

**NOMINATION TO UNESCO'S LIST
OF WORLD HERITAGE SITES**

CITY OF LUANG PRABANG



DEPARTMENT OF MUSEUMS
AND ARCHAEOLOGY

VIENTIANE - SEPTEMBER - 1994

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND CULTURE
LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

**PROJECT FOR THE NOMINATION OF LUANG PRABANG TO
UNESCO'S LIST OF WORLD HERITAGE SITES**

**This project was produced by : THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND
CULTURE OF THE LAO PDR**

**DEPARTMENT OF MUSEUMS AND
ARCHAEOLOGY**

- Mr. Bounhom CHANTAMAT
Deputy Director

- Mr. Viengkeo
Archaeologist

in collaboration with :

**LES ATELIERS DE LA PENINSULE
Consultancy firm in architecture**

- Mr. François GRECK
DPLG Architect

- Mr. Jean Christophe MARCHAL
DPLG Architect

- Mr. Manoroith PHINITH
Architect, ESBA teacher

with the participation of :

- Mr. Bounthieng SIRIPAPANH
Doctor of Lao Art History

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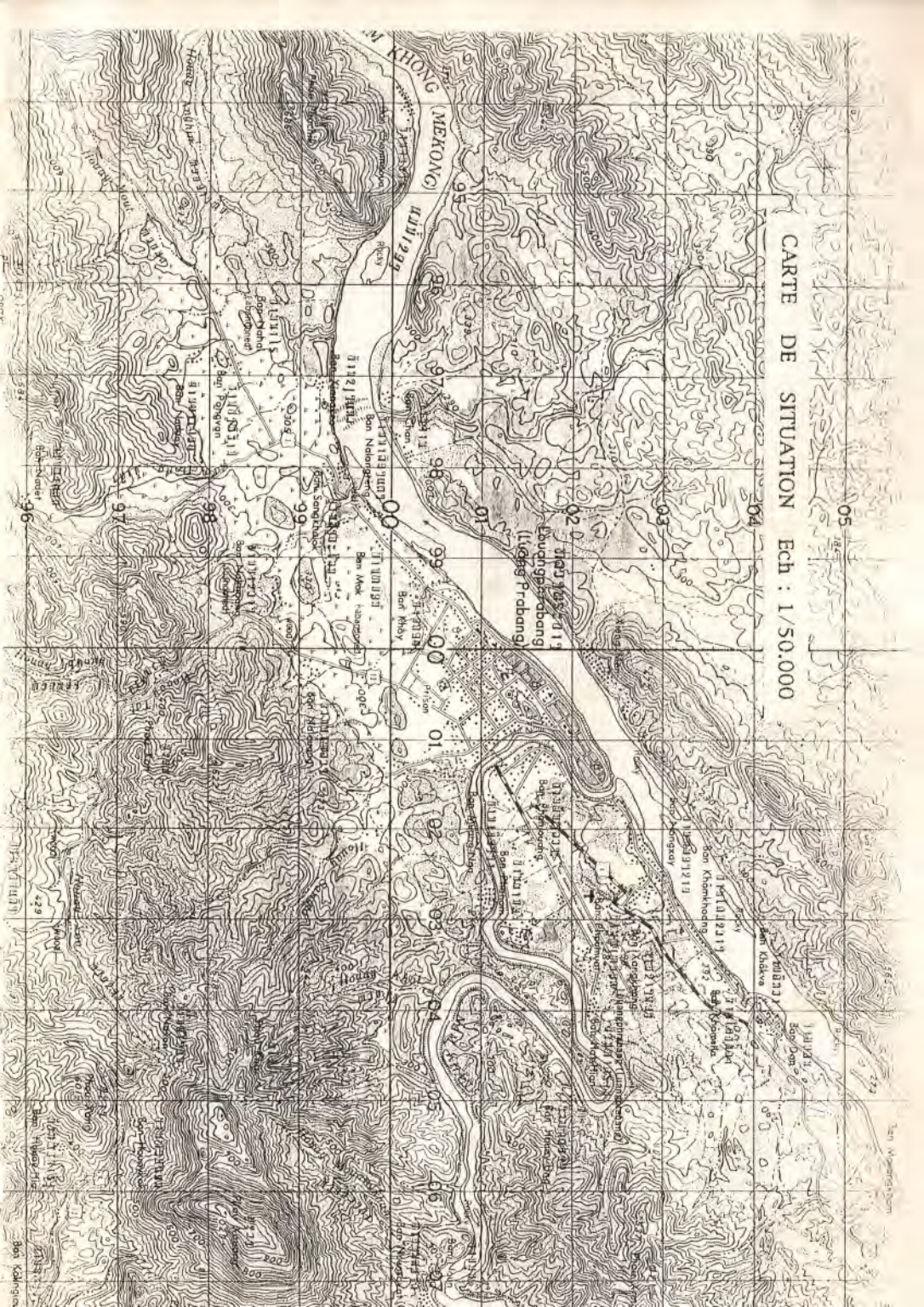
(*) Drawings and illustrations by LES ATELIERS DE LA PENINSULE
(July-August 1994)

1. LOCATION

- a) Country : LAOS
- b) State, Province, Region : Luang Prabang Province
- c) Name of site : City of Luang Prabang
- d) Geographical Location : Latitude : 102.01
Longitude : 22.02



CARTE DE SITUATION Ech : 1/50,000



2. LEGAL INFORMATION

a) Proprietors

- Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Office of the Prime Minister of the Lao PDR.
- Luang Prabang Province.
- Lao Buddhist Federation (L.B.F.)
- Luang Prabang provincial L.B.F. committee.

b) Accessibility of the site, legislation and regulations provided for its preservation

1) Accessibility of the site: At present, the only practical access to the town of Luang Prabang is by air. The increase of tourism in the area in 1994 allowed the national carrier, Lao Aviation, to increase the frequency of links between Vientiane and Luang Prabang threefold.

The tourism potential of Luang Prabang has engendered a proposal for an airport management project between Thailand and the Lao PDR which will expand the capacity of the airport, enabling it to receive larger carriers and accommodate a greater frequency of service.

- An overland access route is nearing completion in the form of a Lao-Australian cooperative project. A 150 km section between Vientiane and Vang Vieng is already complete. Work on the second section between Vang Vieng and Luang Prabang (250 km) started in 1994 and will be completed by 1995/96. This road will open up Luang Prabang and increase the possibilities for commercial exchange between China and Vietnam.

2) - Luang Prabang is acknowledged as the national property of the Lao PDR.

- The majority of the historical and religious edifices in Luang Prabang are included in the Heritage Protection Zone (HPZ). The latter is defined by the Institute of Technical and Urban Studies (ITUS). The Department of Museums and Archeology will be organised in the second semester of 1994.

- 08/09 1994 - The Luang Prabang Province Technical Service, responsible for delivering construction permits, is evolving within the ITUS services and will facilitate the management procedures and regulations required by the implementation of the HPZ.

I LEGISLATION ON RELIGIOUS MONUMENTS AND EDIFICES

The protection of archaeological heritage and religious monuments is the responsibility of the national and provincial administration and of the LBF

(Decree No. 1375, Ministry of National Education and Sports - June 1978)

II LEGISLATION ON NATURAL, CULTURAL AND HISTORIC HERITAGE

The responsibility for national heritage rests with the following institutions:

- National: Ministry of Information and Culture
 - Provincial: Information and Culture Service
 - District and Village
- (Decree No. 139, Ministry of Information and Culture - March 1990)

According to Decree 834 of the Ministry of Information and Culture adopted in September 1993, all historical Lao and colonial buildings constitute an inherent part of the national heritage.

III CIVIL CODE

Article 19 of the Constitution of the Lao PDR :
Respect of cultural property and historic monuments.

Article 81 :

All archaeological artifacts originating from searches belong to the national heritage.

IV CRIMINAL CODE

Article 103 :

All destruction of the historic, artistic and literary heritage is liable to prosecution.

c) Responsible national agencies

- Prime Minister's Cabinet
- Ministry of Information and Culture
Department of Museums and Archaeology
Setthathirath Avenue, P.O. Box 122 VIENTIANE Lao PDR

d) Collaborating international and non-governmental agencies and organisations

- UNCHS (HABITAT) Urban project management assistance
Institute of Technical and Urban Studies (ITUS)
Urban Project Office, P.O. Box 345 VIENTIANE Lao PDR
Tel/Fax : (856-21) 41.23.69
- UNESCO World Heritage Centre
7, Place Fontenoy, 75 352 Paris 07-SP., FRANCE
Tel : (1) 45.68.10.00, Fax : (1) 45.67.16.90
- Architecture consultancy firm
ATELIERS DE LA PENINSULE
114, Quay Fa Ngum, P.O. Box 070 VIENTIANE Lao PDR
Tel/Fax : (856-21) 21.30.89 Tel : 22.21.52

3 DESCRIPTION

a) Historical

LOCATION OF LUANG PRABANG

Luang Prabang Province is situated in the centre of the mountainous region of Northern Laos. The province was the largest in the country until the fall of the monarchy on December 2, 1975. Since then part of its northern region has been amputated. Modern day Luang Prabang is bordered to the north by Phongsaly and Udomxay Provinces, to the west by Sayaboury Province, to the south by Vientiane Province, to the south-east by Xieng Khuang Province and to the east by Huaphan Province and Vietnam.

The town of Luang Prabang, capital of the province, was the capital of the Kingdom of Luang Prabang until 1946. Vientiane became the administrative capital of the Lao People's Republic in 1975. It is situated on a river peninsula delineated by the Mekong and its tributaries, the Nam Khane and Huai Hop, which form a natural geographical defence. In ancient times it was further fortified by the construction of a wall around the town's southern periphery. The town is located in a clay basin surrounded by limestone hills which dominate the view. One of these hills, the "Phou-Si" - considered sacred by the inhabitants - is situated in the centre of the town.

THE ANCIENT TITLES OF LUANG PRABANG

Luang Prabang has undergone a series of name changes through its history: Muang Xua, Muang Lan Xang, Muong Suvannaphoum, Xieng Dong-Xieng Thong, Sisatanekhanahuta and Luang Prabang. Muang Xua seems to have been its first name, as it is associated with the name of Khun Lo, Khun Boulom's son. Then it appears to have changed to Muang Lan Xang, usually translated as "Land of a Million Elephants". This period overlaps for a time with the Muang Xua era, giving rise to the name "Xua-Lan Xang". The third name attributed to the town - but also to Laos as a whole - is Suvannaphoum which appears in the Chanthaphanith story, (HCP, 1989 : 121) wherein it is written; "Phanya Chanthaphanith reigned over Suvannaphoum". Suvannaphoum derives from *Suvannabhumi*, a Pali word (*suvamabhumi* in Sanskrit), which means the "Gold country", a name which could have been held by the ancient Mon country of Burma. According to legend, two hermits determined the site of the town (see "Birth of Luang Prabang"). Its southern limit, they decided, would be marked by the "Dong" stream, which springs from a hill that resembles a pile of rice, and the northern boundary by the "Thong", a great flame tree. Hence the fourth name, Xieng Dong-Xieng Thong. This name seems to have been used more specifically to designate Luang Prabang while Suvannaphoum was generally used to denominate the country as a whole. There existed a convention of referring to a town by listing all of its ancient names. Therefore the next recorded name for the town, Sisatanakhahuta, would have formed only a small part of the town's official compound name, an abbreviated form of which would have been used by the local population. Finally, the town adopted the name Luang (meaning grand) Prabang (the name of the Buddha statue, palladium of the northern kingdom) which appears for the first time under the reign of King Vixun on an inscription dated 1509 (Pavie Mission, 1898 ; pp. 175 ff.) and which became the definitive name when the capital of Lan Xang was transferred to Vientiane in 1563.

THE RELIGION OF THE LUANG PRABANG PEOPLE

Most authors have written that the Lao people's religion was exclusively the Theravada Buddhism introduced to Luang Prabang by a Khmer mission, summoned by Chao Fa Ngum (ruler of Lan Xang from 1353-73) at his wife's behest. In fact, the northern Lao people's true religion is a mixture of pre-Buddhist animist beliefs and Buddhism.

The northern Lao people's pre-Buddhist belief systems derive from prehistoric cults and creation myths. The worship of natural objects - usually sites of particular beauty believed to harbour spirits - was combined with a belief in ancestral ghosts who "activated" a local collective memory pre-dating the birth of the individual. The people of Luang Prabang worship a variety of spirits. They may give offerings to *phii*, or to the "NAGA" (the fifteen spiritual

protectors of the town) or to the *Pou Nheu Nha Nheu*, the protecting spirits of Luang Prabang, portrayed in myth as the "overseers of the territory".

Prior to 1970, *Ho Phii* (altars to the protecting spirit to whom offerings were made) were found in almost every monastic compound and in front of every house.

These beliefs and practices did not prevent the people of Luang Prabang from visiting the many pagodas in the town, temples where monks belonged - and still belong - to the Theravada school, which supplanted the Mahayana Buddhism practiced in the 13th century. This double adherence to two different beliefs produced a Theravada which still retains some unique features. On its arrival in the region, Theravada Buddhism was faced with a multiplicity of local beliefs. Instead of confronting these beliefs and attempting to subjugate them, it further added to the local religious sub-strata, giving birth to a religion which is a mixture of Buddhism and local pre-buddhist beliefs. The traditional religions of the people retained their popular fervour untouched by the hermetic nature of Buddhist metaphysics, from which they took only the main principles: the ethical base, the cyclical and accountable nature of actions and the belief in external manifestations. Acts of devotion were also adopted - visits to pagodas during festivals, offerings of food and respect to monks - but remained detached from the animist side of the faith, which was linked to the geographical territory, the only tangible reality for the local peasants.

Animism and Buddhism are therefore not competing here, but form a complementary relationship; the people of Luang Prabang seek, through the cult of spirits, an assurance of welfare as well as protection on earth, and through Buddhism a code of moral conduct and a path of salvation. We are facing an acculturation of two beliefs, even if Buddhism remains the dominating element through the moral and cultural contexts it provides to the population.

THE BIRTH OF LUANG PRABANG

A hagiographic tradition relates that the Buddha smiled when one day he rested on the soil of Luang Prabang. To his disciple Ananda, who asked him the reasons for his contentment, he answered that later a rich and powerful capital would be erected there. According to another even more ancient legend, two hermits, seduced by the beauty of the site, decided to build a city. They were attracted by a hill which strangely resembled a pile of rice. Walking along the Mekong, they then discovered at its confluence with the Nam Khan, an immense flame tree resplendent with flowers and fruits, red like lacquer.

Guided by their intuition, they placed at the base of the tree a big slate of rock and proclaimed that in this place a palace would be erected, and that in future times a virtuous monarch would govern from it. Taking the southern limit as the Dong stream and as the northern limit the Thong tree, they gave to the city the name of "Xiang Dong-Xjeng Thong". Soon it became populated, first by hybrid beings which when they died became the protecting spirits of the site, then by men. The Kha people, issue of the oldest human race in the region, were the first. After several generations they were supplanted by the Lao who came from the North, led by the legendary Khun Lo. The Kha chief he defeated was named Khun Java. Khun Lo, wanting to pay him homage, renamed the city Muang Java. The name, as attested by a *stèle* in Sukhothai, was already known by the end of the Eighth century. Some decades later, under the conquering reign of Fa Ngum, it became the capital of the powerful and prosperous kingdom of Lan Xang or "Million Elephants".

It remained so until 1560, when it began to cede power to Vientiane, further and safer from aggressive Burmese armies. According to chronicles, it was also from this moment that the town was renamed Luang Prabang, after the famous Buddha statue brought from Cambodia. At the end of the 17th century, after the death of King Souriya Vongsa, a grave political crisis occurred. Lan Xang was divided into two independent kingdoms, Vientiane and Luang Prabang. Then a third, Champassak, was created. The kings of Luang Prabang became the puppets of Siamese power, starting from 1828 when Vientiane was sacked. Assaults on Luang Prabang came chiefly from other sources, such as the infamous "Black Banners" who in 1887, in the wake of the French intervention, looted and ransacked the city. Its reconstruction and restoration as a religious and royal capital was essentially the work of King Sisavang Vong assisted by two viceroys: Chao Maha Oupahat Boun Khong, then Prince Phetsarath.

Introduction drawn from royal chronicles (translated from Pali by Mr. Michel Lorrillard, linguistic researcher).

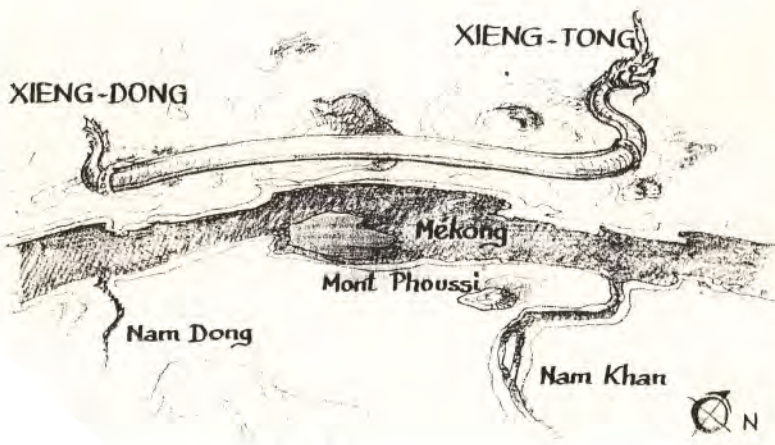
ESTABLISHMENT OF T'AI LANGUAGE POPULATION ALONG THE RIVERS

The settlement of the T'ai populations in the southern areas of South East Asia, between the Second and the Twelfth Centuries, developed along the rivers. In Laos this meant the Mekong, Namtha, Nam Beng and Nam Ou. The major trading centres were found along the Mekong Basin.

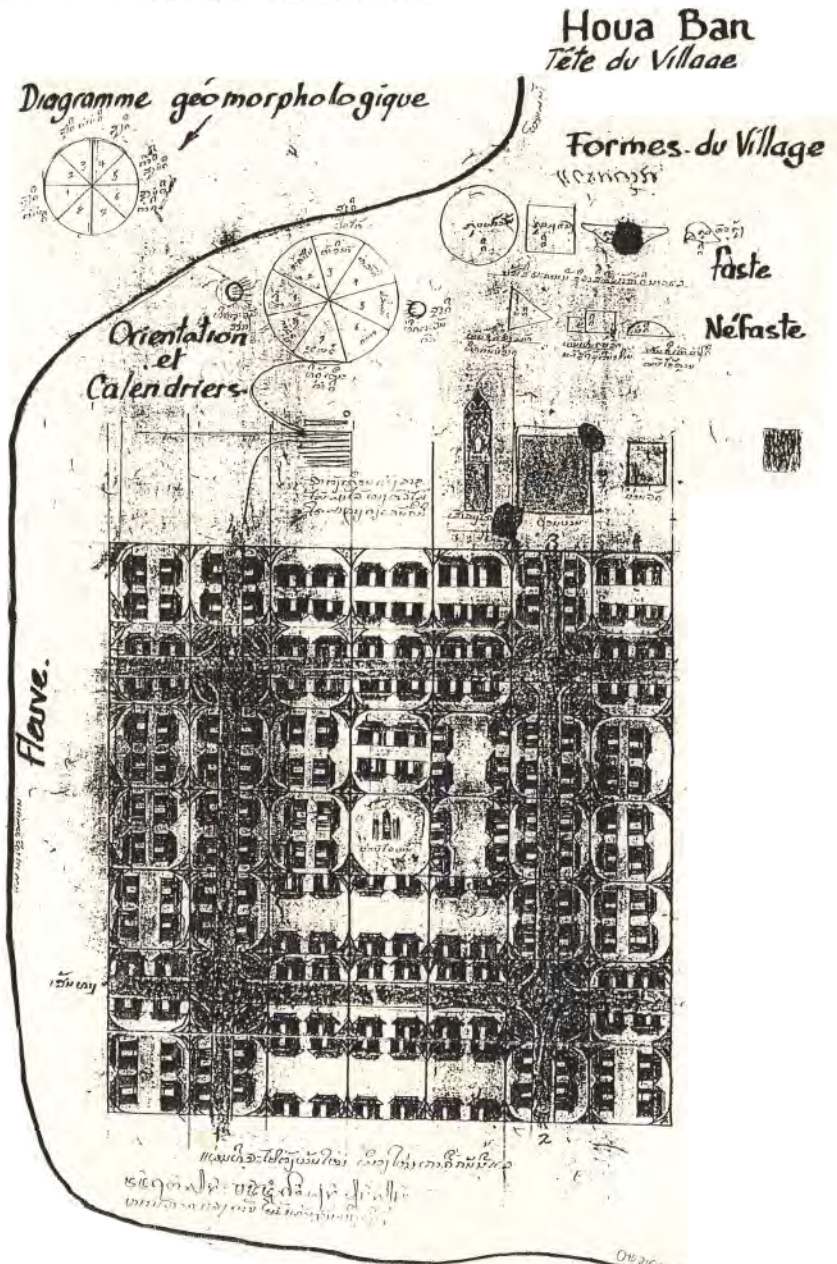
In those traditional villages still extant in northern Laos, the respect and importance granted to the elements constituting the natural environment is still observed. The interpretation of the panorama is foremost in the selection of a site, so as to ensure the community's prosperity. The orientation of the marked geo-morphological elements - rivers, peaks, forests and springs - is juxtaposed with astrological and symbolical landmarks, and their relation to geographical elements and the symbols of the Chinese zodiac, in order to identify current and potential disorders.

The interpretation of the panoramic code determines whether conditions are propitious for settlement. Some of the "PHI" genies inhabiting a site are, PHI PA the forest genie, PHI NAM the water genie, PHI TON MAI NIAI the genie of big trees, PHI DIN the earth genie and PHI FA the sky genie. Some of the genies are ritually consulted to ensure prosperous future co-habitation. The practice has been perpetuated to the present through the office of the seer. The various T'ai ethnolinguistic families have grouped according to their ancient origins; the T'ai Lao (from the Mekong Plains), T'ai Lu (Sipsongphanna), T'ai Nua (Yunnan and Sipsongphanna) and T'ai Dam (Black River basin, northern Vietnam) have developed individual cultures in distinct regions. Each group displays a similar ritualistic means in the consultation of the natural forces. The differing results are the product of the individual codes produced by the varied landscapes.

Illustration proposée



EXAMPLE OF THE VILLAGE SETTLEMENT METHODS USED BY THE T'AI NEUA
(Document from Muong Sing District, north Laos, 1993)



The arrival of Buddhism in these regions produced a perfect synthesis of cultures among the T'ai Lao, T'ai Lu, and the T'ai Nua. To-day the works of the seers are kept in the monasteries whilst the practice of the rituals is executed by "ACHAN" (sage).

