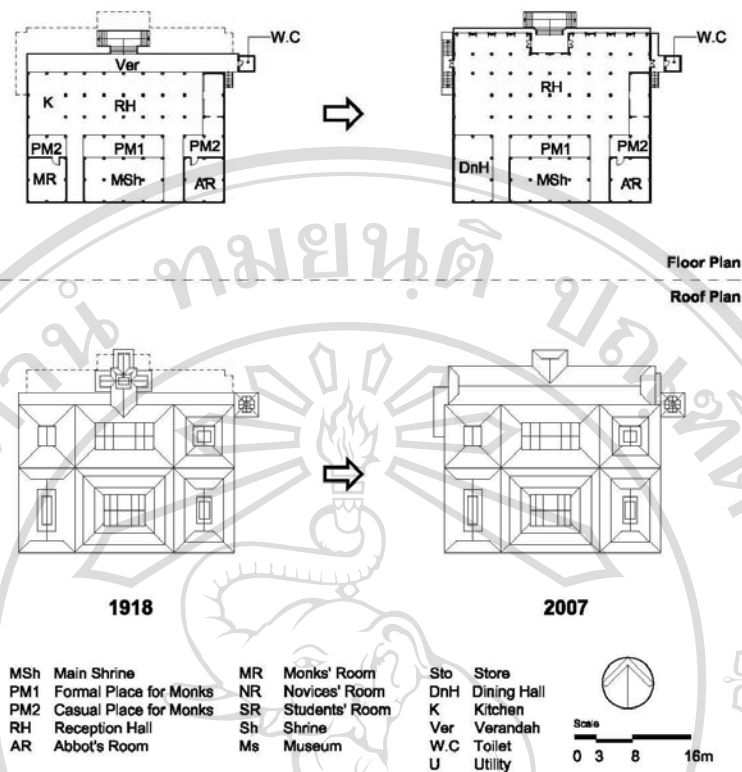


Figure 5.36 Spatial Transformation in Main Monastery Building of Wat Tor Pae

N-10 Wat Nan Taram

The monastery was built in 1925 AD in the style of a wide verandah encircling the front façade. The extensions are found on both sides and back of the monastery. The extensions on the eastern side are for Monks' Rooms and Novices' Room. A museum was built on the southern side connected by an open verandah to the main monastery. A wide extension appeared on the western side. This is an extended Reception Hall which is more likely to be as a combination of Buddha Hall and Reception Hall although under the same roof. A kitchen was attached to the hall on its southern end. The extensions were appeared in 1998 AD.