The document opposite, copied from the original texts, was consulted at Muong Sing in Luang Namtha province. It originates from a seer work in the PALI language and belongs to a T'ai Nua community. The T'ai Nua do not on the whole observe the same settlement regulations as the Lao communities, but the similarities of the selection criteria observed here are nevertheless remarkable.

The villages implanted along the rivers upstream are differentiated from those downstream through the names "HUA BAN" and "HANG BAN" (the head and tail of the village), or "NUA BAN" and "TAI BAN" (the north and south of the village). Maps of villages associated with animal or geometric forms are found in the texts and are auspicious or inauspicious as denoted by the names of the limits (head or tail).

The legend of Luang Prabang mentions the dual polarity of the site, bordered by the Nam Kong and the Nam Khan rivers (the northern upstream and southern downstream delimitations of the site.) On the peninsula formed by the Nam Khan and the Mekong is a Thong (flame) tree. The significance attached to it becomes evident in the annals which record a dilemma over the use of the names "Xieng Dong" or "Xieng Thong".

The selection criteria for the establishment of the town await clarification. It seems however that Luang Prabang is the perfect example of the integration of human town and natural site; an achieved balance between a community and a propitious natural environment.

Luang Prabang, a trading crossroads on the silk road, royal capital of Lan Xang and eventual centre of Lao Buddhism, shows that the reading of a site can reveal its qualities and potential. Today the town awakens again. Shall its future confirm its origins?

THE ARCHITECTURAL ART OF LUANG PRABANG

Until the end of the nineteenth century Lao dwellings were all constructed of wood, "from the royal palace and the houses of the high nobility.....the gentry and the poor are badly lodged..... their hovels are more like cabins and huts than houses." - As Marini records, only religious buildings were in mason, "only the Talapoi, who are the priests of idols, have the authority to build their roofs and houses in brick or stone." (P. de Marini, *Histoire nouvelle et curieuse des royaumes de Tonquin et de Lao*, Paris, Clouzier, 1666, pp. 341 and 342). It therefore natural that only the religious art, sanctuaries and stupas have survived from these times.

The Lao religious architectural art presents three main styles; those of Vientiane, Xieng Kuang and Luang Prabang. These are fairly easy to differentiate on the basis of the sanctuary's general form and roofing. In the Xieng Kuang region the pagoda, the sanctuary wherein the large buddha is found and ceremonies are celebrated, generally displays a portico and a simple roof reaching down towards the ground. In the Vientiane region the vihara is smaller and higher than in Xieng Khuang. It presents a far less imposing roof, often with lapping, as well as much higher doors and windows. Sanctuaries in the region of Luang Prabang are characterised by an immense roof, covered in flat tiles with double or treble tiers or sometimes a rupture of slope, as well as the existence of a peripheral nave.

In the eighteenth century Luang Prabang counted some sixty-five monasteries. In its library each possesses somewhat fabulous accounts of its foundation and the subsequent notable events - partial destructions, restorations, royal donations and so forth - which have marked its existence.

Alongside the sanctuaries have survived another type of religious building, the stupa. The That, as the Lao call the stupa, is numerous in Luang Prabang. One is exceptional in its shape which copies the Indian stupa. This is the remarkable That Mak Mo (the watermelon stupa), a square-based monument surmounted by a hemispheric cupola.

THE FRENCH PERIOD AND ITS IMPACT

Laos became a French protectorate in the wake of the Franco - Siamese treaty of October 3, 1893. Laos in this era was not the former politically homogenised entity of yore; the kingdom of Lan Xang was but a memory. The country's recent history was one of disintegration, its territories fragmented into small rival kingdoms which were the vassals of competing neighbouring empires (cf. Levy).

Politically and culturally, the colonial period sees the emergence of a nation in the western sense of the word, a unifying and centralising vision incompatible with the traditional spatial and political organisation based on



feudal territorial division and management. Therefore, this period was a transition between two spatial organisations. Through contact with the West, and policies implemented by the colonial administration, Laos evolved toward a political geography dominated by the city, with its inherent administrative and economic functions.



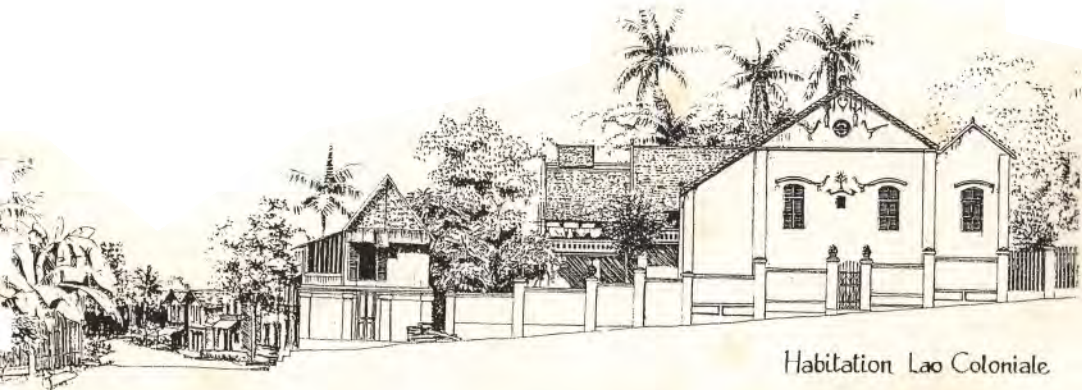
The market street in Luang Prabang (1925-1930)

However the original geographic, historical and human features remained, along with the rural character of the population, (which partly explains the urban under-development of ancient Laos), and continued under the French protectorate to hamper the development of cities and the country as a whole.

The French colonisation process, which elsewhere created cities and imposed political and economic influence on surrounding rural areas, was here confronted by a rural society resistant to urban "progress".

We will also see that for reasons owing to France's political and financial interest elsewhere in Indochina, the protectorate of Laos was somewhat overlooked for economic development and was considered primarily as a territory of strategic interest, a savage hinterland with difficult access.

The colonial powers focused primarily on military control of the territory rather than development. This proved difficult however because of the mountainous geography, the small population and the delinquency of traditional power.



Habitation Lao Coloniale

GEOGRAPHIC, HISTORIC AND HUMAN CONTEXT

The implementation and administration of colonial power in a country which at that time lacked political unity is a landmark in Laos' history. It occurred not only in the political field, but also in the area of spatial organisation and its relation to the urban phenomena, which in Laos had never held the importance it had in other regions of the world, particularly in the rest of the Indochinese peninsula.

Laos always had only two centres of urban significance: Vientiane and Luang Prabang:-

- Vientiane, following its ransacking by the Siamese in 1827, was nothing more than ruins. Only vestiges of the temples from its age of glory remained. Its population deported, Vientiane was unable to rebuild on its ruins.

- Luang Prabang, the royal and historic capital of Lan Xang had just been pillaged by the "black banners" of Deo Van Tri and a large proportion of its population perished during the attack and flight.

Laos was at this time an unstructured geographical space, a country threatened by its neighbours' expansionist aims and vulnerable to colonisation. The French assigned themselves the task of creating a capital and urban centres capable of supporting the subsequent colonial economic development, similar to the systems established in other French colonies.

POOR URBANISATION IN LAOS: AN ENDURING FACTOR,

As was observed by Fourniaud of Vietnam, and was equally applicable to Laos, "no agglomerations are found which would conform, by their features and functions, to the geographical and sociological phenomena commonly designated as a city in the West" (Urban Studies p. 170).

This is particularly true of Laos, where the surroundings have for centuries worked against the economic progress of the country and its cities. (See the historian Fernand Braudel who observes the influence of the natural surroundings on the social, political and urban formations).

Certainly, the central position occupied by Laos in the Indochinese peninsula and the resulting relative geographical isolation are parameters which influenced the evolution of Lao cities.



Habitations Lao Traditionnelles

But the most distinct component is the under-population of the country, a permanent factor during its history which can be explained by its geography, since Laos' mountainous terrain provides a relatively small area of arable land. The population, which until colonisation had never exceeded 1.5 million people, is unevenly spread through the country. The basic social organisation is the village, the importance of which varies with the settlement site (plain, valley or mountain). These have autarkic economies based on the cultivation of rice, the use of forest resources and some livestock.

Therefore the city in Laos develops within the limits imposed by the physical space, by rural and autarkic social structures, and a remarkably low population density. These conditions ensured that urban population never gained importance. In addition the frequent wars waged between the peninsula's kingdoms, with the accompanying ransackings and deportations of populations, contributed to some degree.

THE ANCIENT CITY, CENTRE OF ARISTOCRATIC POWER

We will not enter into the details of the Lao kingdom's political organisation and the traditional city's morphology. In relation to this issue, we refer the reader to the attached excerpts of urban analysis.

There are some basic facts which outline the nature of urban phenomena in Laos before the French protectorate and the resulting transformations of the urban fabric.

- The term *Muang* designates both the city and the territory it depends on.
- The city is the centre of royal or princely power. Its political function extends to all principalities bearing allegiance to the King of Lan Xang. As such, it contains the king's residence, his palace, the royal administration, the aristocracy and administrative personnel within its walls.
- The cities were built like forts. A wall (in earth, wood or brick, depending on the period) protected them from frequent external aggressions, and a garrison was permanently quartered, "while nowhere else could they be found in time of peace" (Lafont).
- In addition to the residences of the king and the nobility, the city sheltered numerous temples (65 in Luang Prabang), religious sites, and also residences of the kingdom's numerous monks. "The city's monks were practically the only true literates of the kingdom, [therefore] the sites of Buddhist significance became the centres of intellectual radiation" (Lafont).
- Finally, an agglomeration of villages around an aristocratic and religious core shelters the city's population.

In respect to these cities' economic and commercial functions, the poverty of the hinterland, coupled with its low population, failed to transform them into important economic poles on a peninsula scale. Instead a local economy developed.



undercutting the handicraft and food production from the neighboring regions. A low quantity of sub-forest produce was exchanged with the T'ai principalities in the South of the peninsula.

As underlined by PB Lafont, the importance of these cities in the demographic, as well as economic field, is relative. Vientiane and Luang Prabang never experienced the economic progress which occurred in Asian trading cities in the 15th and 16th centuries, since the country's agricultural economy prevented the production of goods in sufficient quantities for exchange in the other trading places of Asia.

Though it is frequently reported that Luang Prabang was a stop on the caravan silk road, the importance of this must be put into perspective. The economic flux has always been poor in this part of Asia and the economy itself undynamic. The absence in Lao cities of quarters dominated by foreign traders indicates their minor trading importance "Even if at the local scale, these cities appear as important trading centres, they were in fact rather small exchange places, compared to Ayutthaya or even to the Cambodian capital". (Lafont p. 105).

LUANG PRABANG, ANALYSIS OF THE MORPHOLOGY AND EVOLUTION OF THE COLONIAL CITY

In the case of Luang Prabang, the colonial city was constituted along different lines from Vientiane.

At the beginning of this century, Luang Prabang was still the royal capital, and supported a population of approximately 10,000 people (according to Auguste Pavie in 1888).

Therefore, the colonial city had to be imposed upon an urban fabric occupied by the residences of the royal family, numerous Buddhist temples, and the habitations of the nobility and bourgeois classes.

The site is in itself much more distinct and constraining than in Vientiane. Since the colonial administration did not choose Luang Prabang as the capital, public edifices are less numerous than in Vientiane. However, a larger number of French citizens settled down there, attracted by the life in Luang Prabang and its trading potential, Luang Prabang having long been more populated than the protectorate's capital.

THE SITE

Luang Prabang is situated in the centre of northern Laos, in a mountainous region where northern Laos' hydrographic basins, and hence the region's commercial networks, converge.

The city is erected at the confluence of the Nam Khan and the Mekong; at this place, both streams outline a peninsula 250 meters wide and 1 km long which is dominated by Phou Si hill, the city's sacred mountain.



Vat Khili

THE HISTORIC CITY

For most of its history Luang Prabang was entirely constructed of wood (except for the temples). Because of this, Luang Prabang was often prey to fire. Its general organisation consists of two distinct zones :

- the peninsula itself, facing the Mekong and at the Phou Si's base, is the site of numerous wats and the residences of the royal family and of the nobility. It is the political and cultural heart of the city. From the peninsula's elongated configuration, the aristocratic city extends in a succession of temples (from Wat Xieng Thong, upstream) and princely houses.
- the downstream city and the Wat Vixun neighborhood South-east of Phou Si form a crown around the aristocratic city. It is a busy section with a varied population composed of artisans and traders. The city's markets as well as temples are found there.

A wall built between the two rivers closed off the city itself. Outside the wall, there is a concentration of village-type habitats.

THE COLONIAL CITY

Apart from public buildings, which are fewer than in Vientiane, the city's architecture is characterised by a relatively urbanised habitat, with one-storey terraced houses common. The aligned fronts and the typology of this habitat give the streets of Luang Prabang a distinctive urban aspect which Vientiane does not possess.

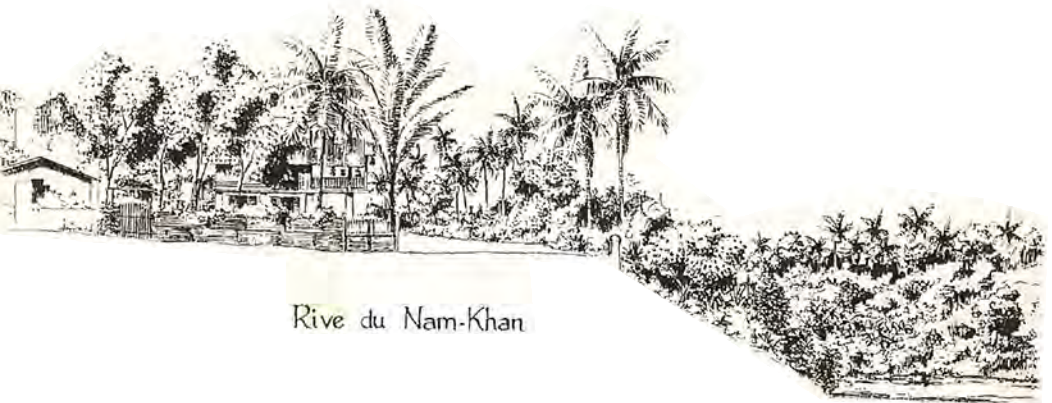
These houses are built from masonry with plastered bricks - sometimes with wooden upper stories - with plaster decorations. The first floor is often endowed with a cursive, with a sometimes ornate wooden bannister, while the ground floors can be equipped with a circumferential corridor protecting the inner rooms from the heat.

To the edifices constructed by the French administration and its denizens are added those built by the Lao in this period. These drew inspiration directly from the western architectural style and complete the colonial urban fabric.



The colonial city's morphology conforms to the site and the character of the city. Different zones may be defined:

- on the bank of the Mekong are trade houses and private housing, dispersed from the peninsula's peak to the downstream settlement.
- Auguste Pavie Avenue runs through the peninsula's axis.
- upstream, the Avenue follows on one side a network of temples and royal residences. On the other side of the road, between the latter and the Nam Khan, traditional habitations and colonial houses blend together. These habitats vary as one walks down the street. Seen from the top of Xieng Muan Street, Pavie Avenue looks like a French road, hemmed by the facades of joint storey houses. Nearby is a school of quite beautiful architectural quality.
- at the crossroads with Garnier road, which forms a landmark of the city, are various administrative buildings: postal offices, the police station, the Luang Prabang bungalow, the Officer's Club and the public treasury.
- beyond this crossroads the buildings become more dense, with ten colonial and Lao houses having aligned fronts and ground floors which house small businesses.
- further on are the commissary, the Indochinese guard offices and the civil works offices. The city ends at this point, in front of the vast cleared space downward of Wat That Luang.
- The Glacière and Henry d'Orléans roads open the city towards the southeast. Here there are :
 - the dispensary, hospital and market
 - Along the line of the Henry d'Orléans road, a block of denser habitations is situated, inhabited by the administration's indigenous clerks.
- The roads of Capitaine Marialz, Wat Vixun and Moun Na; This group of roads between the Garnier and Nam Khan axis is comprised of the habitations of European traders and rich and noble Lao. The quarter begins at colonial road No. 7, along which is a semi-urban housing zone where part of the Lao population resides.



Rive du Nam-Khan

b) and c) Description, inventory and photographic documentation
(see inventory index-card appendix)

THE IMPACT OF CIVIL WORKS AND THE INFLUENCE OF THE SURROUNDINGS ON THEIR CONCEPTION

The civil works service was primarily an executive service which did not participate in the establishment of the construction plans. These plans were established from Hanoi.

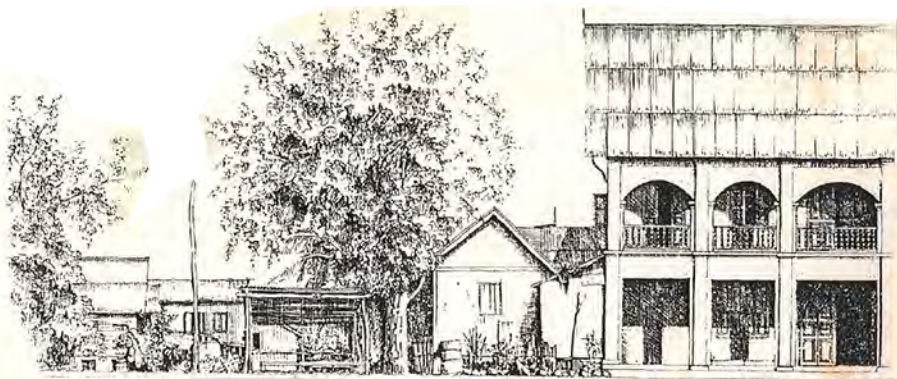
The civil works centre project in Laos was approved by the Vientiane Governor on May 18, 1909.

The centre of Luang Prabang saw the installation of its first equipment by the end of 1909 with the "Customs" project (1909-1911), "Post and Telegraph Office " (1910-1911), "the hospital" (1911), "the school" (1921), the Residence Commissary Hotel (1923-25), etc.

The methods and construction materials used on the civic works required qualified labour which the French generally imported from Vietnam. Luang Prabang thus benefited from two influences which intrinsically marked the urban fabric from the grandest to the humblest edifices.

The Luang Prabang habitat was until then conceived according to the traditional method of construction on poles, while all building material was of organic origin.

COMPARTIMENTS
FACADE Nord - Ouest



Two types of construction characteristic to the urban fabric prior to the French influence are apparent, one of wood (wooden structure with wooden walls), the other one of wood and colombage (wooden structure with bamboo walls which are daubed with mortar on both sides.) This second construction system is believed to originate from Vietnam. Similar traditional structures are still observed nowadays in rural areas of northern Laos and Vietnam, consisting of a natural plaster of vegetable material, limestone and decomposed buffalo skin spread on both sides of a bamboo lattice. The use of brick was reserved for the construction of Wats (temples) - probably for economic reasons. Materials requiring processing could not compete with the cheapness of wood which was accessible to everyone and allowed self-construction.

Traditionally in the construction of civil buildings, the population had to reserve the use of materials and colours representative of the religion (red, black and gold) with respect to religious edifices. Similarly, the buildings' heights were regulated and could not exceed the nearest Wat.

Local influences

The intervention of civil works began between 1907 and 1925. It essentially equipped Luang Prabang with administrative and public buildings, with some functional lodgings such as the PTT lodging, the telegraph lodging, and lodging for the Indochinese guard doctor. It was in these last constructions that the French style took on local influences. The roofs reveal use of the Wat's characteristic framework systems such as tiered and broken-slope roofs.



The decorative elements such as the "NAGA" are evident in ridge-poles, friezes of sculpted wood embellishing the eaves and gutters and in the casts decorating the vents of the gable.

The school director's lodging is one of the most surprising, having used for bannister decoration the crenellations akin to those which surmount the Wats' walls, with lotus leaves for a plaster base and a relief representing a praying Buddha on the building's face.

The impact

From the 1920's, the local aristocracy took advantage of the input of skills and qualified immigrant labour to build large houses in a Lao colonial style. The Vietnamese colony which built the majority of these edifices, (for Lao owners), was recognized and implanted at the extreme end of the peninsula formed between the Nam Khan and the Mekong in the Wat Khili quarter. It is on the formerly named Auguste Pavie road that they constructed shophouses (combined commercial and habitation units). These were originally small independent masonry works embellished with gardens before being built multiply, with supporting entrances approximately 4 meters wide. They are known as Chinese compartments.



GENERAL CHARACTER OF MONASTERIES IN LUANG PRABANG

In Laos, monastic buildings may be divided into three groups :

1. Edifices directly related to the religion: Vihan (sanctuary), chapel, library, that (stupa), landmark and niche on pole.
2. Works related directly to the religion: walls, interior and exterior.
3. Edifices designed for the needs of the pagoda's inhabitants, whether permanent or passing: monks' cells, shelters and festival halls.

The Vihan (sanctuary)

Almost all the sanctuaries of Luang Prabang are oriented northeast, while those of Vientiane face southeast, and east in the case of Xieng Khuang region (Tran-Ninh). Around the Vihan are chapels, libraries, the stupa, monks' dormitories, the drum shelter and shelters to lodge pilgrims. An altar for the protecting spirit ("Ho Phi") is noticed in the pagoda's precinct in Luang Prabang.

The site of the city of Luang Prabang is constituted by the confluence of the Mekong and the Nam Khan; along the peninsula the main roads run along both banks. The residential neighbourhoods fan out from the main roads. The layouts of sanctuaries in Laos are classified along three types :

- A simple type, characterised by the pack-saddle roof.
- A type with peripheral galleries.
- A type with circumferential nave, the external walls closing the penultimate alignment of peripheral poles (gallery type) or the last poles (circumferential nave type).

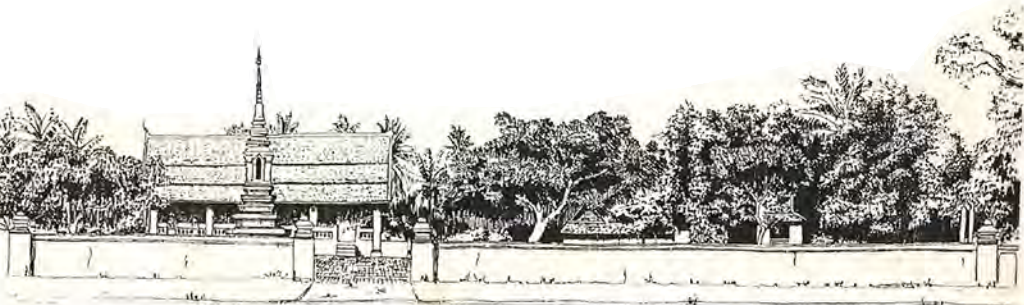
The simple type is pre-eminent in almost all the country, but the multiple nave and circumferential type is found in the Province of Xieng Khuang (Tran-Ninh), and the gallery type is representative of sanctuaries in Vientiane.

In Luang Prabang, the majority of sanctuaries situated within the ancient walls of the city are of the simple type with three naves and a distinctive porch. Those placed outside the walls are of the simple type with a particular style of room and porch. Few sanctuaries possess a back porch such as Wat Akham. In this type of construction, the nave sometimes presents a special disposition. The example of Wat Xiengthong shows the development of the simple type with five naves, to which were added two low covered sides as extensions. This type of circumferential nave is less frequent in Luang Prabang (see Wat Pak Khan, Wat May, Wat That Luang, Wat Vixun).

The Luang Prabang Vihan is essentially composed of a room equipped with a pedestal which elevates the main Buddha, a pulpit, a balcony, a light-holder and one or two *hang-lin*.

Within the sanctuary's hall, the central nave is often bigger than at the sides. The sanctuary is entered by several doors at its frontal facades and has windows on its lateral facades. If the sanctuary is of small dimension, the doors and windows will generally be closed by full leaves on one single room. Most of the sanctuaries have double leaf overtures, but it is noted that Wat Visoun presents occulted overtures of wooden balustrades, treated in an identical way to the stone examples characteristic of Angkor Wat in Cambodia.

The building offers two types of entry: the entries facing the Buddha, which provides access for worshippers and rear entries for the monks. There are usually three main doors.



Vat Sop

Inside, the place reserved for the monks is a rectangular slab elevated 20 cm from the ground, while the remainder of the room is at the disposal of the worshippers who kneel on the mats.

The ceilings in the sanctuaries of simple room and single porch are entirely decorated; the simple types with several naves possess a ceiling ornamented only in the central nave or in the bay reserved for the main Buddha. These are decorated richly with stencil-plates.

The internal walls of sanctuaries are mostly painted with golden stencil-plates on red or black background. They represent the deeds of the Buddha, of Jakata, and local legends. Some of the less frequent wall paintings are of great quality (Wat Long Khoun, Wat Pa Khe, Wat Pa Huak, Wat May, Wat Pak Ou).

Annex buildings

The Chapels

To our knowledge, there exist three types of chapel in Luang Prabang. Their religious function is indicated by the presence of one (or several) Buddha statues or a that they may shelter.

The chapels of the first type are flat semi-light edifices of square outlay. One of the small buildings of this type, no longer standing, was at Wat Xiengthong. It was a small edifice of simple type, which was erected on a square base. The round wooden pillars supported a simple roof and were joined by wooden balustrades. Another of these small kiosks, also destroyed, was at Wat Aham.

- The second type of chapel has masonry walls and is covered like the sanctuaries. Ordinarily, the room of this type of chapel has only one entry door and one or two windows on the sides. If the room is big it may include pillars; in this case, the chapels may even take the aspect of genuine sanctuaries (such as the chapels of Wat That Nopi (in ruins), of the Phra Chao Sip Pet Sök Buddha at Wat Sene, Wat Nak (today integrated in the precinct of Wat Sop). The most beautiful examples of this type are the chapels of Wat Xieng Thong (the red chapels, of Phra Man Buddha, of the funeral cart). The King Sisavang Vong's funeral cart chapel is the biggest chapel in Laos. One of the most interesting features of the monuments constituting the Luang Prabang pagodas is the "arched chapel" type. These are restricted in number; there is only one in Vientiane, at Wat Inpeng. They are of small dimensions and built entirely of brick (including the roof) and are decorated with stucco patterns. Generally, the chapel has a small long room, arched in the shape of a Gothic cradle or an ace of spades, equipped externally with a thickness which does not correspond to the internal volume. The roof is thick, and the interior is lit only through the door. From the outside, the chapel looks like a small room between two even smaller ones. However this external appearance is illusory and the interior forms a single room of straight walls without arch or projection. The facade is usually sumptuously decorated in detailed mortar; the decoration of the doors' leaves is often as rich as those of the sanctuary.

The libraries

In Laos, the libraries (in Lao "Ho Tay") are of hybrid construction. The most usual types have square shapes, with bell-shaped walls, elevated on a high base and covered with a peripheral roof.



In Luang Prabang, most of the libraries are elevated on poles. The libraries of Wat May (today disappeared) were made of wood. One was at the southern end of the Wat, with simple windows in a painted and gilded wooden partition under a small surrounding verandah with double-tiered roof. The other one was at the north end, elevated on a wooden base above the poles; its bays had balusters and its consoles supported the altar which surrounded the roof. Usually the libraries are used for the conservation of manuscripts in inverted pyramidal coffers.

Landmarks

We do not know the exact role of the landmarks whose pinnacles culminate in lotus buds with multiplied and stylized petals. In Luang Prabang landmarks are often seen at the angles of sanctuaries and more often still, around the thats. The rose stone landmarks planted at the feet of the Banyans at Wat Xieng Thong also end in buds. According to our observations the landmarks seem to be there to receive offerings: rice balls, candles and flowers.

Niches

Niches on pedestals are numerous in Luang Prabang; they are entirely built of masonry and most often placed at the feet of thats or in front of chapels. Most of the niches found in Luang Prabang resemble the forms of arched chapels. The niche is a small arch in the form of a bulging cradle, with two faces overhanging the small room. They are only opened from the front and shelter small Buddha statues. The roof is ornate with *nagas* or small statues representing a "Lusi" (Hermit). Niches on poles are for receiving offerings.

The *sema*

In Luang Prabang, according to local information, the semas are there to delineate the space of sanctuaries and sacred cultural edifices. Most of the semas are big stone balls buried at the Vihan's centre ("Bi Sim") and around the sanctuary, at the cardinal and intercardinal points. Roughly cut stone balls are observed in monasteries, emerging from the ground around the sanctuary (Wat Pak Khane, Wat Sibounhuang, Wat Aham). A decorated stele called "Bay sema" ("Sema leaf") is often erected above each ball. The sema leaves have either the shape of a lotus petal, or of a lotus bud; these leaves are sometimes erected on high pedestals (Wat Pa Khe, Wat Muong Kham) and sometimes are laid on the walls of the sanctuaries (Wat Vixun, Wat May, Wat Choum Kong)

Fences

Internal fences are rare; they exist only at Wat Xieng Thong. However all sanctuaries present external fences in masonry. The gates of the important pagodas' external fences (Wat Xieng Thong, Wat Vixun, Wat Aham) are remarkable. In general, these gates are treated as a kind of phrasat, perforated by two large arched bays and covered by a single arch. On the sides are drawn fake-bays where the wall ends. The gate itself is a kind of small square tower with multi-tiered sides and roofs (four tiers for the doors of Wat Vixun and Wat Aham and three for the door of Wat Xieng Thong). The plan is indented on each side and on each roof-tier by a design with the same profile as the main body; it is related to the ancient composition systems of the Khmer phrasat of the classical period. The door's arches are sharp and marked by crosses.



Another door at Wat Sangkalok (today disappeared) had a ribbed vault with four overlooking faces and is mounted with a central spine. In the past, at Wat May, two fence doors existed, one on the east road and the other one on the southeast. The first one had the same aspect as the doors of Wat Vixun and Wat Xieng Thong, the second one was arched in the shape of a cradle, in the fashion of the arched chapels.

Dormitories

Elegant habitations for the monks are found in the monasteries. They are often organised into compartments including both the monk's lodging and the dining room; they are made of wood on poles. The external walls are often flared upward overlooking the outside; the roofs are usually decorated with carved wooden eaves and guttering. Most of the stone accommodations in the pagodas of Luang Prabang have been constructed recently but retain the ancient style (e.g. dormitories at Wat That Luang, Wat Long Khoun, Wat Muang Kham, Wat Tham Sakarine, Wat Xieng Mene, Wat Khom Khuang, Wat Xang Khong, Wat Sang Khalok, Wat Xieng Thong).

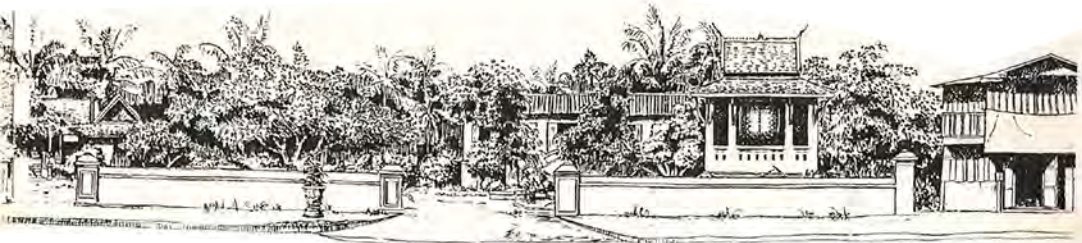
Cells

Formerly, most of the monasteries had small cells to lodge monks during certain periods. (Wat Xieng Thong, Wat That, Wat That Luang, Wat Long Khoun, Wat May, Wat Sieng Muan, Wat Mune Na, Wat Sangkhalok, Wat Muang Kham, Wat Xang Khong). These cells were made of wood and stood on poles. The monks live there in the first month of the twelve Lao rites, isolated from their fellows for repentance purposes.

The drum shelter

In Luang Prabang, the drum shelters are always elevated north of the sanctuaries. This is a construction which resembles the simple type of sanctuary, but without walls. Some pavilions stand on poles (Wat Sene, Wat That Luang) sheltering the big pagoda drums. The pagoda drum is a monoxyle portion of tree trunk, approximately 1 metre in diameter, hollowed and covered on both ends with a tight buffalo hide. The fabrication of drums and their installation formerly gave place to numerous rites, as described in one of the old manuscripts of the Royal Library.

In the Luang Prabang area there are virtually no buildings designed to serve as festivity rooms for the pilgrims. The religious festivals and ceremonies always unfold either in the sanctuary, in the monks' lodging or in the dining room (in Lao "Ho Chek"), except for the main religious festivities ("the Vessanatara festival") during which pavilions are specially constructed.



INVENTORY INDEX CITY OF LUANG PRABANG
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DESCRIPTION OF THE ERA'S CONSTRUCTION SYSTEMS AND MATERIALS
The Monasteries or "Wats"
Masonry and Floor:

Generally elevated above the ground, these buildings are constructed upon brick foundations with undetermined embanking. The soil covering is treated with locally produced ceramic.

The supporting structure differs according to the type of hall. Single nave wats have a veiling structure supporting the framework. Those with multiple naves are structured with brick pillars of varying styles of rendering, facets on hexagonal or octagonal section pillars; simple cylindrical, and cylindrical decorated with fruit. Masonry is rendered with a plaster of sand and limestone which is worked as a base for ornamentation.

Framework:

The structures used in the framework are of the local type; tress with stretcher piling. This type of work was imported from China by the T'ai language groups when they settled in the Indochinese peninsula.

This type of structure enables the fabrication of the tiered and slope-ruptured roofs characteristic of the local wats. The completed extension generally varies between two and four metres but can reach six metres.

Another feature of these works are the shapes of slope. Curbed roofs are evident in Luang Prabang. The curb is facilitated by the use of this type of framework and its calculation is determined by the height of the pantiles. Flat rafters whose section (thickness 1.5 cm, width 6cm, length 4m) allows the curb are selected. These will be covered with wood lattice to support the tiles.

Ceilings:

Constructed of wooden planks, it seems that the ceilings are nailed onto a network of rafters which is fixed to the framework. Lacquered and stenciled as they are, it is relatively difficult to affirm their assembly system.

Tiles:

Flat and equipped with a hooking nib, the baked earth tiles are moulded in wooden matrices and dried before baking in earthen kilns. Their dimensions vary, the most common being approximately 10 - 12 cm wide and 25 cm long. The thickness is about 0.8 cm and the nib is around 1.5 cm.

INVENTORY INDEX CITY OF LUANG PRABANG
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DESCRIPTION OF THE ERA'S CONSTRUCTION SYSTEMS AND MATERIALS

(continued)

The use of glazed tiles imported from Thailand is noticed on the roofs of Wats MAI, SENE and NONG. One edifice alone, Wat AHAM is actually covered with cement tiles.

Carpentry:

The carpentry and the wood carving work are remarkable.

The doors and windows of the Wats are made of single blocks of wood, carved with divinities and legendary figures of Buddhist mythology.

Other parts of the structure, such as the eave supports, are of intricately carved wood. The motifs are adapted to the double curve of this form, presenting a NAGA (dragon image). The *Naga* animals of mythology are often solicited for their protective powers. They can be observed on these supports all around the periphery of the wats and on each side of the entrance staircase. The guardians of the temple, they also surmount stair-rails and were at one time made of wood and baked earth. Today they are rendered in masonry.

Another piece of sculpted wood representative of the Buddhist architecture in Luang Prabang is the internal extension of the pediment: a delicate mantling called "Huang Pheung" gives a beehive quality to the work. It is generally decorated with flora and fauna motifs, with a single or double ornate arcade between the pillars of the entry arcade. In the most ancient cases these are inlaid with coloured glass and gilding.

Paintings and Decoration:

The murals of this epoch are not highly developed. Remarkable examples of this pictorial art are found at Wat Pa Huak and Wat Pa Keh. These hand painted frescoes represent scenes from Buddhist mythology. Later the stencil-plate technique was developed in Luang Prabang and this pictorial art adorns most of the edifices extant to-day. They decorate the structural elements, pillars, posts, etc., and the ceilings, interior walls on unified red or black background and the woodwork through the rivets on the roof.

Some other decorative elements, previously made in baked earth, such as the *Naga* on the ridge-poles' extremities and the celestial flower bouquets (SOFAs) adorning the same poles, are to-day reproduced in cement mortar with iron framing; an easier process.

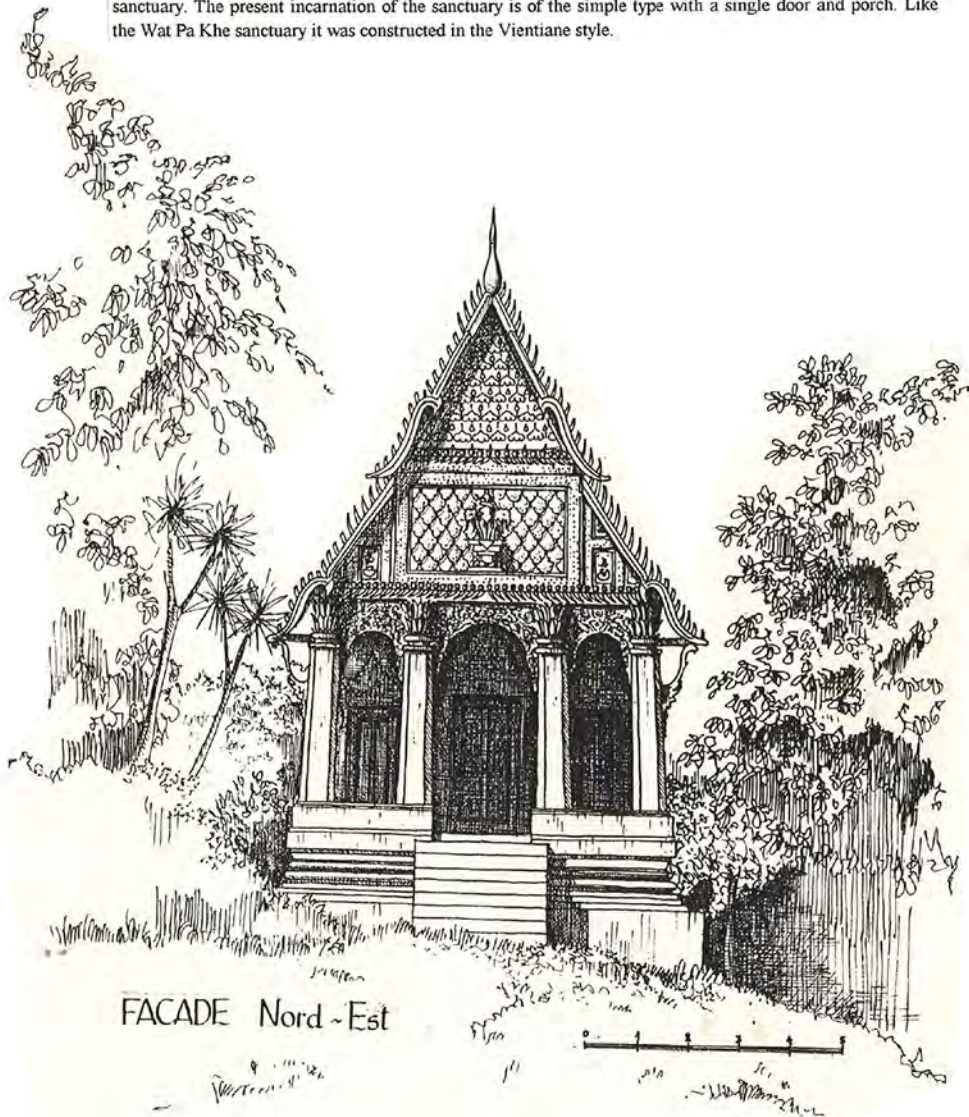
LIST OF WATS

TYPE	YEARS	WATS IN HPZ	VILLAGES
V1	1737	PAK KHANE	B. Khili
V2	1560	XIENGTHONG	B. Xieng Thong
V3	1773	KHILY	B. Khily
V4	1758	SIBOUNHUANG	B. Sibounhuang
V5	1763	SIMOUNGKHOUN	B. Phone Heung
V6	1481	SOP	B. Phone Heung
V7	1714	SENE	B. Phone Heung
V8	1729	NONG	B. Nong
V9	1765-91	PA PHAY	B. Xieng Muan
V10	1853	XIENG MUAN	B. Xieng Muan
V11	1843	CHOUKONG	B. Xieng Muan
V12	1853	PA KHE	B. Xieng Muan
V12	1799	PA FANG	B. Xieng Muan
V13	1962-65	THAM PHOUSI	B. Tium Khong
V14	1804	PHOUSI	B. Tium Khong
V15	1529	APHAY	B. Aphay
V16	1861	PA HOUAK	B. Tium Khong
V17	1821-91	MAY	B. Pa Kham
V18	1791	PHONE XAY	B. Pa Kham
V19	1822	AHAM	B. Aham
V20	1522-26	VIXUN	B. Vixun
V21	1705-09	HO SIENG	B. Hua Xieng
V22	1548	THAT	B. That
V23	1377-78	MANOROM	B. Mano
V24	1818	THAT LUANG	B. That Luang
V25	1533	MUNE NA	B. Muna Na
V32	---	PHAN LUANG	B. Phan Luang
V37	1960	PHONSATH	B. Phan Sath

WATS OUTSIDE THE ZONE

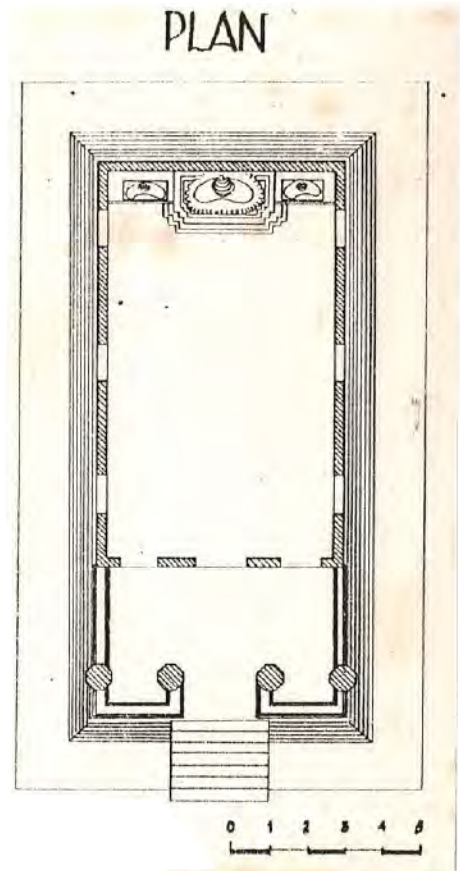
V39	End XVI	XIENG MENE	B. Xieng Mene
V40	1888	CHOMPHEI	B. Xieng mene
V41	1935-38	LONG KHOU	B. Xieng Mene
V42	1902	THAM	B. Xieng Mene
V43	---	KHOH PAB	---
V44	---	HAT SIAO	---

This is a small edifice built at the western foot of The Phousi hill, in front of the entrance to the former royal palace. Wat Pa Houak, "monastery of the bamboo forest," was built by Phragna Simahanam in 1861, under the reign of King Chantharath. The monastery is oriented to the northeast. In 1928 the sanctuary was restored by King Sisavang Vong while Queen Kham Fanh restored the That situated behind the first sanctuary. The present incarnation of the sanctuary is of the simple type with a single door and porch. Like the Wat Pa Khe sanctuary it was constructed in the Vientiane style.