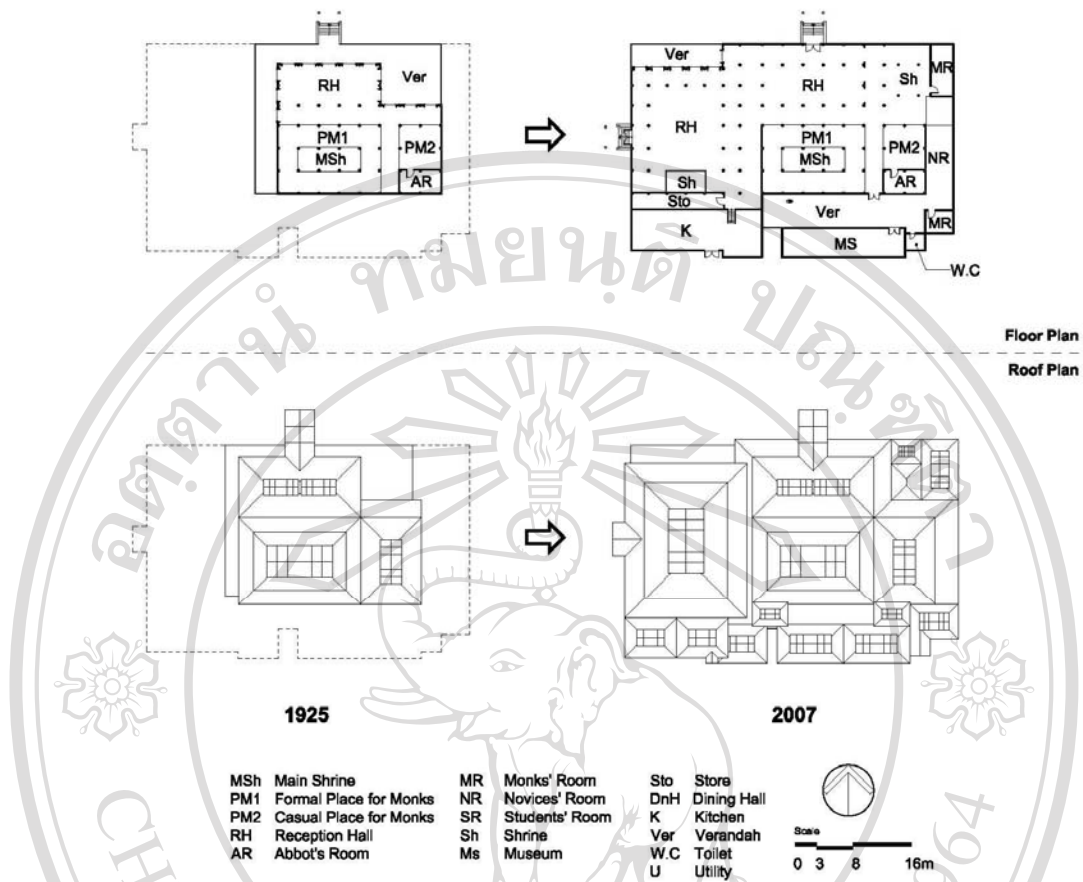


Figure 5.37 Spatial Transformation in Main Monastery Building of Wat Nan Taram

5.4.4 Roof Forms

Shan monasteries in Northern Thailand are wooden structures with the features different from the Lanna Viharn. From the distance, their most distinctive feature is the complex, multi-tiered roof. As the entire building is made up of several adjoining structures, there are often several interlocking roofs, with a variety of shapes. The variations in roof form can be taken out by careful inspection. They have a principle in using different type of roof according to the hierarchy of interior function.

The main gable is called Jong Para (Buddha hall), which enshrined Principal Buddha image, is the highest. The lowest gable roofs located at the front called Jong Taka Taka Ma house (Reception Hall) for the religious community. The last gable roof was divided to Eastern direction called Jong Sangka (Abbot's Room).

The outstanding architectural characteristic of Shan monasteries, which is their multi-tiered roofs were classified generally by the previous researches. Those with double surmounted roofs, each with triple layered roof are called Zaytawun and those with triple surmounted roofs, each with a four-layer of roofs are called Yuan Htat. For very important edifices in which a presiding Buddha image is enshrined, the roof is of three, to five layers.

There are some more variations which are being left to identify by the previous researches. Since the 19th century Shan monasteries in Northern Thailand were associated with Myanmar, the roof typologies of religious buildings in Myanmar studied by Lwin Aung (1976) is used to identify the roof types of Shan monasteries in this particular part of research (See Appendix A).

It is found that the most common roof typologies found in Northern Thailand Shan monasteries are Khaung Le paw type, Yuan Htat Type, Yuan Le Paw type and Eine Daw Khaung type. The Zatawun Saung type of Khaung Le Paw typology is generally used to crown the Buddha Halls in Wat Chong Klang, Wat Mon Puyak and Wat Chom Sawan and in the demolished eastern reception hall of Wat Khum. A modification of Zaytawun Saung type is found in Buddha Hall of Wat Muang Pon where the uppermost gable roof has a stepped roof which is called Sabe Htat. Besides, the lowest hip roof of Zatawun Saung has a step called Samyin making the whole Zaytawun Saung roof seemed bigger in size. This type can also be seen in the Place for Guest Monks of Wat Tor Pae.

The Yuan Htat Khaung roofs can be found with some variations. The uppermost parts of the Yuan Le Paw roofs are varied as three or five gables (Yuan Htat Nga Sint). For Yuan Le paw typologies, it is found that Yuan Hnit Le Paw crowned with Yuan Htet Nga Sint type is also regarded as the same rank with Zaytawun type roof in Northern Thailand since they are used in Buddha Halls. They are found in Wat Mon Chamsil, Wat Pafang, Wat Sri Rong Muang, Wat Tor Pae and Wat Nantaram. Yuan Hnit Le Paw crowned with standard three gable lapping Yuan Khaung, also known as Song Khor Sam Chai in Thai, type is found in Museum, Abbot's Room, Monks' Room of Wat Chong Klang. The standard Yuan Khaung type and Yuan Htat Nga Sint type are the most common types for the Reception Halls.