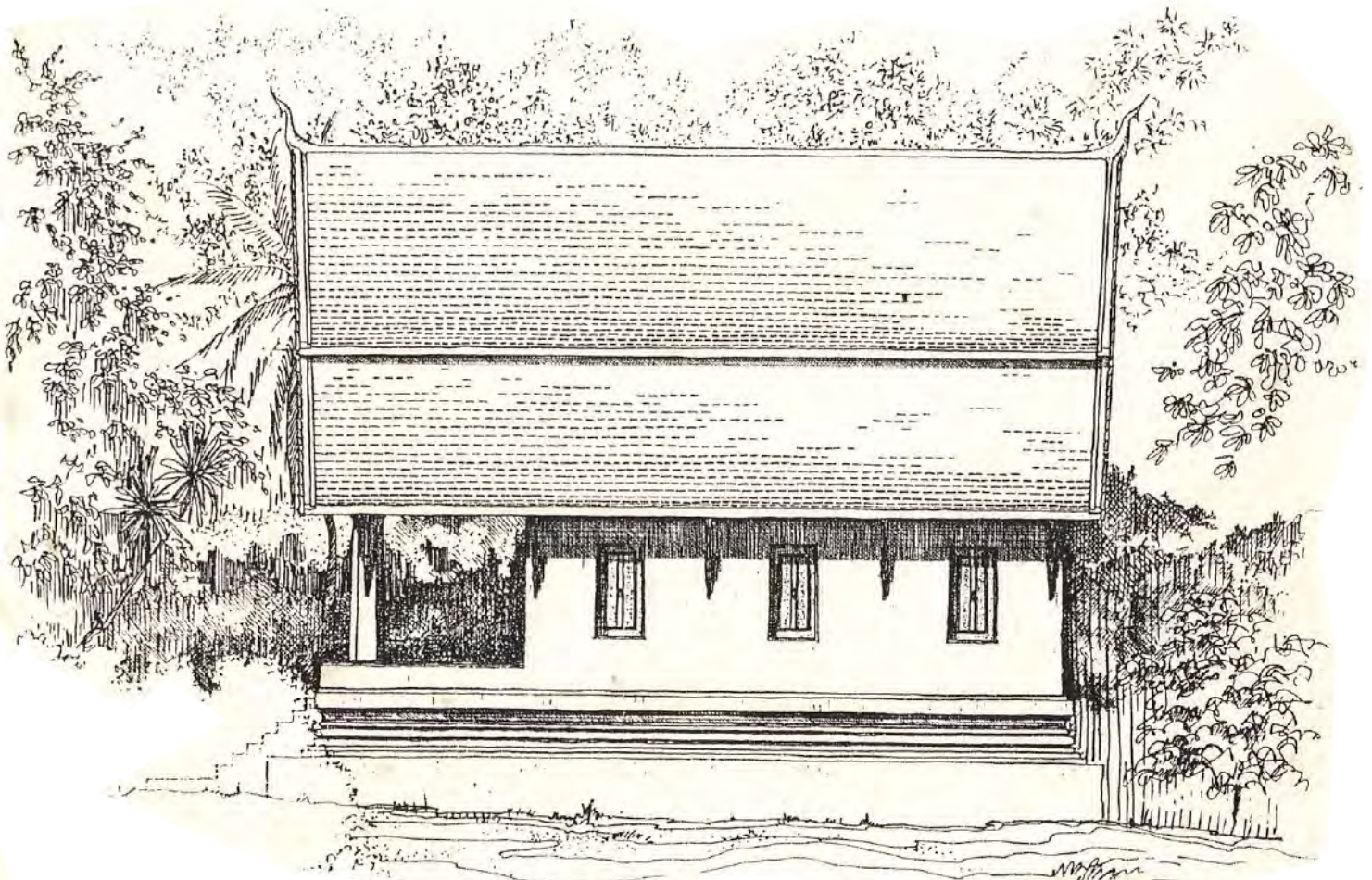


The most interesting feature of this sanctuary is the mural paintings which illustrate the legend of Jambupati-suta. These paintings are of good quality; well composed using harmonious colours, highlighted by some tints of vivid colour.

Formerly a two-compartment monks' dormitory and dining room existed at the northeast of the sanctuary. In 1942 Luang Prabang's Ministry of Cults destroyed the two religious buildings. One of the doors of the monks' lodging is conserved at the Louis-Finot Museum in Hanoi. Since 1945 Wat Pa Huak has served as the library of the Ministry of Cults, where numerous ancient manuscripts are held.



FACADE Nord ~ Ouest





VAT XIENG-TONG

1560

Orientation: N.E-S.W.

The history of this Wat is linked to the legend of the town's original inception. It is situated on the confluence of the Mekong and the Nam Khane.

During the royal epoch Wat Xieng Thong was also known as "the monastery of the town gate," as formerly it was through the upstream port that official coming and goings of the Sovereign took place. Notable travellers navigating the river or arriving from Siam by the road that ends on the right bank, at Ban Xieng Mene, also entered the capital at this point.

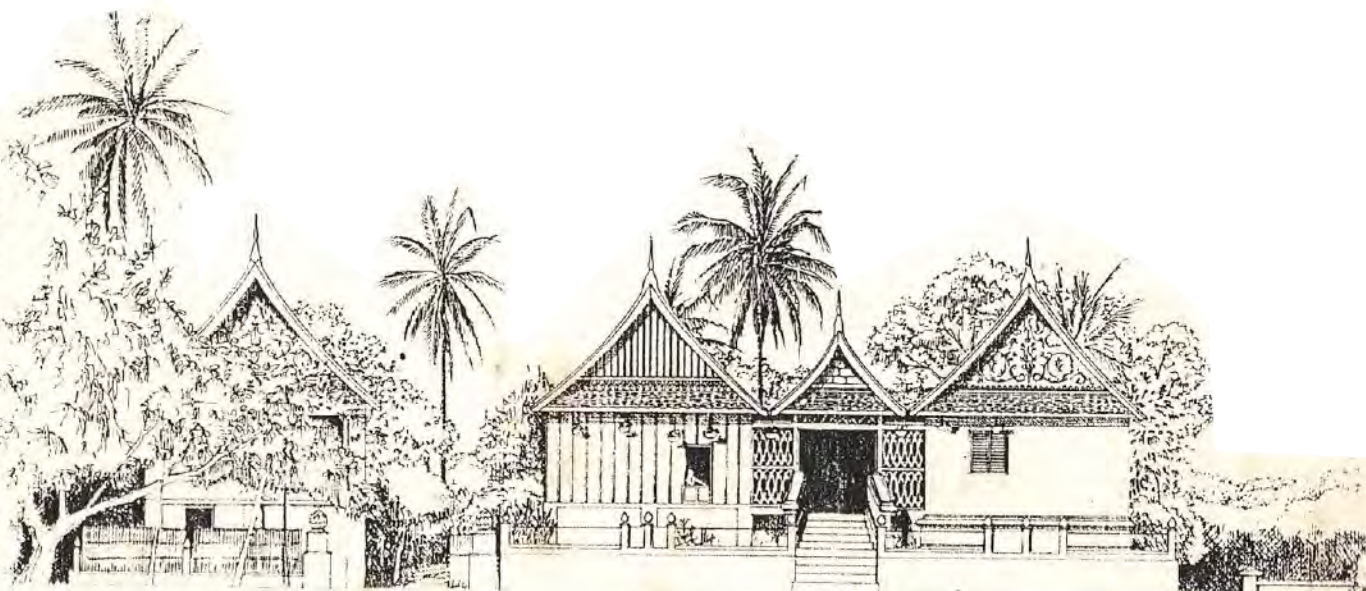
In the legend of Chanthaphanit the foundation of Wat Xieng Thong appears again, this time in the Sixteenth Century. The local annals record that the wat was built in 1560 by King Saysetthathirath. Then after three centuries of relatively calm history, Wat Xieng Thong was faced with the fire of 1887, started during the ransacking of the city by the "Black Banners." Fortunately Wat Xieng Thong was neither pillaged nor burned. Much of the town was.

On an official visit to Luang Prabang in 1928, the Governor General of Indochina accepted the request of King Sisavang Vong to partially finance the sanctuary's restoration.

This Wat presents some of the most complex edifices among all the town's pagodas. It is remarkable from an archaeological point of view, as well as from a Lao iconographic and aesthetic view. Wat Xieng Tong in its present state (following the grand restoration instigated in 1960 by the royal foundation, lasting until the fall of the monarchy in 1975), comprises;

- The sanctuary
- The chapel of the standing Buddha
- The red chapel
- The "Phra Man" Buddha chapel
- The drum shelter
- The funerary cart chapel
- The golden chapel
- The Thats
- The wall gate

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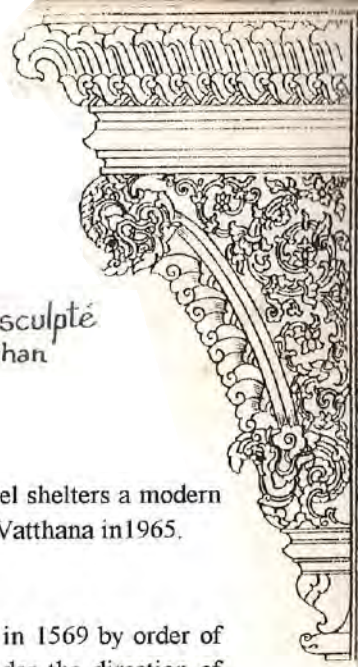


VAT XIENG-TONG

Kouti (Bonzerie)



Lambrequin de bois sculpté
Façade pignon du Vihan



Console de bois sculpté
Porche du Vihan

The chapel of the standing Buddha;

- The chapel situated north-east of the Vihan is the arched chapel. This chapel shelters a modern bronze buddha. The statue was a present from the King of Thailand to King Sisavang Vatthana in 1965.

The red chapel (also known as the chapel of the lying Buddha);

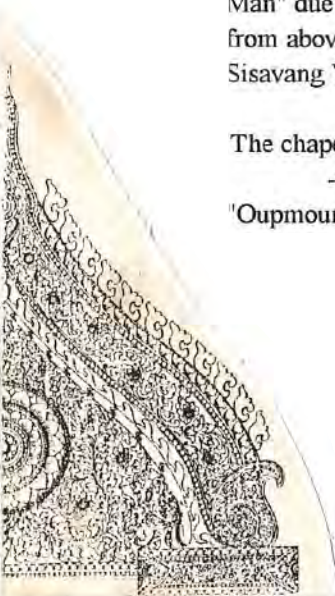
-This chapel harbours a bronze Buddha nearly two metres long. It was cast in 1569 by order of King Sayasetthathirath, the founder of Wat Xieng Tong. In 1931 it left the Wat under the direction of Chao Maha Oupahat Phetsarath, to occupy a prime position in the Laotian section of the Indochina pavilion at the Paris Colonial Exhibition. On its return it was placed in the living rooms of the governor's residence in Vientiane. In 1949 it was transferred to Vientiane's Wat Ho Phra Keo, and it was not until three years later that it was finally returned to Luang Prabang. It was after the restoration of the red chapel in 1960 that this Buddha again found its original place in Wat Xieng Tong,

The chapel of the "Phra Man" Buddha.

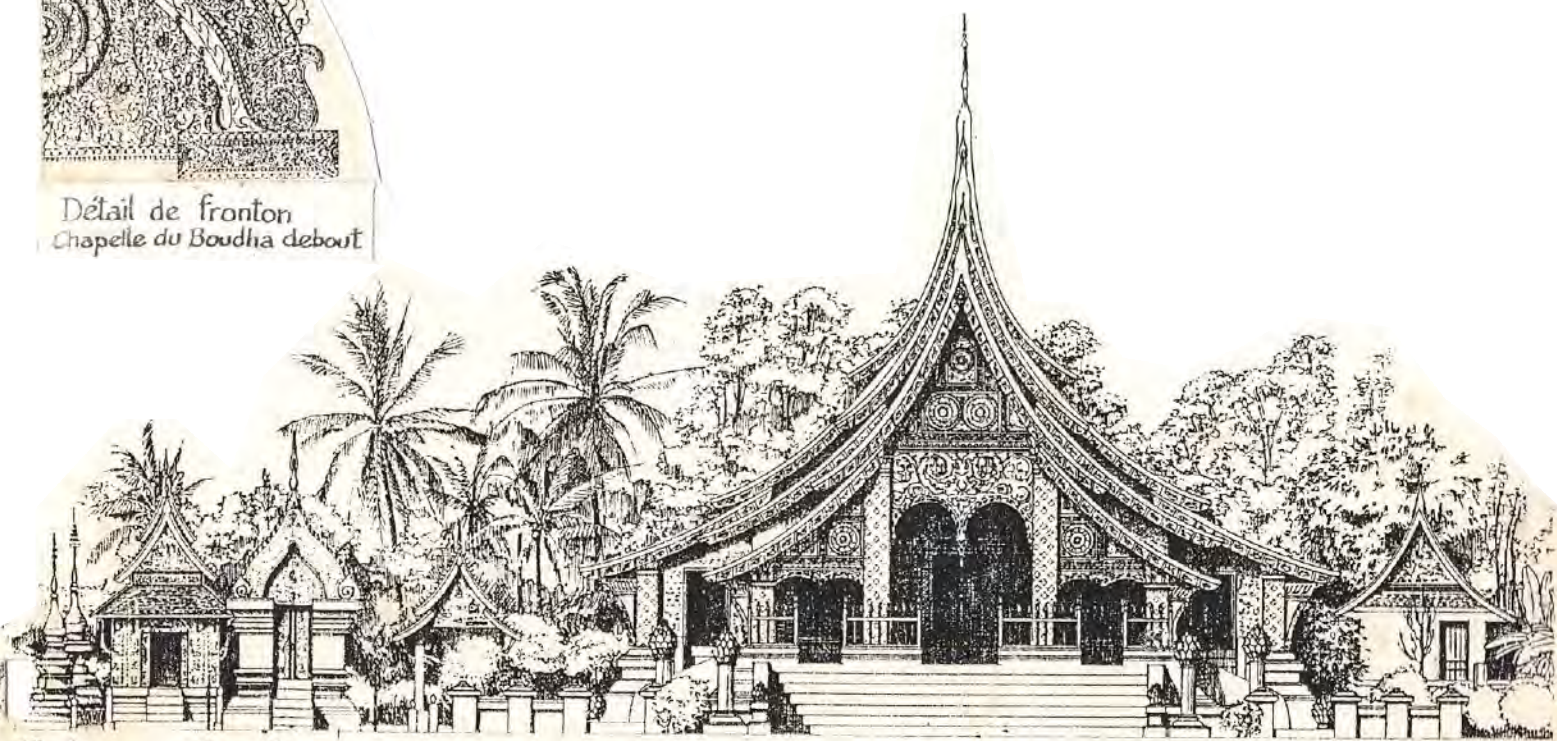
-Within the interior of this chapel is the bronze Buddha that the indigenous villagers call "Phra Man" due to the belief that if the Buddha is taken outside during the dry season, it will call the rains down from above. Inside the chapel, the hall has three naves and four bays. It contains the funeral cart of King Sisavang Vong, who died in 1959, as well as several relics of the royal family.

The chapel of the golden Buddha.

-The chapel of the golden Buddha was recently constructed on the approximate site of the ancient "Oupmoung Man", now disappeared.



Détail de fronton
Chapelle du Boudha debout



Thats Chapelles Vihan Kouti

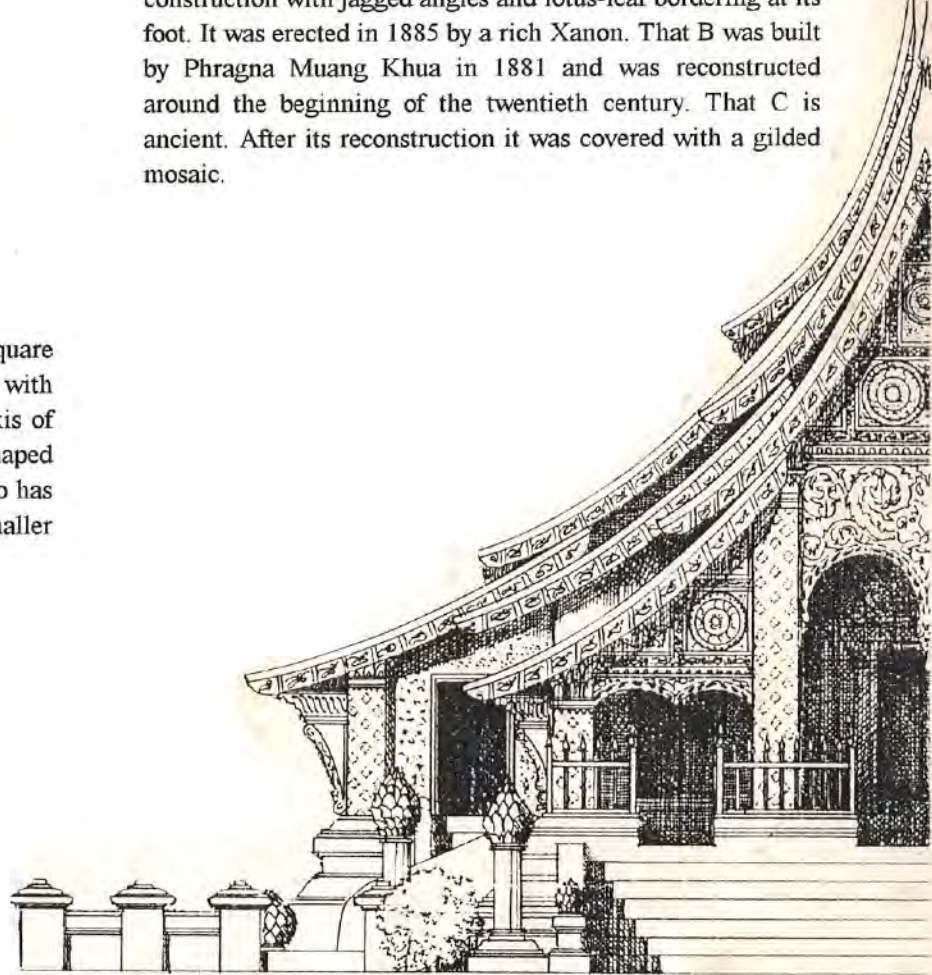
The Thats

-All thats within the Wat's precinct have been restored to their original form. That A is a square construction with jagged angles and lotus-leaf bordering at its foot. It was erected in 1885 by a rich Xanon. That B was built by Phragna Muang Khua in 1881 and was reconstructed around the beginning of the twentieth century. That C is ancient. After its reconstruction it was covered with a gilded mosaic.



*Lambrequin de bois sculpté
Façade pignon du Vihan*

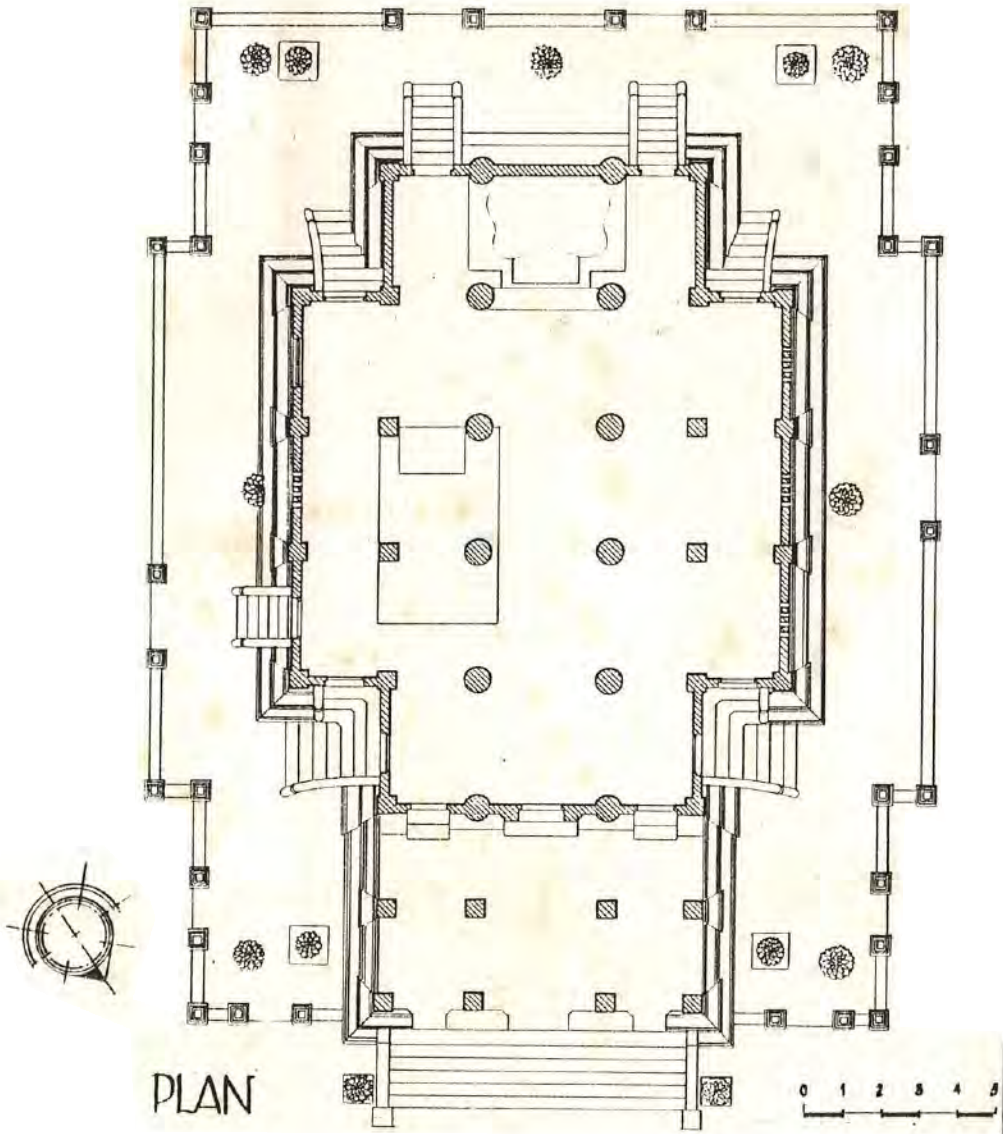
At the southern entry are two thats, one of square carafe shape and the other octagonal, inlaid with coloured glass. The That situated in the axis of the Vihan is of large proportion, bell-shaped with circular mouldings. This large that also has a gilded mosaic. North of this is another smaller carafe-shaped that.