Another variation is Einedaw Khaung type. The standard Einedaw Khaung type is used for Reception Hall and Dinning Halls. However modified Einedaw type roof are seen in the other type of compartments. The Buddha Hall and Abbot's Room of Wat Khum used Einedaw Sabe Htat type roof. The Monks' Room of Wat Tor Pae which later changed as Dinning Hall for monks is also crowned with Einedaw Sabe Hnit Htat while the Abbot's Room has Einedaw Le Paw Sabe Hnit Htat roof.

The simple hipped roof call Madras Khaung is used for kitchens. However, the middle Reception Hall of Wat Khum has Madras Khaung type roof. The simple pitched roof with sunshade at the gable end called Sakyaw Khaung was used to cover the wide verandah along the façade of Wat Sri Rong Muang.

The entrance porches are commonly roofed with Yuan Phay Zaubg Dan type both in the past and present. However, Kon type Pyatthat which is used in that of Wat Chom Sawan. The entrance roof of Wat Muang Pon is Einedaw Le Paw Sabe Hnit Htat with Mote Phees (subordinate gable roofs) on the lowest level hipped roof. A complex combination of roof types is found in the entrance porch of Wat Mon Puyak. The staircase was roofed by Yuan Phay Zaung Dan where the transition landing was crowned with Zaytawun roof containing Mote Phee on both hipped roof steps. The lower hipped roof was added with two flanking roofs on both sides.



Wat Mon Puyak



Wat Chom Sawan



Wat Muang Pon

(a) Zaytawun Saung Type

(b) Zaytawun Sabe
Hna Htat Samyin
Khan Type

Figure 5.38 Zaytawun Saung Type Roofs in Northern



Wat Chong Klang



Wat Mon Puyak



Wat Nan Taram

Figure 5.39 Yuan Htat Khaung Type Roof

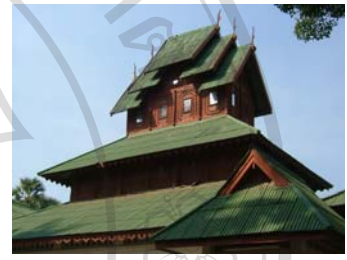
Figure 5.40 Yuan Htat Ngar Sint Type Roof in Northern Thailand Samples



Wat Tor Pae



Wat Mon Chamsil



Wat Pafang

Figure 5.41 Yuan Le Paw Type Roofs in Northern Thailand Samples



Wat Khum



Wat Tor Pae



Wat Muang Pon

Figure 5.42 Einedaw Sabe Htat Type

Figure 5.43 Einedaw Ta Le Sabe Hna Htat Type Roofs in Northern Thailand Samples



Wat Sri Rong Muang



Wat Mon Puyak



Wat Chom Sawan

Figure 5.44 Yuan Phay Zaung Dan Type Roofs in Northern Thailand Samples

Figure 5.45 Kon Pyatthat Type Roof

5.4.5 Detail Decorations

As the Shan monasteries are divided into urban and rural monasteries, their decorations varied from rich to less adorn. Basically, most of the monasteries both urban and rural were built on sites which were taken as scared to the community. However, the decorations of the urban monasteries are more sophisticated that reflects the importance and donors' wealth. Rural monasteries have simpler architecture and material and are built of whatever materials available in the locality. The material and workmanship varied from one monastery to another which probably depends on the skill of the artisans. The most skillful works can be seen in Wat Sri Rong Muang.

Gold, lacquer and glass mosaic are the principal means in decorating the interiors of the urban monasteries while the rural ones with plain wood carvings. They primarily are seen in ceilings, columns, walls and on the Kha Ban (vertical floor board of the dais). The exterior of the Shan monasteries are covered with bitumen in order to resist the timber walling from weather and insect attacks turned out the dark colored figure with minimal decorations.

Ceiling

In almost all studied monasteries, the unique original ceiling designs can still be experienced. The urban monasteries have lavishly decorated ceilings while the rural monasteries used plain untreated ceilings. The ceilings of every compartment are coffered ceilings. However, the Buddha hall of Wat Chom Sawan has a high ceiling with windows at the upper wall. The ceiling designs in urban monasteries have panels of stenciled gold leaf patterns glass mosaic mixed with red and green lacquer. The red lacquer based panels are also adorned with sunburst of lotus enclosed by concentric bands of raised circular, octagonal, and stepped rectangular floral moldings picked-out with glass mosaic. The strips divide between each panel are decorated with glass mosaic set in relief molded lacquer "Thayo"⁴ technique which was popular in Burma until the latter part of the 19th century (Fraser-Lu, 1994). However those of Wat

⁴ Relief molded lacquer was first developed in China around the seventh century AD, but it did not become popular or widespread and appears to have been abandoned by Ming times in a favor of carved lacquer. The technique, however, at some point spread to mainland South-East Asia where it became widely used as a base for glass inlay. See Silvia Frase-Lu, *Splendor in Wood* (Bangkok: Orchid, 2002), p. 240

Chom Sawan used the swell up metal filigree instead. Colored glass balls are fixed at the lotus center piece and the panel intersections. The rural monasteries with simpler ceiling design used the stenciled gold painting on red or dark green lacquer base along the strips dividing the panels. The panels are decorated only with a lotus centerpiece which is neither painted nor gilded.

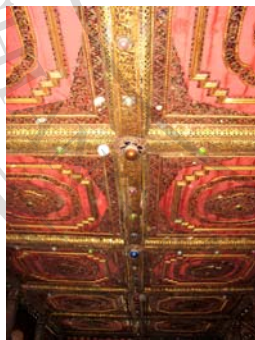


Wat Tor Pae

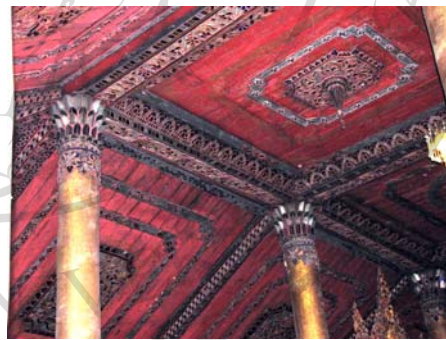


Wat Khum

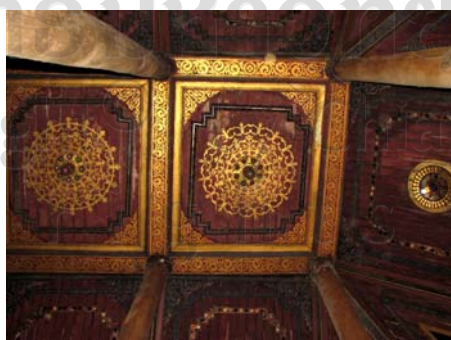
Figure 5.46 Ceiling Decorations in Rural Monasteries of Northern Thailand



Wat Chom Sawan



Wat Nan Taram



Wat Chom Sawan



Wat Sri Rong Muang

Figure 5.47 Ceiling Decorations in Urban Monasteries of Northern Thailand

Column

The columns are found in round and square shape. They are painted, half gilded or decorated with glass mosaic. Half gilded that is the upper sections of the columns are gilded while the lower section has been lacquered red. For the half gilded or painted columns, a central band of stenciled floral or geometric gold leaf designs marks the transition from red to gold. The lotus capitals inlaid with petals of glass mosaic set in lacquer are the most common decoration for the studied monasteries. However, the rural monasteries such as Wat Khum, Wat Tor Pae and Wat Muang Pon have plain or painted lotus capitals. The capital made by zinc-tin ornamented capital was found in some columns of Wat Chong Klang.