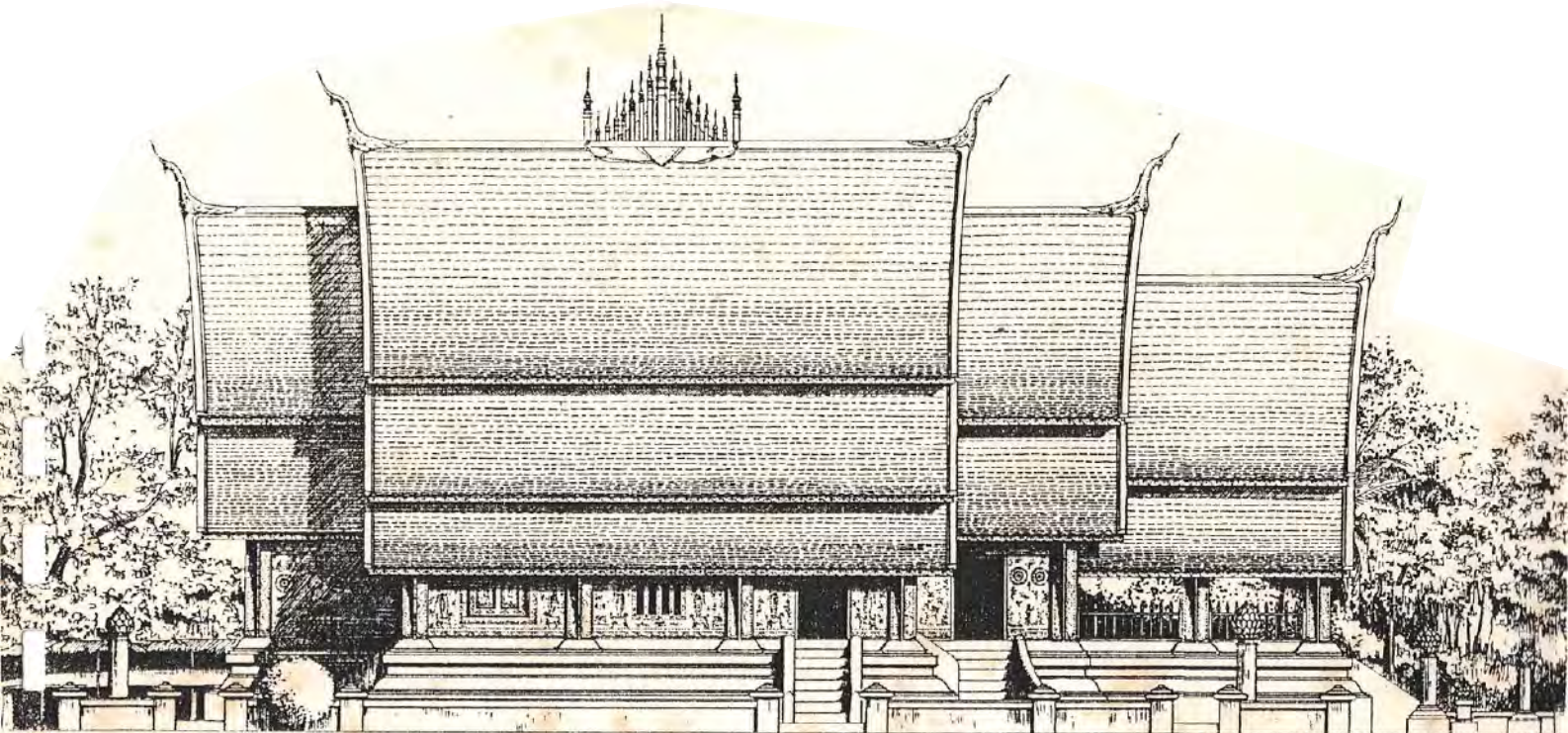
That

That

Chapelle



Sculpture sur bois
Porte arrière du Vihan



Abri Pirogue

Vihan

The Entry Gate

- Wat Xieng Tong's entry gate is a structure with three indentations. It opens east and has two bays and two false bays which meet the precinct wall. Two tigers of ancient character guard the north entrance to the pagoda. Their presence is explained by a former name of the village, Ban Hua Sua, the tiger's head village.

-The staircase leading down to the Mekong was broadened to 8 metres during the great restoration. Formerly it was 2 metres wide. According to ancestral custom the sovereign must retreat to Wat Long Khoum, on the opposite bank of the Mekong, for the three days preceding his coronation eve. The day before the ceremony he enters the city through Wat Xieng Thong.

The sanctuary is a magnificent edifice. The concept was developed from a simple plan of three naves and a single porch, an interesting composition which makes it possibly the most original sanctuary in Luang Prabang.

* Within the Vihan the three central bays are augmented by two aisles. According to the Wat's governor, King Sisavang Vatthana entrusted artists with the task of recopying all the ancient paintings discovered before the restoration works.

Wat Xieng Tong's sanctuary is perhaps the only one in Laos with a roof formed on harmonious lines. It is the most perfect of Lao Wats, its tiered roofs flaring more than is usual. The whole of the basement of the sanctuary is covered with a mosaic of royal blue glass and gilt, evoking the ancient and royal city's rivers and its past through the richness of gold.



In Luang Prabang, as in other regions of the country, the That is a construction full of votive or funereal character. Within it is often preserved, according to beliefs, relics of the Buddha, great monks, royalty and nobility, or even wealthy individuals. It should be noted that these monuments in Laos present a singularly prodigious diversity compared even to the extremely rich and diverse thats of Siam and Burma.

To facilitate the comparison of these diverse specimens with each other the following simple classifications can be made:

- Stupas of demi-sphere, bell, jewel or any decorative form, but only those with harmonious curves.
- Stupas whose supporting structure is of equal significance to the superstructure.
- Stupas whose curved section ends with a simple final symbol.

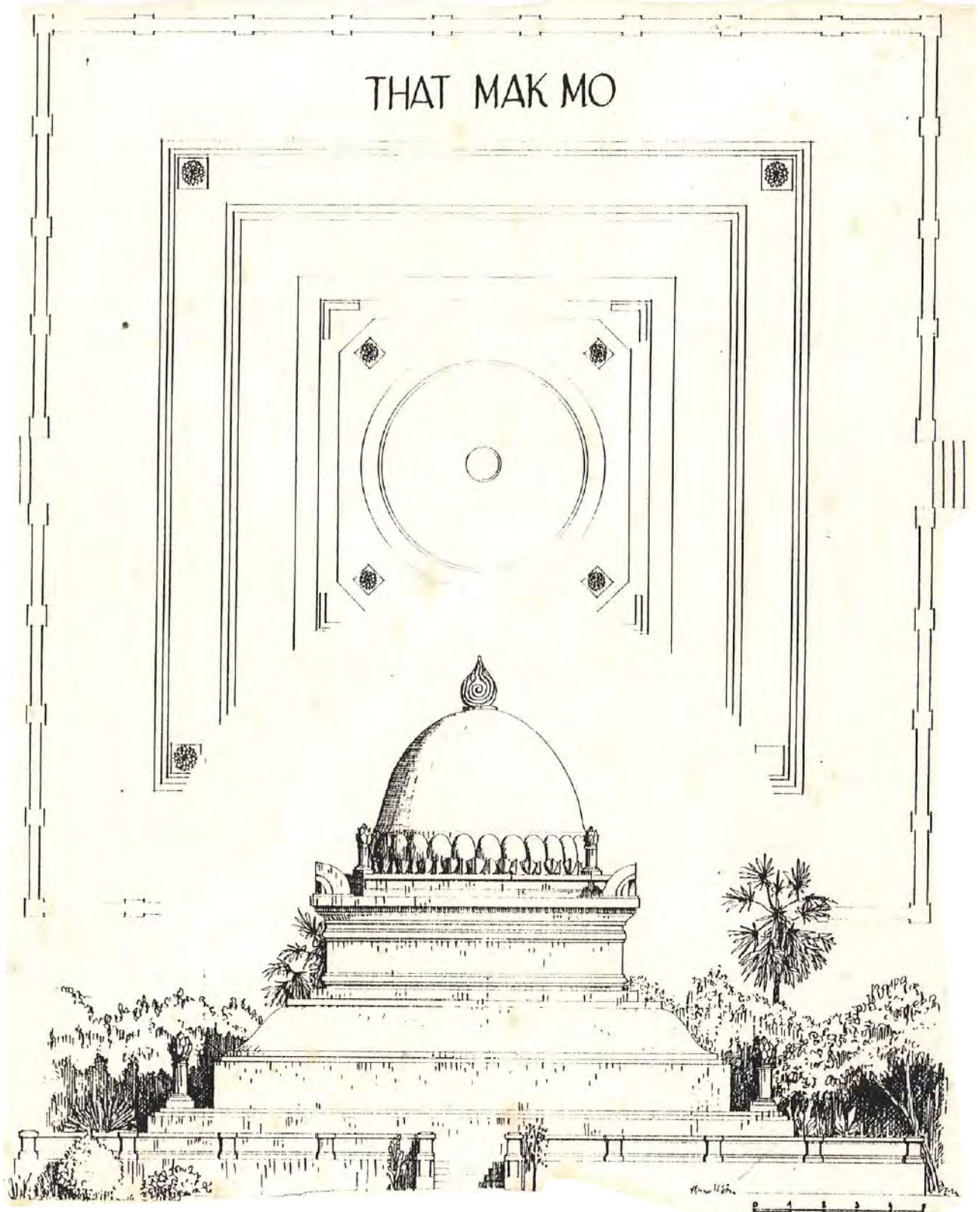
In Luang Prabang the demi-sphere Indian stupa is represented only by the That Mak Mo of Wat Vixun; it is unique in and to Laos. It may have repeated some much more ancient monument of a Burmese influence prevalent before the current style of Burmese thats. Only the bell shape is truly common with the other Hinduised regions.

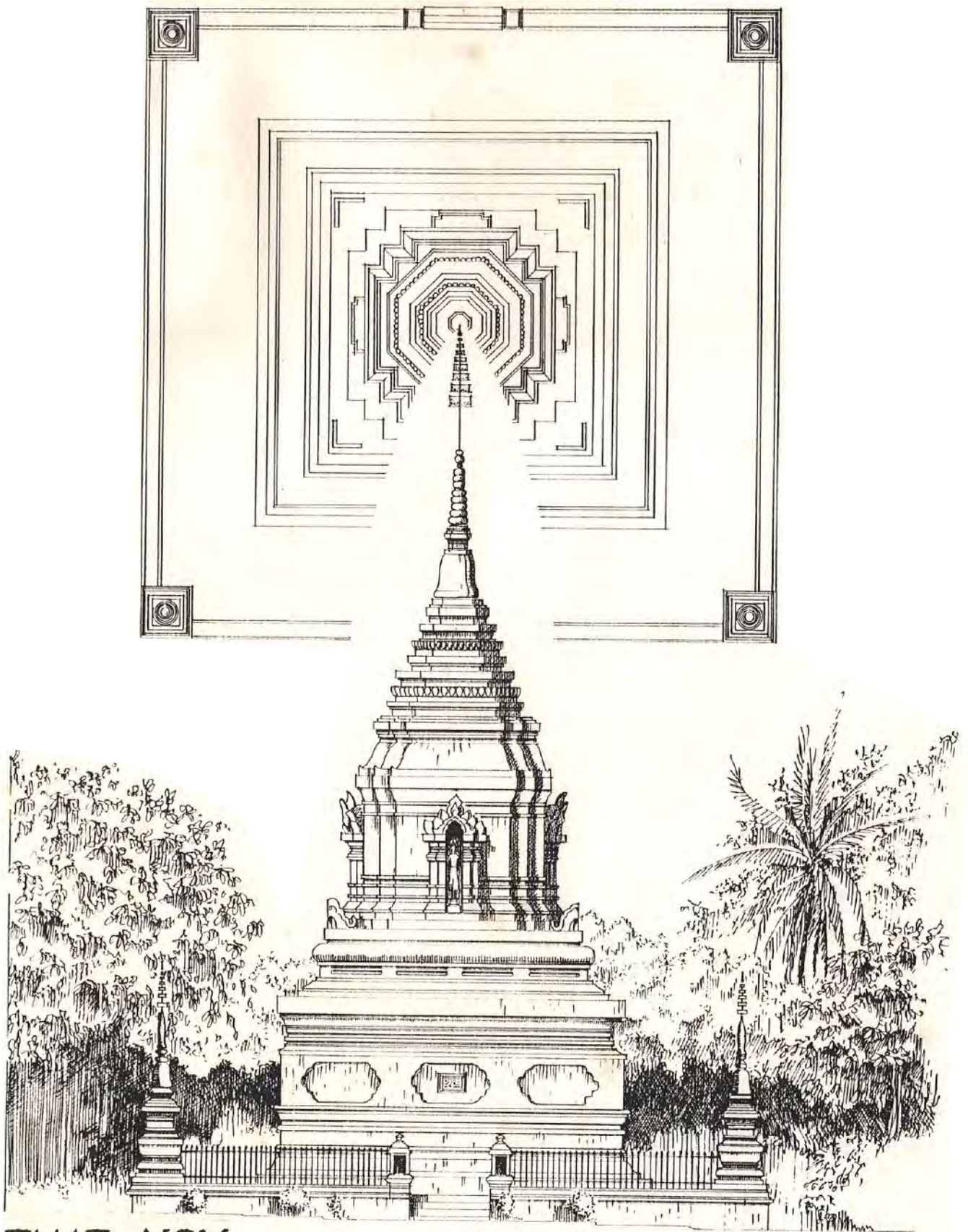
Quasi proper to Laos, the carafe or jewel shape also appears on Burmese stupas. It is a decorative element forming part of the main body. The carafe bulb, a typically Lao decorative element, is found in extremely varied proportions on all Lao stupas. The size of Lao thats ranges from two metres to several tens of metres. The biggest Thats in Luang Prabang, excluding That Mak Mo, are at Wat That Luang and Wat That.



Originally That Mak Mo was known as "Chedi Pathoum", meaning in the form of a lotus. Mak Mo means watermelon, resembling as it does a sliced watermelon. It was probably built at the same time as Wat Vixun, by King Vixunlabath in 1503.

The That was ransacked by the Ho (Chinese of South Yunnan, more commonly called the Black Banners). In 1895 King Sakkharine, father of Sisavang Vong, undertook its restoration. During its second restoration in 1914 a small solid gold stupa, and Buddha statues in gold, silver and bronze were discovered along with many other precious artifacts. They have been held ever since at the Luang Prabang museum, the former royal palace.



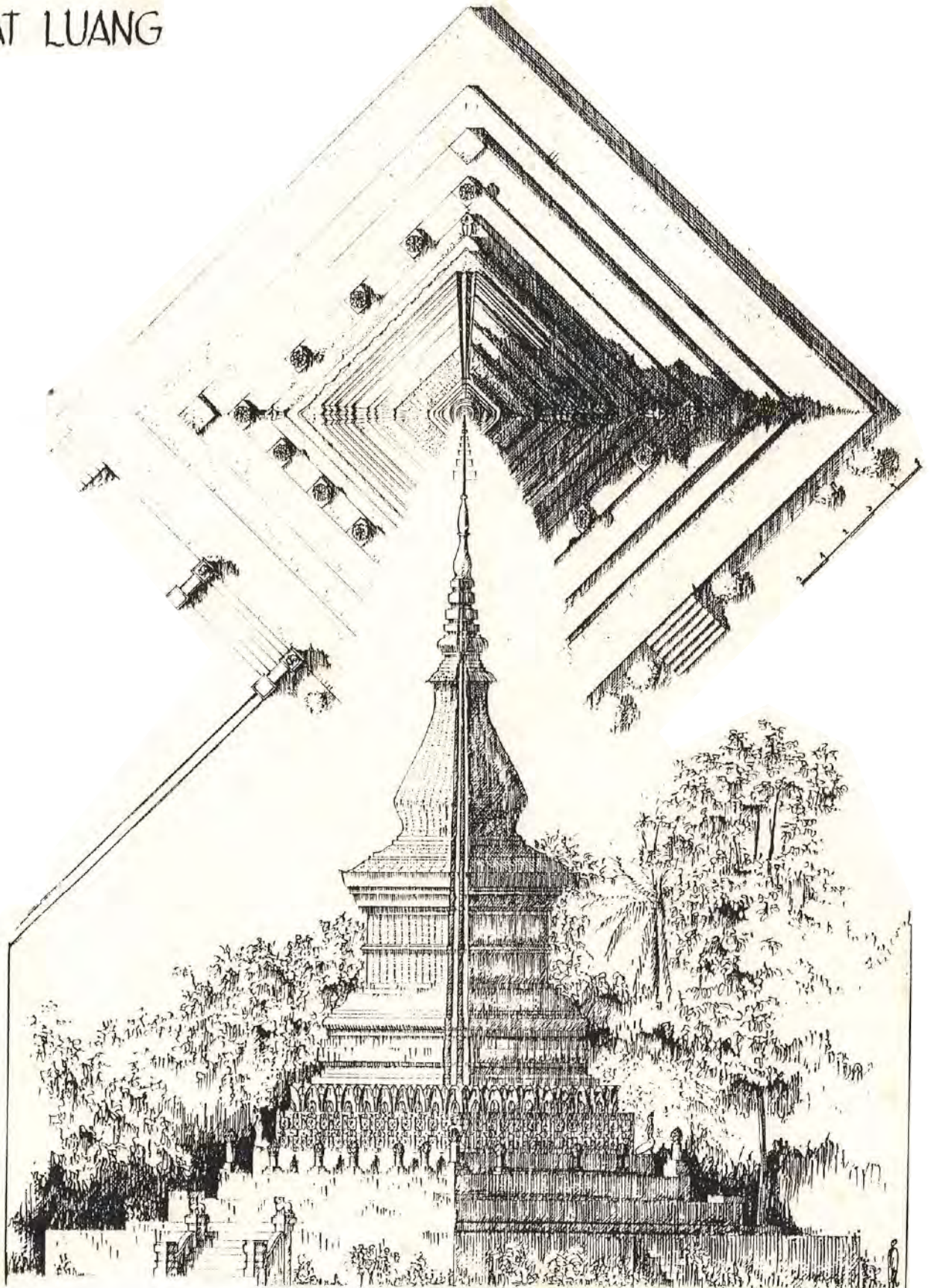


THAT NOY

This That is estimated to be Sixteenth Century. It gave its name to the monastery later built on the site. According to H. Parmentier, its restoration dates from the beginning of the century. It has a square base and each face holds a niche sheltering a standing Buddha, symbolising the omnipresence of the master and his protection of the world.

This that of indented square design was built by Mangthatoulat in 1818 on the site of a more ancient that. Around 1910 the then ruined that was surveyed by Finot Louis and excavated by l'Ecole Francaise d'Extrême Orient who uncovered numerous vestiges of the Khmers, mainly steles and statues. It was in 1935 that King Sisavangvong ordered its restoration.

THAT LUANG



INVENTORY INDEX

CITY OF LUANG PRABANG



DESCRIPTION OF THE ERA'S CONSTRUCTION SYSTEMS AND MATERIALS

Lao Wood and Lao Colombage Habitations

Simply conceived, the Lao habitation divides its space into two; one private area for the family - the bedrooms - the other accessible to visitors, - the covered terrace and space for reception, meals and resting. The furniture, including floor mats, low tables of tressed rattan and chests, is very simple.

These constructions are elevated on wooden stilts, leaving a work area under the house sheltered from sun and rain. The shed and hen house are located here and cattle can be sheltered. This type of habitat is still very common in rural areas through the whole country.

The Structure:

With a framework of wooden pillars cut by machete, the structure consists of an assemblage of mortice and tenon joints and embedments. The components are not nailed and the most delicate ones, such as the rafters, are bound to the structure with the aid of organic ligatures.

The pillars, of +/- 25 cm section, are sometimes faceted hexagonally or octagonally. Made of one piece, they stand on the soil or on a stone plate and rise through the floor to support the framework.

It should be noted that in the structural methods studied in Laos, in the religious as well as the secular architecture, not one example of a cross bracing system has been found.

The Floor:

The extent of the floor varies between four and five metres. It is structured of beams embedded in the pillars, which support wooden tiles. The tiles are covered either directly with planks up to 40 cm wide or by split bamboo rafters on which split and unfolded bamboo sheets (1- 1.5 cm thick) are tied.

A built-in hearth may be noticed in this type of work. It is, in effect, a one metre wooden tank embedded in the structure. Filled with earth this provides a fire-place for heating and cooking in the home.

External walls and partitions:

- Wooden Habitations

These elements are formed either with planks or with tressed bamboo sheets linked to a rigid wooden frame, itself fixed to the pillars.

- Wood & Colombage Habitations

The colombage structures are supported by a lattice of vertical and horizontal rafters hidden by a bamboo frame which is coated internally and externally with cob. The cob is a mixture of sand, rice straw, vegetable oil, unidentified barks and thinly sliced buffalo hide. This nauseating composition must observe a maceration period of three weeks to achieve decomposure and a perfect blend of the ingredients. Once affixed and dried this local cob displays remarkable properties of rigidity and longevity. It is known that the mixture was also formerly used as the base mortar for brick masonry works such as the wats and thats.

INVENTORY INDEX CITY OF LUANG PRABANG
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DESCRIPTION OF THE ERA'S CONSTRUCTION SYSTEMS AND MATERIALS

(continued)

The Framework

The framework is very varied in Laos. The systems used by the T'ai language peoples, as seen in the wats, are constituted of tie-beam piling. These can be found in houses, but other compound systems of the former combined with truss systems also exist. One example is the use of a truss equipped with a central kingpost, without a main rafter but including an intermediary tie-beam embedded at half the height of the kingpost. There are many other combinations.

The Roofing

Originally made from plants known as "GNA KHA" or "GNA FEEK", roofing had a lifespan of three to six years depending upon the plant used and the spacing observed in the application of the roofing materials.

The appearance of the tile has had an impact in urban areas where the more prosperous habitations have adopted its use.

The Carpentry and Decoration:

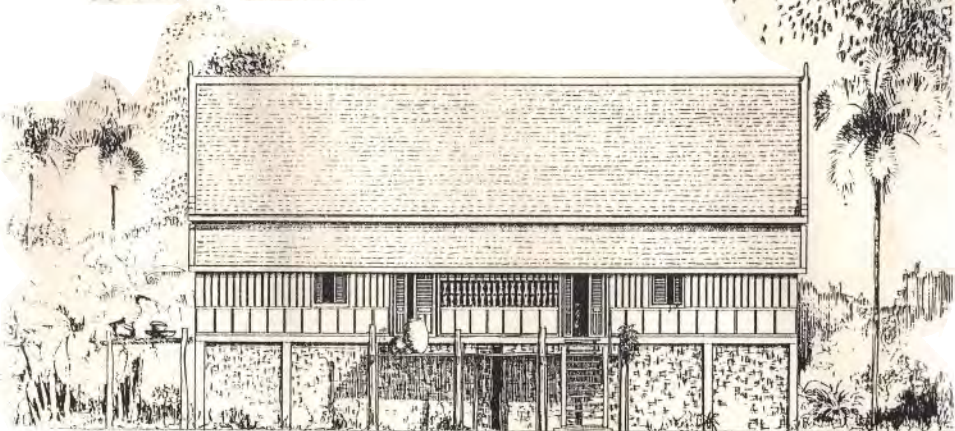
The gutters and eaves of the roof are ornamented with friezes of small, cut and juxtaposed boards generally repeating the same floral motif.

The gables are traditionally decorated with three sculpted wooden cinquefoils, floral and pierced. These hide the ventilation holes of the under slope.

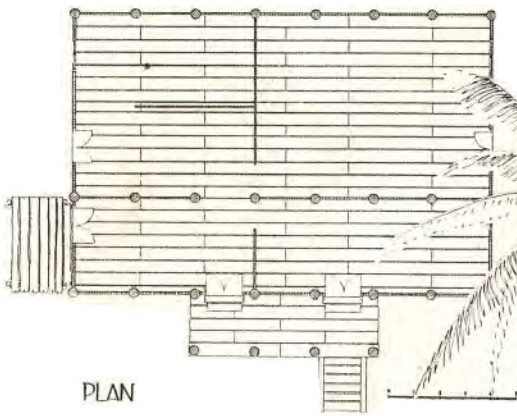
Lao bannisters come in an astonishing variety. They are comprised of either sculpted bars or small cut planks, as on the roof verges.