Wat Mon Chamsil



Wat Mon Puyak



Wat Sri Rong Muang



Wat Pafang



Wat Chom Sawan



Wat Khum

Figure 5.48 Column Center Band Decorations in Northern Thailand Samples

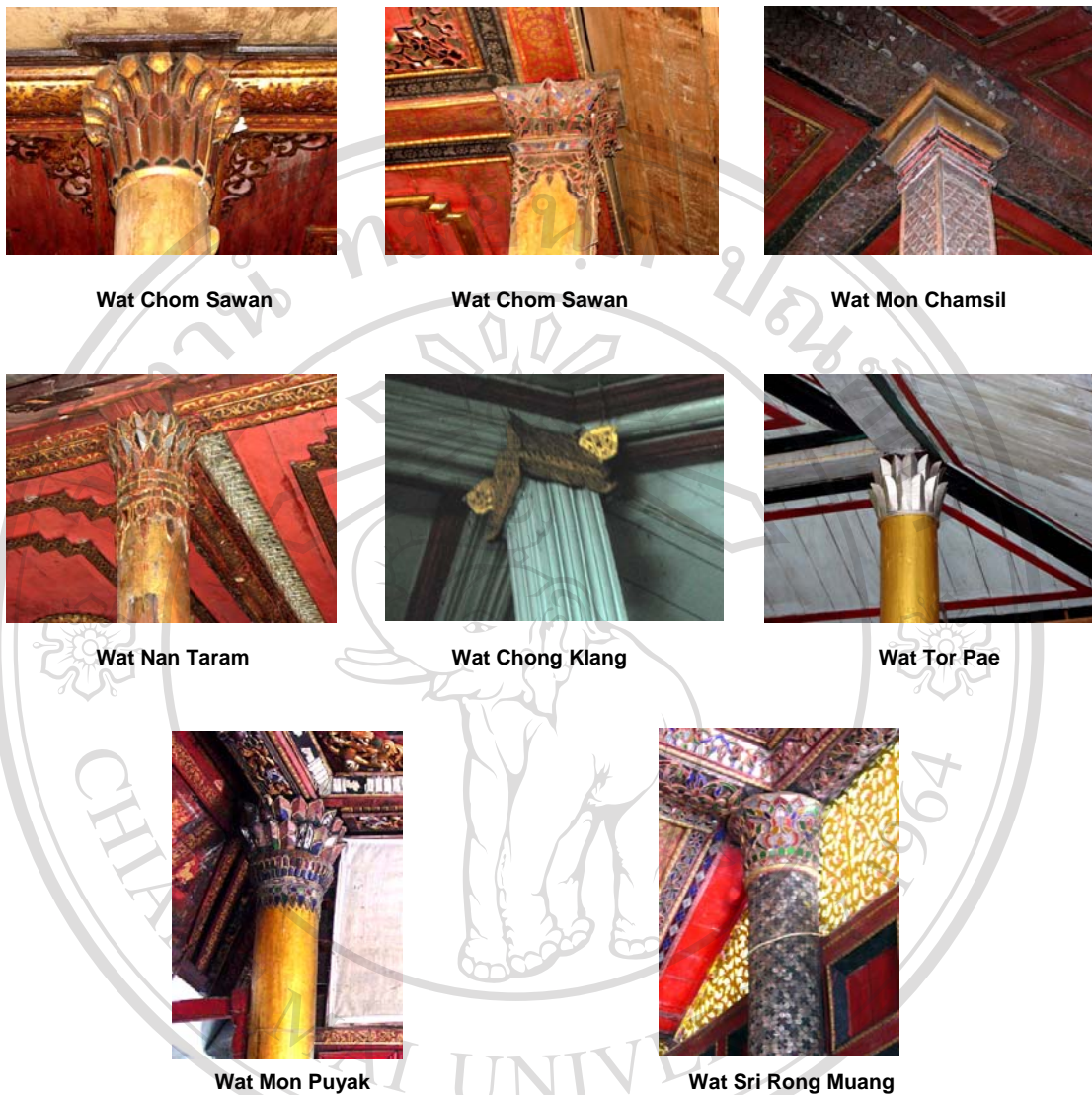


Figure 5.49 Column Cap Decorations in Northern Thailand Samples

Wall

As Shan monasteries are open in plan, there is not much wall to be decorated except Abbot's Room wall and the enclosure wall. The walls of the Abbot's rooms are decorated in more sophisticated ways. The panels are almost red lacquer painted. Gold stenciled floral designs painted at the center piece and on surroundings are found in Wat Nan Taram. The Abbot's room wall of Wat Sri Rong Muang and Wat Mon Puyak are in the same style of decoration; a mixed gold stenciled and glass inlays. The doorways that open into the Abbot's room have been surmounted by flamboyant pinnacle of gilded metal scrolling inlaid with glass supported by decorated architraves. Another style in which the wall panels are divided into smaller

panels rimmed by gilded beadings are found in the Abbot's Room wall of Wat Mon Chamsil and the peripheral wall of Wat Sri Rong Muang and Wat Chom Sawan. The most outstanding wall decoration is found in the Abbot's Room wall of Wat Chong Klang. It was the two hundred glass paintings fixed in small panels. The paintings are the extractions of Buddha's life stories known as Jataka tales. They are imported from Myanmar and the wall is said to be the only one art piece in Thailand. The surroundings and the door with architrave are decorated in gold stencil paintings.