**LIST OF BUILDINGS
OF LAO TYPOLOGY IN WOOD**

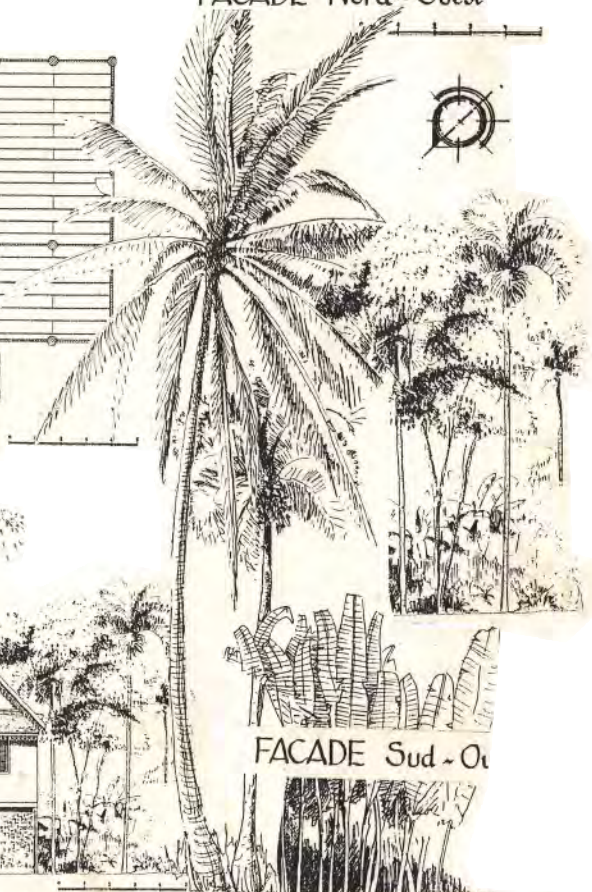
TYPE	YEARS	VILLAGES	NAMES OF PROPRIETORS
Lb 1	1915-20	B. Tioum Khong	Mr. Oun Meuane
Lb 2	1911-13	B. Tioum Khong	Mrs. Kene
Lb 3	1920	B. That	Mrs. Kene
Lb 4	1921	B. Pa Kam	Mrs. Kene
Lb 5	1921	B. Xieng Mouane	Vat Xieng Mouane
Lb 6	1920-30	B. Xieng Mouane	Vat Xieng Mouane
Lb 7	1931	B. Aham	Mr. Thong Chan
Lb 8	1935	B. Mune Na	Mrs. Thoum



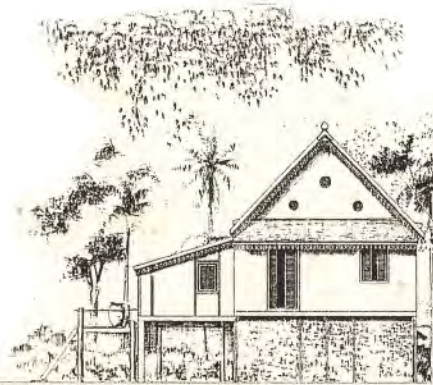
FACADE Nord ~ Ouest



PLAN



FACADE Sud ~ Est



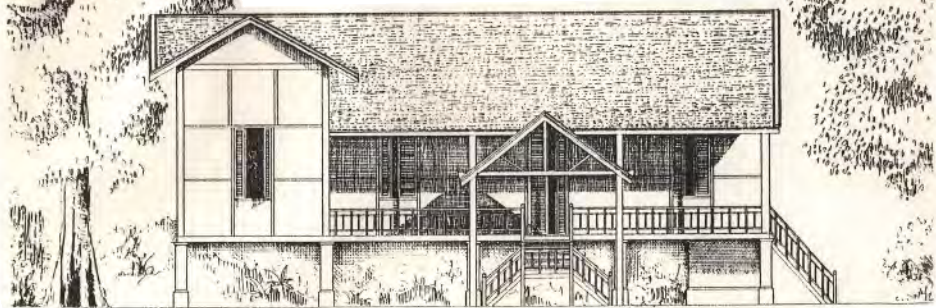
**LIST OF BUILDINGS
OF LAO TYPOLOGY IN COLOMBAGE**

TYPE	YEARS	VILLAGES	NAMES OF PROPRIETORS
Lc 1	1922	B. Vixun	Lao Red Cross
Lc 2	1922	B. Vixun	Finance Service
Lc 3	1924	B. Vixun	Finance Service
Lc 4	1920-25	B. Phone Heung	---
Lc 5	1931	B. Pa Kam	Mrs. Thiam Chan
Lc 6	1930-35	B. Nong	Mrs. Alhinh
Lc 7	1930-35	B. Sene	Mrs. Phiakhambua
Lc 8	1930-35	B. Vixun	Finance Service
Lc 9	1935	C. Xieng Thong	---
Lc 10	1930-35	B. Pa Kam	---
Lc 11	1940	B. Sene	Mrs. Southone

HABITATION Lao Colombage

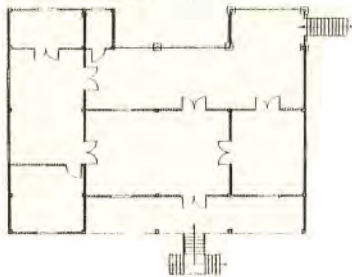
1937

Lc 1

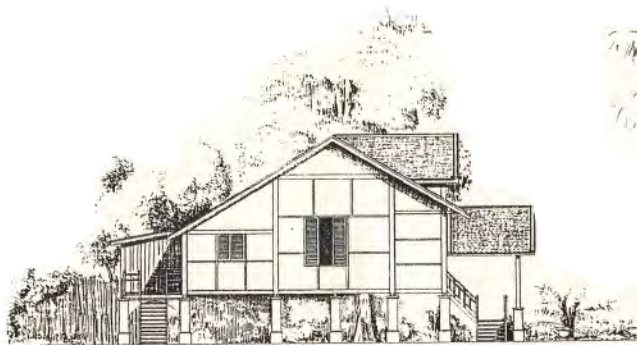
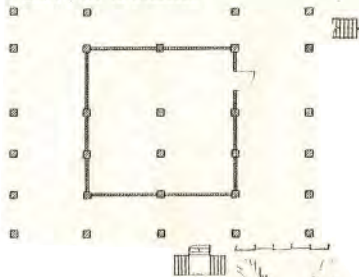


FACADE Nord ~ Ouest

PLAN 1^{er} Etage



PLAN Rez de Chaussée



FACADE Nord ~ Est



INVENTORY INDEX CITY OF LUANG PRABANG
--

**DESCRIPTION OF THE ERA'S CONSTRUCTION SYSTEMS AND MATERIALS****Habitations in Lao Brick and Wood, and Lao Brick and Colombage.**

These houses are of the same type as the previously discussed traditional Lao habitats. The use of brick during the French era abolished the restrictions hitherto observed by the Luang Prabang people. Brick had been used only in religious monuments.

Brick replaced wood in the supporting structures. The plank and framework systems, the wood partitions and colombage assembly and the fabrication of decorative elements remained identical to the previous era.

**LIST OF BUILDINGS OF
LAO TYPOLOGY IN BRICK & WOOD**

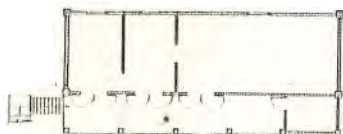
TYPE	YEARS	VILLAGES	NAMES OF PROPRIETORS
LBb 1	1914	B. Xieng Muan	Mr. Thong Phanh
LBb 2	1910-15	B. Sene	Mrs. One Si
LBb 3	1916	B. Vat That	Sisavangvong family
LBb 4	1919	B. Pa Kam	Mrs. Latsamy
LBb 4'	1919	B. Pa Kam	Mrs. Latsamy
LBb 5	1915-20	B. Vat That	Mr. Sisavath
LBb 6	1920	B. Xieng Muan	Mr. Thongsouk
LBb 7	1920-25	B. Xieng Muan	Mrs. Saysamone
LBb 8	1920-25	B. Phone Heung	---
LBb 9	1925	B. Mun Na	Mrs. Chamsouk Boupha
LBb 10	1925	B. Phone Heung	Mrs. Uan Soudachan
LBb 11	1926	B. Xieng Muan	Mrs. Souksakhone
LBb 12	1931	B. Khily	Mr. Thong Khambay
LBb 13	1935	B. Vixun	Mr. Bounchan
LBb 14	1930	B. That Luang	Mr. Honekeo
LBb 15	1930	B. Vat That	---
LBb 16	* 1942	B. Thong Tialuan	Mrs. Houn Huen



HABITATION Lao Brique Bois 1920



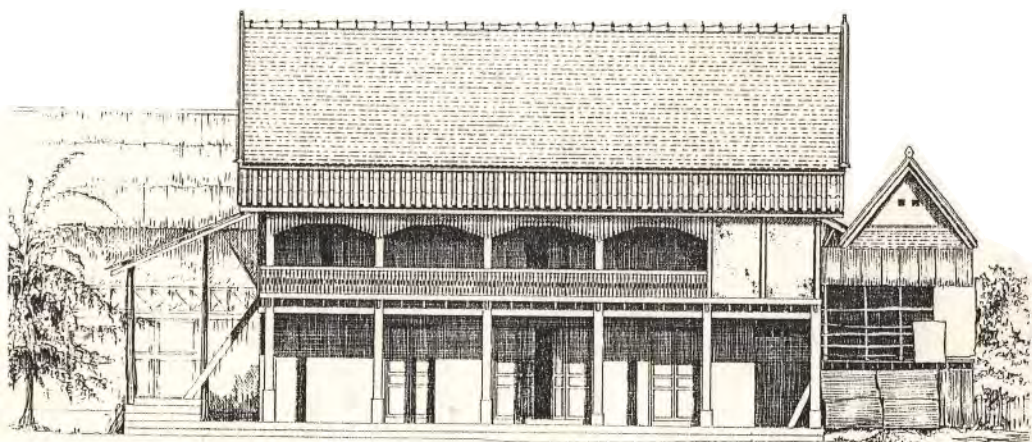
PLAN Rez de Chaussée



PLAN 1^{er} Etage



FACADE Nord ~ Est



FACADE Nord ~ Ouest

**LIST OF BUILDINGS OF
LAO BRICK & COLOMBAGE TYPOLOGY**

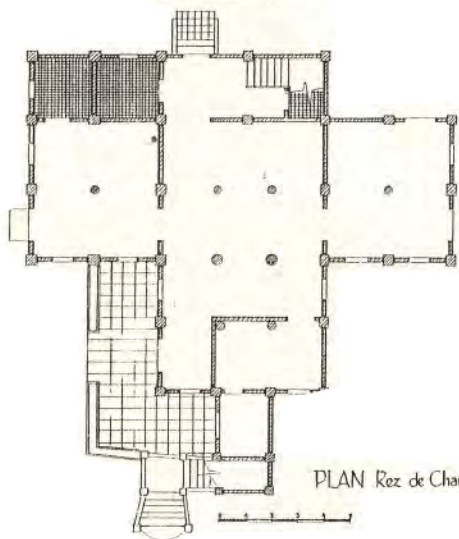
TYPE	YEARS	VILLAGES	NAMES OF PROPRIETORS
LBc 1	1923	B. That Luang	Mrs Bouakham
LBc 2	1920-25	B. Phone Heung	Culture Service
LBc 3	1932	B. Thong Tialeune	Mr. Bounthanh
LBc 4	1934	B. That	Mrs Nang Somdi
LBc 5	1934	B. Thong Tialeune	Miss Manichan
LBc 6	1934	B. Pa Kam	Mr. Somlith Sithivong
LBc 7	1934	B. That	Mr. Chansisouk
LBc 8	1934	B. That	Mr. Chanh Khao
LBc 9	1935	B. Vixun	Mr Sayasit
LBc 10	1935	B. Khily	Mrs Chanthy
LBc 11	1935	B. That Luang	Mr. Chansamone
LBc 12	1935	B. That Luang	Mr. Siphane
LBc 13	1935	B. That Luang	Mr. Chanthavong
LBc 14	1930-35	B. Khily	Mrs Chanthy
LBc 15	1936	B. Khily	Mr. Thongsouk Sisophah
LBc 16	1935-40	B. Khily	Mrs Hapsara

HABITATION Lao Brique Colombe 1923

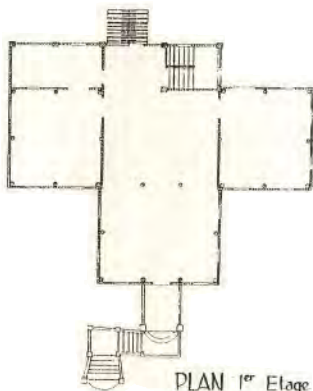
LBc1



FACADE Sud ~ Est

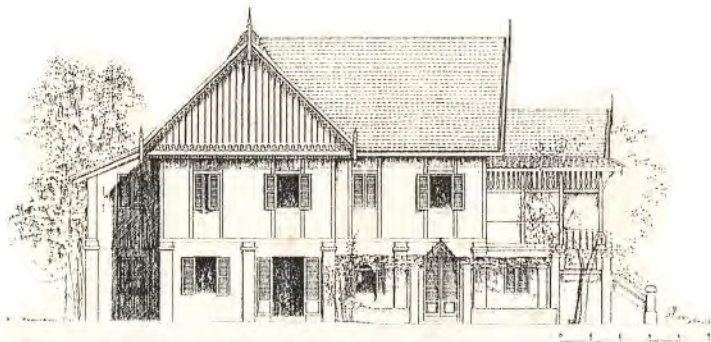


PLAN Rez de Chaussée

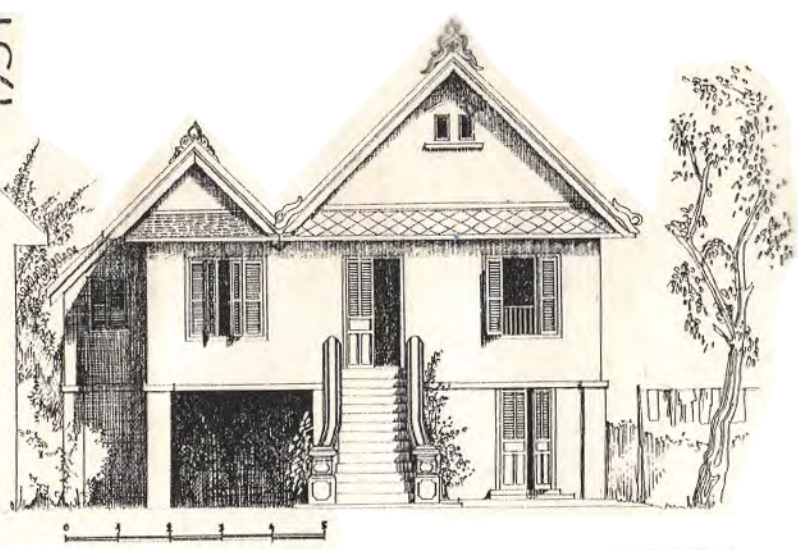


PLAN 1^{er} Etage

FACADE Sud ~ Ouest

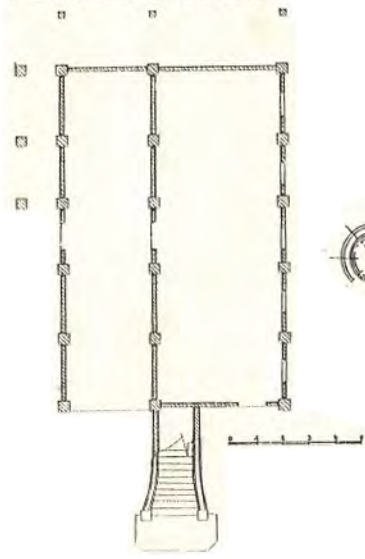


HABITATION Lao Brique Colombage
1934

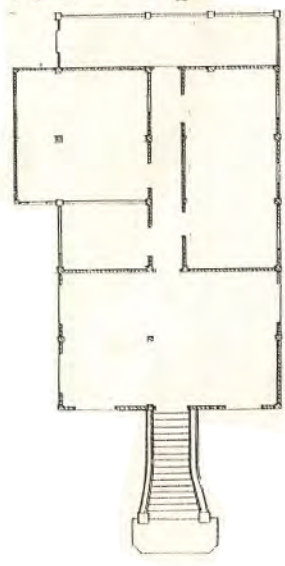


FACADE Nord ~ Est

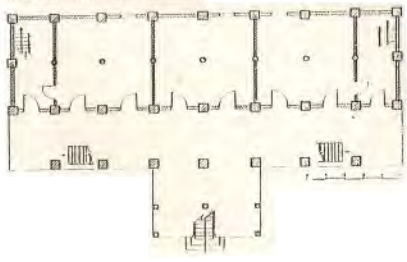
PLAN Rez de Chaussée



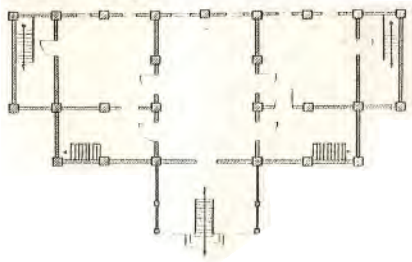
PLAN 1^{er} Etage



PLAN Rez de Chaussée



PLAN 1^{er} Etage



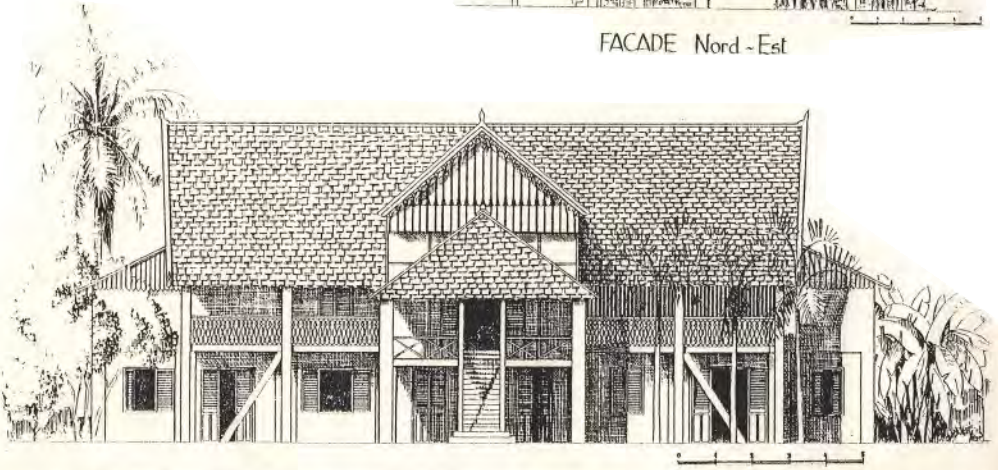
HABITATION

Lao Brique Colompage 1922



FACADE Sud - Est

FACADE Nord - Est



INVENTORY INDEX

CITY OF LUANG PRABANG



DESCRIPTION OF THE ERA'S CONSTRUCTION SYSTEMS AND MATERIALS

The Administrative Buildings, Lao Colonial Buildings and The Compartments .

Masonry:

The colonial edifices are built according to a brick support structure with beams of square or rectangular section, 30-50 cm, and external walls of 20-25 cm section. The brick bonding displays a base moulding and pillar capital at both the top and bottom of the walls and at the door frames, window frames etc.... The masonry is covered with a sand and limestone plaster. The colour of the facades is due to the use of a coating made from limestone, pigments and an unidentified but certainly natural fixative.

The Grounding:

The coverings used at the ground floor level are laid on a foundation spine of stones and gravel, covered by a bed of raw earth and a final bed of sand which supports the base mortar for ceramic tiles.

Only one house with a bed of baked earth is known (habitation LC 14).

Ceilings:

Ceilings are made of a coating of smooth plaster on a wooden lattice. This is nailed to a frame of rafters fixed either to the floor (on the ground floor) or directly to the structural elements (on the first floor).

Floors:

Placed on wooden structures (pantiles, rafters), the floor span varies between two and five metres. The planks, of 1.5 - 2.5 cm thickness may reach the length of the span in the finest works. Certain floors present an assembly of halved planks (tenon and mortice).

Framework:

The structures used for the framework are of the classical type; stretcher truss, kingpost and chief rafter. However the local framework systems with stretcher piling have been borrowed. This structure allows the tiered roof and the slope-ruptured roof characteristic of the local wats.

Tiles:

Flat earthen tiles with hooked nibs are moulded in wooden matrices and dried before being baked in earth kilns. The dimensions vary, the most common being 10 - 12 cm wide over a length of 25 cm. The thickness is approximately 0.8 cm with a nib of 1.5 cm. A particular size of tiles, 20 cm wide and 40 cm long, was recorded on the July 1994 project at Wat Mai. These are black with a finish that suggests a better quality baking process. According to the High Venerable of Luang Prabang these tiles had previously covered Wats.

INVENTORY INDEX CITY OF LUANG PRABANG
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**DESCRIPTION OF THE ERA'S CONSTRUCTION SYSTEMS AND MATERIALS**

(continued)

Woods:

The wood types most used in construction are:

- Hard woods:**
- Mai Du or rosewood
 - Mai Tekkha of the teak family, for structural elements, pillars and beams, carpentry and stairs etc.
 - Teak for floors

Soft woods: - used for scaffolding, struts etc.

The decorative elements are for the most part mouldings which ornament the ventilation holes on the under-slope of the gable.

Some rare floral and animal motifs are found on the gables of Lao colonial houses.

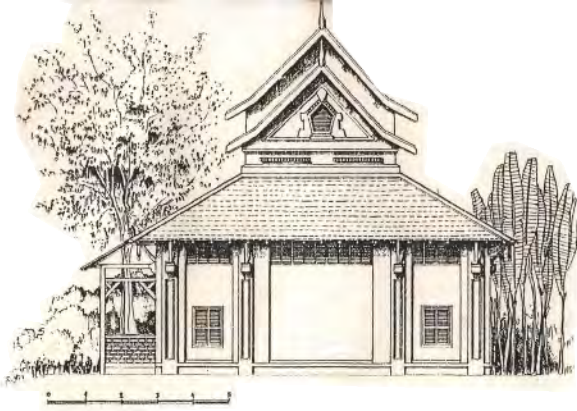
In the compartments the ground floor may be wooden. This is the only example of the positioning of the floor at road level.