The uppermost parts of the walls are fixed with perforated walling for the ventilation purpose. They appeared in various decorative wooden grate designs. The pattern used in Wat Mon Chamsil, Wat Mon Puyak and Wat Chom Sawan are found to be the same. Besides that design was proved to be found in the monasteries of Mawlamyine City in Lower Myanmar⁵. The research claimed this design was the indigenous Lampang design.



Wat Chong Klang



Wat Mon Chamsil



Wat Mon Puyak



Wat Nan Taram



Wat Mon Puyak

Figure 5.50 Interior Wall Decorations in Northern Thailand Samples

⁵ See Chotima Chaturawong, "The Architecture of Burmese Buddhist Monasteries in Upper Burma and Northern Thailand: The Biography of Trees," Dissertation for Doctor of Philosophy, Cornell University, 2003, p. 272



Figure 5.51 Wooden Grate Decorations in Northern Thailand Samples

Floor

The Kha Ban at the dais of the shrine and the place for monks has been more or less decorated. However, some of them are left plain or very few stencil painted.

The decorations are seen in different ways. The only wood curving in floral design is seen in the Kha Ban of Wat Chom Sawan. Those found in Lampang monasteries such as Wat Mon Chamsil, Wat Mon Puyak and Wat Sri Rong Muang are decorated with Thayo glass inlay. Some inscriptions are written in Thayao material and gilded. The simpler glass mosaic decoration is found in Kha Ban of Wat Nan Taram.



Wat Mon Chamsil



Wat Chom Sawan



Wat Nan Taram



Wat Sri Rong Muang

Figure 5.52 Kha Ban Decorations in Northern Thailand Samples



Wat Chong Klang



Wat Muang Pon



Wat Tor Pae

Figure 5.53 Handrail Decorations in Northern Thailand Samples

There are some handrails appeared to demarcate the sacred space and laity space in addition to the level segregation. They are found in different design and material as well. The original balustrades found are cast iron grills in Wat Chong Klang, wooden lathed blasters in Wat Muang Pon, and diamond shaped wooden screen in Wat Tor Pae.

Roof

The exterior decorations can only be seen on the roof structures such as fascia board and wall panels of the roof neck. The designs show concentric stepped paneling and lotus rosettes at the center. However, in urban monasteries such as Wat Mon Chamsil and Wat Pafang, the glass panels are fixed as the center piece instead of lotus flower. Besides, the panels are divided by spiral curved designed studs.

The roof gables of the multi tiered roofs and covered entrance ways have been embellished with bands of open work geometric decoration along the fascia boards. However, there is some geometric zinc tin open work template decoration can be seen as replacements. The decorations at the apex of the gable ends are usually simple lathed poles. However, those of Wat Pafang are the replica of Lan Na viharo roof finial design known as Cho Fa Pak Khruad (the gruda beak finial). The apex of the entrance in Wat Mon Puyak shows a wood curving of an angle while those of Buddha Hall in Wat Chom Sawan was fixed with iron lotus flower.



Wat Pafang



Wat Tor Pae



Wat Chom Sawan



Wat Mon Puvak

Figure 5.54 Gable Decorations on the Roofs in Northern Thailand Samples



Figure 5.55 Roof Neck Decorations in Northern Thailand Samples

Staircase

Since the studied monasteries are wooden structure, limited masonry art works can be seen only at the balustrade of entrance landing in Wat Mon Puyak and Wat Sri Rong Muang. They are in Sein Daung⁶ type design which is widely used in the monasteries of Upper Burma. No Thayatkin type stair case decoration which is popular in Upper Myanmar monastery can be seen.



Figure 5.56 Staircase Decorations in Northern Thailand Samples

⁶ Decorative device resembling a row of upright leaves used on monasteries, public rest houses, palanquins and helmets of soldiers. See Myanmar-English Dictionary (Yangon: Department of the Myanmar Language Commission, 2006), p. 125

5.5 Summary

The samples are located both in urban and rural in which none of them is royal donation “Phra Aram Lung” and can be regarded as commoners’ donation “Wat Ratsadon” since they are donated by commoners and traders. Some of the monastery compounds were started with a single monk residence and later developed as full status monastery containing prescribed religious structures.