**LIST OF BUILDINGS OF
ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING TYPOLOGY**

TYPE	YEARS	VILLAGES	NAMES OF PROPRIETORS
BA 1	1909-11	B. Xieng Thong	L.P. Province
BA 2	1910-11	B. Pa Kam	L.P. Culture Service
BA 3	1911	B. Pa Kam	L.P. Culture Service
BA 4	1911	B. Vieng Xay	L.P. Health Service
BA 5	1920	B. Tioum Khong	L.P. Culture Service
BA 6	1921	B. Nong	Primary school
BA 6'	1921	B. Nong	Primary school
BA 7	1921-22	B. Thong Tialeune	Secondary school
BA 7'	1921-22	B. Thong Tialeune	Secondary school
BA 8	1920-23	B. That Luang	L.P. Prov. Admin.
BA 9	1920-23	B. That Luang	Nursing school
BA 10	1920-23	B. Kham Yong	Public servant lodging
BA 11	1920-23	B. Pa Kam	Public servant lodging
BA 12	1920-25	B. Tioum Khong	L.P. library
BA 13	1920-25	B. Vixun	Chinese clinic
BA 14	1920-25	B. Thong Tialeune	L.P. Health Service
BA 15	1920-25	B. That Luang	Governor's Palace
BA 16	1925-35	B. Xieng Muan	L.P. Prov. Admin.
BA 17	1925-35	B. Xieng Muan	L.P. Prov. Admin.
BA 18	1930	B. Pa Kam	Lan Xang Bank
BA 19	1935-40	B. Tioum Khong	Electoral Office

FACADE Sud ~ Est

BA2

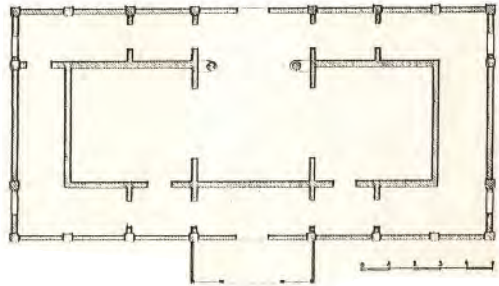


1911

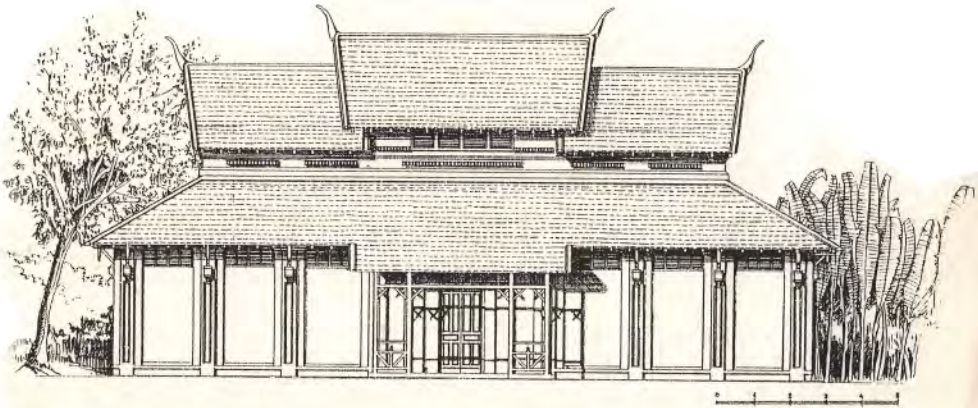
LOGEMENT PTT

1910

PLAN



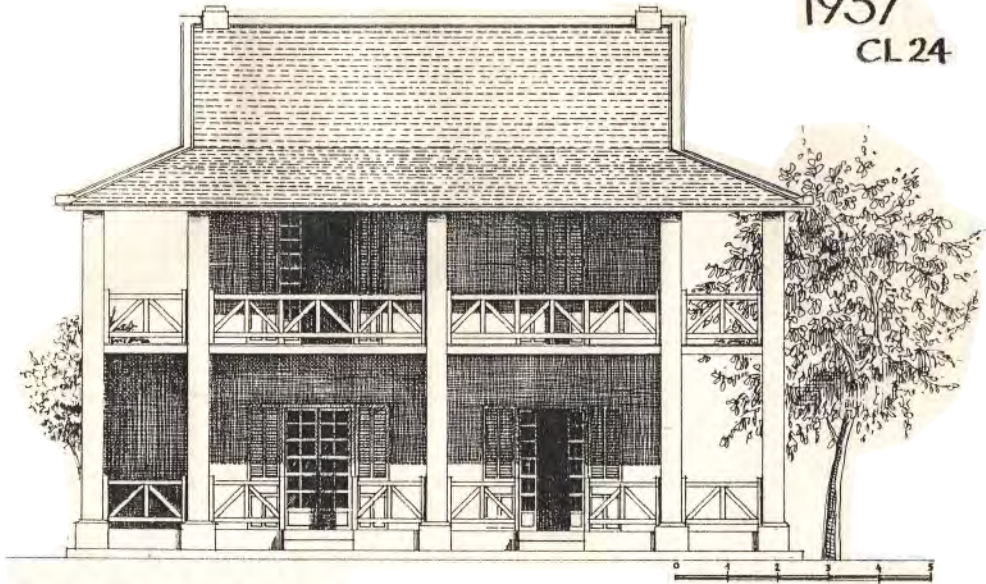
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HABITATION Lao-Colonial

1937

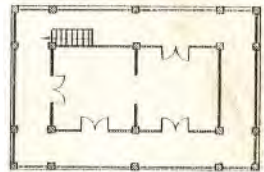
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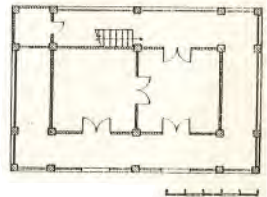


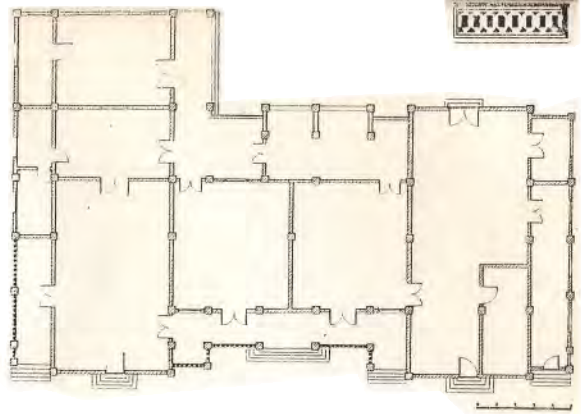
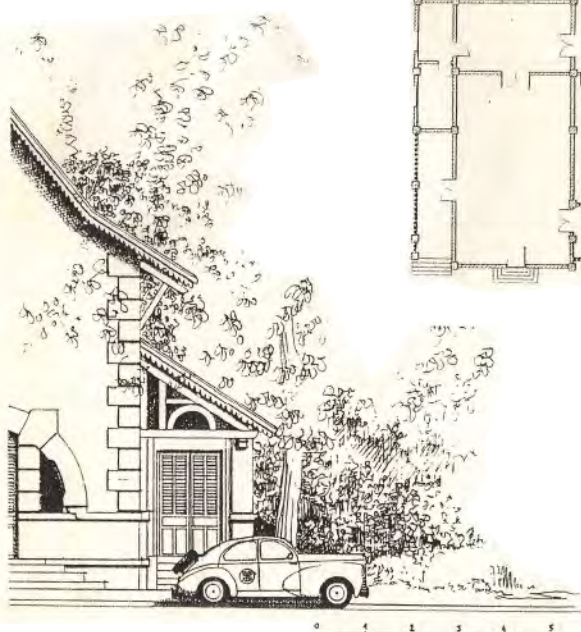
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PLAN Rez de Chaussée





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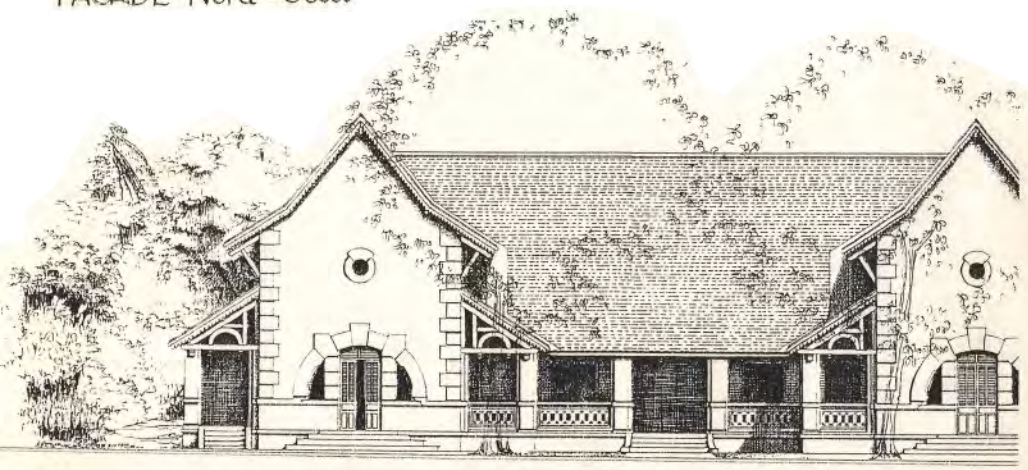
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LUANG-PRABANG

FACADE Nord-Ouest

BA12



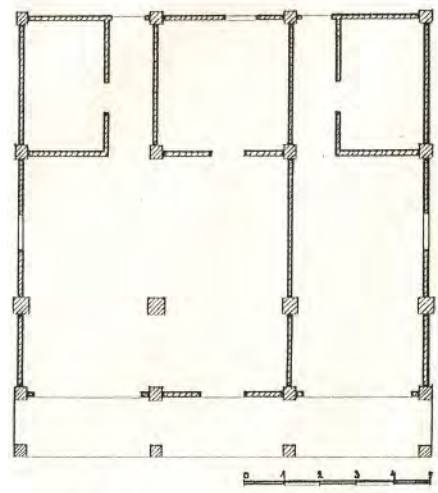
**LIST OF BUILDINGS
OF COMPARTMENT TYPOLOGY**

TYPE	YEARS	VILLAGES	NAMES OF OWNERS
C 1	1921	B. Sene	L.P. Commerce Service
C 2	1923	B. Pa Kam	Mr. Thitsingkhom Bounthavong
C 3	1925	B. Sene	Mrs. Southone
C 4	1930	B. Hua Xieng	Mr. Huen
C 5	1930-35	B. Sene	Mrs. Puiakham Bua
C 6	1935	B. Sene	Mr. Pheng
C 7	1937	B. Phone Heung	Mr. Phanu
C 8	1938	B. Sene	Mr. Chansouk
C 9	1938	B. Sene	Mrs. Sangnaly
C 10	1938	B. Tioum Khong	Mr. Vatthana

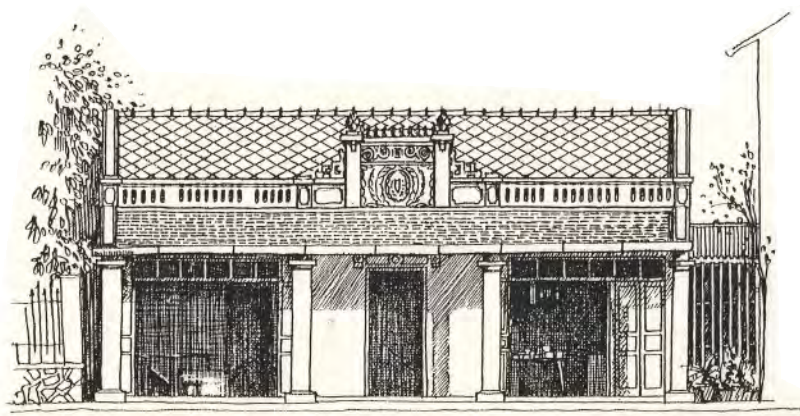


COMPARTIMENT Vietnamien 1923

PLAN



FACADE Sud ~ Est



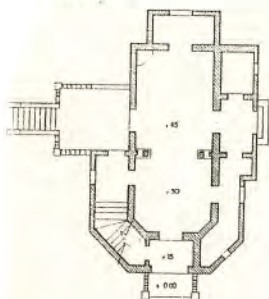
**LIST OF BUILDINGS
OF LAO COLONIAL TYPOLOGY**

TYPE	YEARS	VILLAGES	NAMES OF OWNERS
LC 1	1909-11	B. That Luang	Construction service
LC 2	1911-13	B. Thong Tialeune	Health Service
LC 3	1922	B. Xieng Muan	Education Service
LC 4	1925	B. Aham	Mrs. Mon Onh
LC 5	1920-25	B. Phone Heung	Family Dorée
LC 6	1924	B. Aphay	Mr. Xieng Phonmi
LC 7	1925	B. Sene	Mr. Kham
LC 8	1926	B. Hua Xieng	Mr. Phay
LC 9	1925-30	B. Vixun	Mr. Khamphon Boupha
LC 10	1929	B. Phone Heung	Mr. Inthavong Santi
LC 11	1930-33	B. Hua Xieng	Mr. Khamphing Sisavangvong
LC 12	1931	B. That Luang	Mr. Somok
LC 13	1930	B. Phone Heung	Mr. Khampheng Boupha
LC 14	1930	B. Phone Heung	Mr. Bounma
LC 15	1930-35	B. Xieng Muan	Tiao Ning Vllay
LC 16	1930	B. That Luang	Mr. Soulat
LC 17	1933	B. That Luang	Mrs. Phani
LC 18	1930	B. Xieng Muan	Mr. Phouik Huen
LC 19	1935	B. Tioum Khong	---
LC 20	1935-40	B. Tioum Khong	---
LC 21	1935	B. Xieng Muan	---
LC 22	1935	B. That Luang	Mr. Sisoumang
LC 23	1935-40	B. Thong Tialeune	Construction Service
LC 24	1937	B. Khily	Diethelm Travel
LC 25	1935-40	B. Vieng Xay	---
LC 26	1940	B. Sene	Xieng Thong Police
LC 27	1940	B. Vieng Xay	Mrs. Chanpheng



FACADE Sud - Ouest

PLAN



LOGEMENT

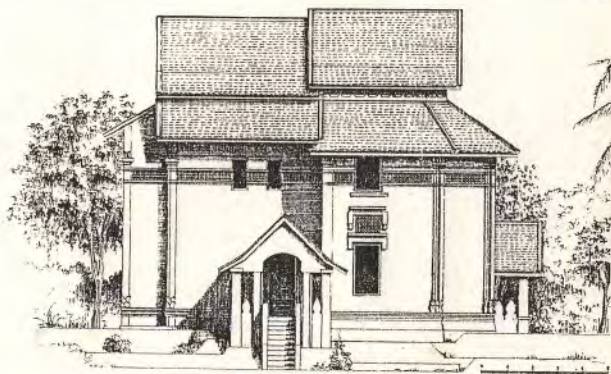
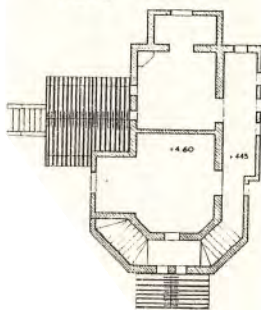
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Directeur d'école

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FACADE Nord - Ouest

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4 LEVEL OF PRESERVATION/CONSERVATION

a) Diagnostic

The monuments have been maintained according to the local tradition and restored with donations from the faithful. Since 1991, the Wats have again been the object of international assistance projects for their restoration. The current restoration techniques are to be improved by the renewed use of traditional materials (wood, brick, tile, and local ceramic). Effort is to be exerted on the relaunching of local fabrication units for such materials quasi non-existent in Luang Prabang at present. Only the Royal Palace's restoration project (within the bilateral cooperation program between Sweden and Laos) has restarted fabrication of traditional tiles for the building's roof.

The wood work, carpentry and sculpture remain fields where know - how has been perpetuated; in the choice of wood, drawing and execution. In general, the wood formerly used for building was of good quality. Hardly any disorder due to the structures' aging is noticed. Presently the main difficulty is supplying hardwood, which is becoming rare. The use of softwood renders the works fragile and subject to aggression from termites.

The use of imported materials, such as glazed tiles, floor tiles and paints, is noticed today in certain restoration works. These detract from the authenticity of the edifice. To this effect the regulation provides a range of reference colour based on an inventory of the existing fabric's colours.

The frescoes and stencil techniques used in the decoration of Wats require an expertise which can determine the supports and materials used in this pictorial art, and thence the restoration methods.

In general, the civil buildings are in good condition. The most frequent pathologies are :

- damp, due to poor drainage. This may degrade the bases of walls and pillars in wood or brick.
- a degradation of the roof which entails more important disorders to other parts, such as the walls, floors, carpentry, etc...

An example of water damage : Wat Pha Huak, built in 1861, has not yet been restored and the mural paintings are for certain partly erased.

Most of the tile roofs which have suffered this type of damage have been replaced, due to the lack of means, with coverings of asbestos cement or corrugated iron. These create an impoverished aspect. The regulations require, to this effect, the compulsory use of tiles on all renovated buildings hosting an activity linked to tourism. For private or other habitations, tile is recommended.

Through its recommendations and directives this zone regulation will attempt, in the medium term, to redevelop the production of local handicrafts linked to buildings.

b) Agency in charge of preservation/conservation

Ministry of Information and Culture
 Department of Museums and Archeology
 Sethathirath Avenue, P.O. Box 122, VIENTIANE, Lao PDR.

c) History of preservation/conservation

- 1991-94 Luang Prabang museum (former Royal Palace) restoration cooperation project between the Government of the Lao PDR and SIDA (Sweden)

- 1992 Phousi stupa restoration project - public donations.

- 1993 Wat Longkhoun restoration project - Indochina House Foundation - France.

- 1993-1994 Phra Bang edifice construction project - funds from the Government of the Lao PDR and private donations.

- 1993 Tham Ting cave conservation project - Australian cooperation.

- 06-1994 Wat Vixun gateway restoration - Transfield (Australia).

- 1993/94 Study and identification of a Heritage Protection Zone (HPZ) in Luang Prabang - ITUS Urban Projects Office (MCTPC) Project Lao 89/002 UNCHS - (HABITAT).

- 13 November 1993 Decree No. 174 - List of sites and monuments classified as the national heritage of the Lao People's Democratic Republic (see appendix 1).

- 23-26 May 1994 Hanoi; presentation of Mr. Bounhom Chanthamat, Deputy Director of the Department of Museums and Archaeology, Ministry of Information and Culture of the Lao PDR, at the regional seminar on the challenge of restoring historic neighborhoods. (See appendix 2).

- 05/09 1994 Inventory of historic monuments in Luang Prabang by the Department of Museums and Archaeology, in collaboration with the French architects of Les Ateliers De La Péninsule.

- Ministry of Information and Culture of Lao PDR

- 01-1995 Colloque international "Futur of Asia's Past" à Chiang Mai (Thaïlande) organisé par l'Asia Society, le Getty Institute of Conservation et la Siam Society.

Présentation de la politique de préservation du patrimoine au Laos par la DMA et le cabinet d'architecture les "Ateliers de la Péninsule".

- 04-1995 Colloque international "Futur of Asia's Past" à Chiang Mai (Thaïlande) organisé par l'Asia Society.

Présentation de la politique de préservation du patrimoine au Laos par la DMA et le cabinet d'architecture les "Ateliers de la Péninsule".

d) Means of preservation/conservation

At the request of the Ministry of Information and Culture, the historic sites, ancient monuments and pagodas were placed under the protection of the Government of the Lao PDR.

By decree No. 174 of November 13th, 1993, the Government of the Lao PDR has declared the Luang Prabang District a site of national interest.

Continuing the intention of protecting the heritage, the local authorities of Luang Prabang, with assistance from departments of the Ministry of Construction (ITUS), have elaborated an urban plan for the town and delineated an Heritage Protection Zone (HPZ). On the 22nd of July 1994, the urban plan and the Heritage Protection Zone were presented to the local authorities, who approved these urbanisation documents on the 30th of August 1994.

The ITUS team, who in collaboration with the Department of Museums and Archaeology is responsible for the inventory of the town's historic monuments, has elaborated a regulation aimed at preserving the site and the city. This will be submitted before the end of 1994 to the Government of the Lao PDR for approval at the session of the Council of Ministers (see HPZ regulation, appendix 3).

- 7.04.94 - (No. 343/Min.J.C.) The approval of the Ministry of Information and Culture was granted for an inventory program of historic monuments in Laos. The project was identified in November 1993 by the consultancy firm Les Ateliers De La Péninsule in Vientiane (see appendix 4).

- VIENTIANE TIMES - August 1994 - Luang Prabang : New urban plan to help heritage preservation, by Matthew Pennington - UNDP Vientiane (see appendix 5).

e) Regional development program

The Province of Luang Prabang is undergoing significant development, due on the one hand to the development of Route No. 13 (the former silk road) which will link Thailand to China through Luang Prabang, and on the other hand to the increase in air traffic. Airport renovation works will allow the reception of more planes and passengers. Another fact significant locally is the creation of two ports, on either side of the city, equipped with swift pirogues which will enable optimum river links with several provinces.

The tourist interest in the town's heritage is progressing. This will become economically important due to the preserved urban quality of its history, and to the local political will to protect this heritage. This dynamic desire for preservation is once and for all affirmed by the presence of a Lao architect responsible for Long Khou's restoration.

5 JUSTIFICATION OF INCLUSION AS A WORLD HERITAGE SITE

a) Cultural quality

CHARACTER OF LUANG PRABANG'S BUDDHA IMAGES

Art historians have often classified Lao Buddha statues according to the artistic styles defined in Thailand. It is undeniable that neighboring arts, Khmer and Thai, have had an established influence on Lao sculpture. Lao artists have accepted these influences in the context of a religious art whose iconography was determined by the same texts as the late Thai or Khmer iconography. However, Lao artists have been able to assimilate these influences to create specific Lao images.

It is perhaps not forbidden to say that prior to the arrival of the Lao, the Mekong valley was populated by already strongly Buddhist proto-Indochinese. (The most ancient of this proto-Indochinese art is a stone Buddha in "abhaya mudra", discovered in 1968 on Vientiane Plain accompanied by a stele written in ancient Mon, probably dating from the 7th to 8th centuries).

The Lao Buddha images, like all others in Southeast Asia, wear the same underdress, the *antaravasaka*, wrapped around the hips and the *uttarasanga*, worn as a monastic coat. These are the two pieces which appear on all the images. However, many images also display on the left shoulder a long, draped fold which is the *sanghati*. The Buddha's eyes are lowered, their sclerotic made with a sheet of nacre or silver. The pupil is neatly drawn, giving the impression of a meditative eye. The hair is treated in small pointed curls. The *usnisa*, in the shape of a flame radiating from the Buddha's head, is well known in the Singhalese iconography. The arms are long, the fingers are of almost uniform length; the external ear is prolonged by a disproportionate lobe which does not fall vertically. The most often represented attitudes are the sitting types, attesting to the earth and sky, and those with both hands parallel to the body.