The main elements in the monastery compounds are stupa, ordination hall, main monastery building, rest houses and monks’ residences. The principal structure which was built earliest and biggest in size is the multipurpose main monastery building which is a combination of shrine, monks’ residence and library.

The stupa and ordination hall which were built later show the status of the monastery. Some monasteries do not contain stupa and ordination hall in the compound and they are regarded as “Samnak Song” (Monastic residence) rather than a full status Wat according to the Thai religious rules and regulations. Another principal element is the separate monk’s residence. Since the donors were not local Lan Na people, the monasteries were first built according to their own style which is multifunctional monasteries with Myanmar or Shan monks as the first abbots. Later, they were transferred to the Thai religious sects with Thai monks as abbots. Under the Thai religious administration, the monks have to stay in the separate compartments known as “Kuti”. This made several separate monks’ residences to be appeared in the samples’ compounds and become one of the principal elements. The rest houses are for lay devotees to stay in the special religious days. More numbers of rest houses are found in rural monasteries probably to offer lodging for the guests where no commercial guest houses are available within the community.

The main monastery buildings are one storey buildings built on stilt. They were first constructed as wooden structures although some urban monasteries replaced the exterior wall with brick in renovations. Their plan is almost rectangular mainly containing Buddha Hall, Reception Hall, Abbot’s Room, and Monks’ Room. The buildings are laid on East-West direction facing either North or South. The Buddha Hall is placed either on the North or South with Abbot’s room always on the eastern side. There normally is only one main entrance although Wat Chom Sawan which is

recognized as the purest Shan monastery in Northern Thailand appears with two main parallel entrances.

The monasteries are not much transformed as they were being not much extended. However, some extensions appeared on the existing verandahs either long or wide. The extensions are mainly for Reception Hall or Museum rather than residence. The reception halls are extended to accommodate the activities of lay community such as listening to the monk's preaching during the special religious days and religious ceremonies. Since the construction of so-called Myanmar monasteries including Shan monasteries were gradually stopped after 1930s around La Na proper, previously built samples are regarded as sentimental and become tourist sites in Northern Thailand. To attract tourists and visitors, the monasteries provide museums to display their collections such as antique Buddha images, scriptures, coins, medals and the other exhibits having sentimental values.

The extensive variations of roof forms can be seen in the samples. The popular variations for Buddha Halls are Zaytawun Saung Type and Yuan Htat Ngar Sint type. The Einedaw type can also be seen for Buddha Hall, Abbot's Room and Monks' Room although not widely used. The sophisticated roof combinations and variations are supposed to be the influence of Lower Myanmar specifically from Mawlamyine. This is because of the major connection between these two areas according to the teak trading in 19th century.

Gold, red and green lacquer and glass mosaic decorations are the principal means of interior decorations in urban monasteries especially in Lampang. The rural monasteries from Mae Hong Son sustain simple decorations and are mostly unfinished. The decorations can be seen in ceiling, columns, wall and floor. Wood carvings, glass mosaic decorations and angle figures which were once restricted only for the royal decoration in Myanmar can be seen interiorly in the urban monasteries of Northern Thailand samples. On the roof, the decorations are found on the gable ends and on the roof necks. Some samples in Lampang show Northern Thailand style roof finals. The exposed roof necks in some samples are decorated with glass panels and wood carvings while some are fixed lotus relief. This type of decoration is found in the monasteries donated by wealthy teak traders.

The upright masonry Sein Daung decoration which is popular in Mandalay monasteries can be seen in the samples of Lampang since the artisans were from Mandalay. All samples in Lampang used masonry staircase while those in Mae Hong Son used to have wooden staircase although replaced by brick ones in the later periods.

British colonization of Upper Myanmar obliged to move the artisans from Mandalay to Mawlamyine for business opportunities in 19th century. The teak traders from hired those artisans to build their monasteries in Northern Thailand. Being away from Myanmar sovereignty, the donors and the artisans freely and abundantly used once restricted elements in decorating their works of merit.

It is found that the types and variations found in Northern Thailand samples depend on the location of the monastery, economic situation and status of the donors and the influences of the associated localities.