The Buddha of illumination, sitting in a sheltering canopy of naga heads during his deep meditation, is almost absent in Laos whilst it is universal in Cambodia and Siam.

In Luang Prabang, the most ancient images discovered are of Khmer composition from the XI-XIIIth century. Tradition says the Phra Bang, the palladium Buddha statue of the ancient Lao kingdom, came from Cambodia in the XIVth century. It is certain that the Phra Bang is an image of totally Khmer type, whose face has an expression

impregnated with kindness, and whose line proportions are very harmonious. Because of the absence of dates it is difficult to estimate most of the Lao statues; a chronological study of periods would have to be very cautious.

Of the statues in each sanctuary we shall first examine the main Buddha statue. The most ancient main Buddha statue known in Luang Prabang, and in Laos, is undeniably the one in Wat Manorom which dates from the XIVth century. It is a colossal bronze statue of 15 mm thickness; the head measures 1.90 m and the torso 4 m, with the whole measuring 6 m in height including the plinth. All main Buddhas are sitting. The most frequent attitude is the one contemplating the earth, excepting some Buddhas who meditate in the *samadhi* attitude, (the Buddhas of Wat Nong, Wat May, Wat Phone Xay, Wat Vixun and Wat Aphy). There are also some large adorned Buddhas in this attitude (at Wat Sop, Wat May and Wat Phon Sang). The Buddha in the *Maravijaya* attitude sits *envirasana*, with the left hand resting on his lap; the right hand, palm resting on the knee, touches the plinth with the tip of its fingers, thereby taking the earth as witness. The drape of the *uttarasanga* uncovers the left shoulder. The *sanghati*, folded on the left shoulder, falls on each side on the chest and the hips. The *uttarasanga* covers the left arm until the wrist and, on the thigh, its hem forms a simple curve on the most ancient pieces while two or three curves elaborate the pieces from the XVIIIth century.

The Buddha represented in *samadhi* is also sitting in *virasana*; both hands rest on the lap, the right hand on the left hand in the normal attitude.

The attitudes of the Buddha represented standing are more varied. The Buddha is standing, motionless; either with the gesture of absence of fear in *abhaya mudra*, both palms turned forward, or with both arms hanging along the body, or both hands crossed on the stomach.

There exists a pose of the standing Buddha in the walking attitude. In these representations, the Buddha may advance one foot or the other, on the side where the foot is put forward, the hand is raised to draw the reassuring or increasing gesture; on the opposite side, the arm hangs beside the body. It seems that this attitude is unknown in India and is practically extant only in Laos and in Siam. The two rather large pieces worshipped on the Buddha altar of Wat Vixun are good examples of the standing Buddha in this attitude. Both advance their right hand in the reassuring gesture; large shoulders, tight hips, elongated thighs and very thin legs confer an extreme elegance to their silhouettes. They are very noble images with soft movements. According to local data, these images were executed at the same time as this Wat was founded. If this information is sound, the two statues should date from the XVth century.

In Luang Prabang, principally at Wat Xieng Thong (in the chapel of the Royal Funeral Cart) and at Wat Vixun, many standing Buddhas have been found in the *abhaya mudra* position; they are often placed on altars, next to the main image. Moreover, the *abahaya mudra* attitude, with folded forearms, both palms turned forward, is interpreted in Laos as being the attitude of the "Buddha calming family quarrels" (in Lao: "Ham Nhat") and not "the absence of fear", or the attitude of the Buddha "calming the Ocean's water".

It must be observed that the *abhaya mudra* Buddha never wears the *sanghati* (fig. 72) whereas the walking Buddha wears the three dresses (the *uttarasanga*, *antaravasaka* and the *sanghati* which is on the left shoulder); the *uttarasanga* covers both shoulders and the arms, showing the breast and the *antaravasaka*.

The standing Buddha statues with arms hanging along the body are particularly numerous in Luang Prabang, with those in wood revealing a very fine sculptural art. The arms hanging by the body and the hands slightly away from the legs make room for the lateral hems of the *sanghati*. It sometimes flares at the end by curling like a wave. This attitude appears only in the iconography of Thailand and Laos. In Thailand, it corresponds to the Buddha's walk during the third week of the Awakening, on a golden path built by the Gods. In Laos, it is considered as a representation of "Calling the rain" (in Lao: "Hiek fone") over a kingdom affected by drought. In Luang Prabang, the artists have idealised the Buddha's image in this attitude by thinning its body to the extreme; it is a hieratic statue radiating softness, with very pure lines.

Representations of the "begging Buddha" can be seen in Luang Prabang, and are also known by the name of "Oum Bat," meaning the Buddha holding a bowl of alms with both hands. This is a relatively uncommon attitude, except in the Vientiane region where several examples are known.

Few images of the lying Buddha (in Lao: "Pariniphan") exist in Lao art. The one and only image of Buddha in this attitude is found at Wat Xieng Thong, in the red chapel. This statue dates from 1569. In general, images of this type

in Laos are treated in a much less soft manner : one rather has the impression of a statue fallen on its side rather than of a man resting. In particular the folds of its dress are much too rigid.



*Image du Bouddha
Vat Xieng-Thong*

One somewhat particular aspect of the Buddha must be mentioned; the image of the "ornate Buddha". The ornate Buddhas are found mainly in the north of the country. They wear on their bodies the ornaments of the Cakravatin monarchs and sometimes wear the attributes of monarchy on their monks' robes. Most of the ornate Buddha images in Luang Prabang are in wood, only a few are bronze.

The Buddha sitting on a throne in the "European" way, with hanging legs, is an extremely rare attitude in Laos. In Luang Prabang, images with this attitude are shown in the false doors of the That at Wat Nong.

In general the Luang Prabang Buddha, like all Lao Buddhas, presents three features which mark its originality when compared to the Siamese, Khmer and Burmese Buddhas :

- first: the *usnisa* or skull protuberance, often treated in the form of black hair, always presents an elongation in the form of a very curious stylized flame whose origin and significance have not been explained.
- second: the Buddha does not have the *urna*, or divine frontal sign, an important feature elsewhere in the tantric Buddhism of Tibet.
- third : the ear lobe, disproportionately long and curved to the outside follows the external ear in the form of a typical snail shell.

According to the local artists, Buddha images must be represented in the most idealised manner possible; the Buddha could not have been a human like others. The head and face must be oval, the eyebrows must look like "a drawn bow", the nose like "an eagle beak", and the arms polished and round like the tusks of an elephant; Most important is that each Buddha possess its own genie. Thus artists have sought to reach this goal by following a path which led them to elegant stylisation. The Buddha's body is covered with gold leaf in order represent the skin colour of Great Sages endowed with a golden carnation, and not to enrich the image; nor is it the product of barren inspiration.

Compared to the classical Buddha, the Lao Buddha possesses grace and suppleness, a fine modeling of its chest and thighs, an accentuated tightness of hips, and the elegance of gesture given by the fineness of its hands. The classical and majestic Khmer Buddha impresses by its calm and serenity; the Lao Buddha may be more appreciated by its grace and kindness.

a') Classified edifice selection criteria

The identification of the buildings which constitute the character of Luang Prabang necessitated a preliminary observation in order to guide the proposed analysis of the site and city.

It must be noted that the city, starting from 1915 to 1925, had to integrate a new concept into its traditional Lao morphology: urbanisation.

Today's urban character witnesses important cultural exchange between three communities: Lao, Vietnamese and French. This is evident in the constructions, new systems, concepts and cultural values of the period. The architectural fabric of Luang Prabang expresses its wealth in an entanglement of styles and materials which must be preserved from an urban development liable to destroy ancient constructions. In 1992 the Post Office, in the middle of the historic centre, was demolished to make way for a new post office of Thai style, in total disharmony with the Luang Prabang character.

The town's urban value is evident in its anecdotes and in the contrasts of style which confront a western architecture of the 1920's with a tropical architecture in a complementary fashion.

The classification has firstly taken into consideration the proposed regulations of the Heritage Protection Zone (HPZ).

This was in fact elaborated for the preservation of the existing architectural and urban character. All of the concerned constructions and fields in the zone are subject to rules respecting the natural and the constructed environment. Potential development areas, green spaces, alignments, heights and other parameters pertinent to the composition of the urban landscape, as well as the construction systems, materials and colours, are regulated for the management and integration of future architectural and urbanisation projects in the zone. It is noted that all modifications brought to a building situated in the zone must be submitted to the Provincial Construction Service for approval.

The constructions situated in the zone and subject to this regulation may not receive substantial modifications.

These measures of protection for the built heritage have allowed a classification methodology based on two parameters :

- 1) - Cultural contrasts and identities
- 2) - Thoroughfares in the historic centre

1) Cultural contrasts and identities

The undertaken study and the architectural data gathered have allowed the identification of construction groups, each one distinguished from the others by its construction system, materials, period and style. These groups of buildings retrace the different periods known by Luang Prabang and the evolution of habitat concepts and construction techniques.

The chronological classification shows the following typologies :

- 1) Lao in wood
- 2) Lao in wood and colombage
- 3) Administrative buildings
- 4) Lao in brick and wood
- 5) Lao in brick and colombage
- 6) Compartments ----- which will be called Chinese
- 7) Lao colonial but can be distinguished into three types:
 - a) Lao French
 - b) Vietnamese
 - c) Chinese

The inventory has detailed, for each of the above mentioned typologies, the buildings presenting the best work and materials, as well as the decoration elements confirming the work's authenticity. This classification allows identification of the establishment of administrative and commercial functions in the town and the development of low density residential, and higher density popular neighbourhoods.

2) The historic centre's thoroughfares

Created by different spheres of activity and cultural influences, the directing axes and poles of the existing historic urban plan very simply define the layout and position of the various quarters.

The inventory proposes firstly the classification of all monasteries along the peninsula, which by their number, alignment and orientation form the primary axis of the historic town. This axis we will call, "Peninsula Walk Lane". Secondly, all the administrative buildings constructed during the French period form an axis perpendicular to the Mekong on the southeast of Phousi hill. There developed a sector of commercial activity at the intersection of these two arteries, extended by the construction of compartments northeast of the walk. The lane perpendicular to the Mekong liaises the ports' transport activity with the market's central distribution of goods.

The Lao architectural fabric is concentrated in the historic town end to end along "Peninsula Walk Lane," on slopes bordered by the piers of the Nam Khane and the Mekong. In this zone, the proximity of bourgeois houses and popular habitations echoes the ancient juxtaposition of the villages of the peninsula. In fact, the names of the peninsula's roads are those of sovereigns, testifying the former presence of the royal families.

Shortly after the installation of the French administration (1925-1930), the aristocracy left the peninsula, the density of which no longer allowed the construction of stylish houses. It invested in vast areas of land (+/- 1,500 to 2,500 m²) in the southwest of the town.

A popular quarter with precarious habitations developed later, until the present day, to the south of Phousi mount.

The classification of buildings of Lao typology (excepting the qualitative parameter of the works) has taken into account the factor of density.

Classified buildings not presenting the architectural qualities observed in the historic center may be found in the heritage protection zone aimed at the low density neighbourhoods.

The classification proposes :

<u>Inside HPZ</u>	<u>Outside zone</u>
28 Wats	6 Wats
8 Lao wooden	1 Lao wooden
11 Lao colompage	1 Lao Colompage
19 Administrative buildings	
10 Compartments	
26 Lao colonial	3 Lao colonial
16 Lao brick and wood	1 Lao brick & wood
15 Lao brick and colompage	
-----	-----
<u>Sub-total</u> : 28 Wats	6 Wats
105 Civil buildings	6 Civil buildings
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TOTAL :	
	34 Wats
	111 Civil buildings

a'') Condition of classified monuments compared to similar constructions

The diverse condition of classified buildings does not allow pertinent comparison with unlisted buildings of the same type. In general, the buildings of this period are, curiously, in better condition in Luang Prabang than in Vientiane. Abandoned and ruined Wats are rare. Four were listed in and outside the zone in conditions which do not threaten the building's structure. The others have, as formerly stated, benefited from continued maintenance ensured by donations made to the monastery. The classified civil buildings are generally of good quality, only the Lao wooden habitations being in a worrying state. These have been listed so that all the architectural characters composing the urban vocabulary of Luang Prabang are represented and preserved. At first these classified buildings will be the most problematic to preserve and restore. It will be difficult to maintain this type of building on land with increasing value, and especially difficult to convince the owners concerned of their interest in partial restoration and reconstruction.

a''') Authenticity of buildings

The actual authenticity of the town is due to its own history.

Situated at the point of convergence of the South Yunnan fluvial network, the site of Luang Prabang has been impregnated by multiple influences during the peopling of the Indochinese peninsula. This site, strategically situated on the trails linking India to China, makes the town a centre of exchange coveted by the neighbouring countries (Burma, Vietnam). The 15th and 16th centuries inhibited all political and economic activity in the town through conflicts which divided the country. Luang Prabang lost its status as capital of Laos to Vientiane during the French period (1946). It was plunged into an autarkic function and the urban fabric reflects this isolation, maintained during the French presence. The 1960s and '70s left to Luang Prabang some architectural examples, of little value, which have not altered the town's original structures. The French architectural and urban influence developed over a period of 50 years. It structured the town and blended with local construction systems and decorative elements. The influence of the surroundings is strong: Witness today, in the outlay of the PTT lodgings and the school director's house, a concept of adapted space. This organisation optimises the ventilation of the edifice by using peripheral circulation through a buffer space which protects the living rooms.

The town's spatial organisation stems from a traditional Lao implantation system, a master plan which today still organises all the historic town. The peninsula created by the confluence of the Mekong and the Nam Khane shaped the city's foundation and its commercial functions through the rivers. The villages grew side by side along this strip of land, exploiting the market gardening potential along the banks. The Wats were constructed on the highest point of the villages, forming an alignment of religious parks visited daily by the population. In fact the gardens around the sanctuaries are the city's green space in which children play and pilgrims rest. The Wat is perpetuated by its roles in the religion, medicine, education and balance of traditional social structures in the Lao community. The conservation of the monuments and their surrounding areas is based on the respect accorded by the inhabitants. The historic town remains today structured on the banks of the Mekong and Nam Khane and a cultural spine runs down its centre, marked by acupuncture points ; the Wats.

APPENDICES

Lao Peoples Democratic Republic

Peace Independence Democracy Unity Prosperity

Prime Minister's Office

No. 174/PM

**DECREE ON THE NATIONAL HERITAGE:
CULTURAL, HISTORICAL AND NATURAL**

- Based on the Constitution of the Lao Peoples' Democratic Republic of August 14th 1991;
- Following the request made by the Ministry of Information and Culture for the adoption of ancient cities, historic cities, historic monuments, archaeological sites and important natural landscapes as national heritage.

The Prime Minister decrees:

Article 1 : The ancient and historic towns, archaeological sites, historic monuments and national landscapes listed below are adopted as sites of national cultural and historical heritage and nature heritage.

1. That Luang Monument and environs, Ho Phakeo temple, Ongteu temple, Inpeng temple, Si Muang temple.
2. The towns of Luang Prabang and Viengxay.
3. Wat Phou and environs, Champassak.
4. The stone jars of The Plain of Jars.

5. The Sikhot monument and environs.
6. Inghang monument and environs.
7. Phou Asa temple and environs (Pathoumphone district, Champassak Province.)
8. The rock tunnel and environs (Tomo village, Pathoumphone district, Champassak Province.)
9. Tham Ting cave and environs (Luang Prabang Province).

Article 2 : To the Ministry of Information and Culture is assigned the responsibility of establishing and managing the repair and restoration of the national cultural, historical and natural heritage, in accordance with its history, of preserving the houses and towns, of protecting the traditions and costumes of our multi-ethnic Lao people and their environment.

Article 3 : Where the parties concerned have planned projects for the construction of houses, roads, or for the repair of temples and sites, ancient and otherwise, in the ancient towns and historical regions hitherto listed in Article 1 of this decree, they will be co-ordinated with the officials concerned or with the officials of the Vientiane Prefecture and the Ministry of Information and Culture, in order to attain a consensus.

Article 4 : The Ministry of Information and Culture is charged with co-ordinating all the following concerned parties, in order to accomplish the studies and the delimitations of areas necessary for the official registration and establishment of regulations and laws governing the management of ancient towns, monuments and archaeological and other sites, which must be presented to the National Assembly and the Government to secure their adoption.

- The Prime Minister's Office
- The Ministry of Communication, Transport, Post and Construction
- The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
- The Ministry of Finance
- The Committee of Plans and Cooperation
- The Central Committee of the Lao National Construction Front
- The governors of the Provinces concerned
- The Mayor of Vientiane Prefecture

Article 5 : The Ministry of Information and Culture has the task of studying antiquities, archaeological sites and objects, natural treasures and so forth outside the list mentioned in Article 1 of this decree with the view of presenting them to the Government for their adoption onto the national list of cultural, historical and natural heritage.

Article 6 : The ministers and their legal aides are to acquaint themselves with and apply this decree in line with their duties.

Article 7 : This decree is valid from the day of signature.

Vientiane, November 13, 1993
Prime Minister of the Lao
Peoples Democratic Republic.

Khamtay Siphandone

**PRESENTATION BY MR. BOUNHOM CHANTHAMAD
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSEUMS AND
ARCHAEOLOGY, MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND CULTURE OF
THE LAO PDR
TO THE REGIONAL SEMINAR ON THE
CHALLENGE OF RESTORING HISTORIC URBAN AREAS
HANOI 23 - 26 MAY 1994**

To-day Lao faces up to an open economy and to an amount of investment, the impact of which on the urban landscapes of historical sites and the towns of Vientiane , Luang Prabang, Savannakhet and Pakse, has caused the Lao authorities to develop a policy of protection towards the national cultural heritage.

In effect, certain foreign investment projects in 1992 condemned to demolition several buildings of historical note in the town centres of Vientiane and Luang Prabang.

To this effect the Board of Museums of the Ministry of Information and Culture has submitted, to officials of the Lao Government, a profile of the classifications of sites representative of the national heritage.

In November 1993, The Council of Ministers made public decree No. 174 charging the Ministry of Information and Culture with the responsibility of managing the historical monuments of Lao.

A first list of nine natural, archaeological, religious and urban sites has been drawn up and placed under the protection of the government.

These sites are [projection slides]

1. - That Luang and environs
 - Wat Sisakhet
 - Wat Ho Phrakeo
 - Wat Ongtu
 - Wat Inpeng
 and Wat Si Muang
2. The district of Luang Prabang and the district of Viengxay.
3. Wat Phou Champassak and environs
4. The Plain of Jars and environs
5. That Sikhot and environs
6. That Inhang and environs
7. Wat Phou Asa (district of Pathoumphone, Champassak)
8. Oupmoung Hinh (district of Pathoumphone, Champassak)
9. The Tham Ting caves at Luang Prabang and environs.

The said decree anticipates the establishment of an inventory and the delimitation of the parameters of protection.

The Ministry of Information and Culture is to-day responsible for the study and approval of urban and rural development projects liable to affect these named sites, in conjunction with the appropriate national administrative institutions.

The socio-economic impact of development on the towns of Vientiane and Luang Prabang has highlighted two respective urban identities:

One represents an economic capital, the other the historical memory of a capital.

This identification does not under-estimate the richness of the historic buildings and monuments of Vientiane, but rather recognises Luang Prabang's standing as an authentic and intact urban landscape, a witness to Laos' historical heritage.

In recognition of this the Ministry of Information and Culture and the Ministry of Construction are today developing a programme to place the city of Luang Prabang on the World Heritage List of UNESCO.

This programme anticipates the research and definition of an urban and architectural Heritage Protection Zone (HPZ) and the implementation of corresponding regulations by the Urban Projects Office at the Ministry of Construction. Assisting this are UNHCS (Habitat) and the inventory of historical monuments, provided by the Board of Museums in collaboration with French architects, supported by the Heritage Board of the French Ministry of Culture and the French Ambassador to Laos.

These agents have now united to create a preservation process for Laos.

URBAN PROJECTS OFFICE

LAO/89/CO1- LAO/89/002

Institute of Technical Studies and Townplanning (ITSTP)

Ministry of Communications, Transport, Post and Construction(MCTPC),LAO PDR

Vientiane, 12/9/94

To: Messrs. Greck and Marchal
Architects
Ateliers de la Peninsule
Vientiane, Laos

Purpose: Presentation to UNESCO for the inclusion of the city of Luang Prabang on the list of World Heritage Sites. Draught transmission of urban regulations of Luang Prabang for the dossier.

Ref. No. : Project Lao 89/002 - City of Luang Prabang urban plan.

Sirs,

We have the pleasure of handing you the draught of the urban regulations for the city of Luang Prabang, to be placed in your dossier for presentation to UNESCO, which will shortly be submitted to the Council of Ministers for approval.

This project has already been adopted in principle by the local authorities of Luang Prabang city. The minutes of that meeting are enclosed

Our best wishes to you,
We offer you our regards,

Mr. Saisana Prathoumvan
Director of Urban Projects
Institute of Technical Studies & Townplanning

Mr. Bob HARDY
Principal Technical Advisor
UNDP/Habitat - LAO/89/002

Enclosed; Minutes of meeting of the local authorities of Luang Prabang, to endorse the planned urban regulation of the town as presented by the ITSTP.

1 copy of the draught urban regulations from 10/9/94

Copy to ; Mr. Patrice Dalix, architect, chief supervisor of town planning studies, Luang Prabang city.

LAO PDR

Peace Independence Democracy Unity and Prosperity

Ministry of Information and Culture

No.343/min.J.C.

To the President of the Committee of Planning and Co-Operation.

Object: Proposition for an inventory project of historic buildings, to be performed before requesting an aid programme from the French government.

The Minister of Information and Culture has the honour of informing you that Mr. Francois Greck, French architect in a joint mission with Habitat and the Urban Institute over two years, has proposed a project aiming to create an inventory of historic monuments within Vientiane Prefecture and in Luang Prabang.

The proponent has recently completed a study of the various Lao ethnic minorities of the Province of Phongsaly, with a classification of the different buildings which comprise the temples and traditional homes. The proponent has exhibited his work in Montpellier (France) and in Luang Prabang at the Eighth anniversary of the Habitat mission.

Having seen his finished works and his potential, and having seen the need for documents for the dossier addressed to UNESCO which will request the imminent admission of the city of Luang Prabang to the World Heritage List, the Ministry of Information and Culture, in collaboration with the Board of Museums and Historic Monuments, sees fit to grant its approval to this project.

Also the Ministry of Information and Culture asks that the Committee of Planning and Co-Operation inserts this project into the aid programme to be requested of the French Government.

Vientiane 7.04.94

For the Minister of Information and Culture

Bouasy Chaleunsoun