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Deciphering the styles and architectural features of Korat houses from traditional central Thai houses

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Abstract

This research is aimed to compare the architectural characteristics between the Korat house and traditional central Thai houses, by identifying similarities and differences in their respective Architecture. The case study used in the analysis are 80 Korat houses located in Nakhon Ratchasima Province. Two principles of data analysis were analyzed: morphological analysis on architectural styles and comparative analysis among samples. The study discusses and identifies the identity of Korat houses along with the interpretation by explaining the factors that affect the unraveling of the architectural characteristics of the Korat house from traditional central Thai houses under a research conceptualized framework. The results of the study concluded that Korat people have maintained some of the traditional central Thai house construction patterns, especially the use of structural system. Therefore, the Korat house has the same architectural style as the traditional central Thai house. At the same time, they have adapted some elements to the environment and socio-cultural context, thus the unraveling of architectural characteristics. As time passed, a new style was integrated to serve the needs and correspond to the changes that occurred in each historical period. It became a unique style of Korat houses. All the variables resulted in the same architectural style for both groups of houses. The variables in terms of geography, locally available building materials, values, family system, way of life, construction method, privacy needs and social interaction are factors that affect the unraveling that is clearly reflected in the Korat house architectural style.

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Introduction

The Korat house, also known as Ruen Korat (in Thai), was once widely prevalent in the Nakhon Ratchasima Province (Korat). These houses served as a reflection of local identity, embodying the way of life and wisdom of the Korat ancestors. However, the presence of Korat houses has been diminishing in recent times. Therefore, it becomes crucial to conduct a comprehensive study of Korat houses from various dimensions to establish a database for conservation and further knowledge development. A preliminary literature review revealed a connection between the architectural features of Korat houses and traditional central Thai houses, known as Ruen Thai, in the central region. Naktong (2014); Srisuro (1987); Tansuwanrat (2002); agreed that the Korat house was influenced by traditional central Thai houses, where local artisans deciphered certain patterns and details to establish a distinct local identity. However, there is currently no comparative tool available to discern the detailed similarities and differences in architectural features between these two house types. Additionally, there is a lack of clear explanations regarding the factors influencing the deciphering process of these architectural styles. As a result, the research question arises: “How have the Korat houses evolved from the traditional central Thai houses? What are the factors contributing to those changes?” These questions lead to the research objectives of comparing the architectural styles of Korat houses and traditional central Thai houses in order to explore their respective identities, identifying similarities and differences in architecture, and providing an explanation for the factors influencing these changes. By accomplishing these objectives, a more comprehensive understanding of Korat houses can be achieved. The study’s findings will provide valuable information that sheds light on the ingenuity and wisdom of local craftsmen in adapting to the local context, thereby contributing to the overall knowledge and understanding of Korat houses.

Literature Review

The primary focus of this study was to compare the architectural styles of Korat houses, with those of traditional central Thai houses. By applying the theory of influences on vernacular architectural formation, the study aimed to analyze and discuss the factors that

influenced the modification of architectural styles, ultimately leading to the development of distinct Korat houses. Theoretical analysis conducted by Lawrence (1987); Oliver (1997); Rapoport (1969); revealed that two main factors played a significant role in shaping vernacular architecture as follows:

1. Physical variables such as geography, locally available building materials, availability of constructing technology. These factors resulted in the builders of each region creating houses according to their local environment. This affects the differences in styles and architectural features.

2. Socio-cultural variables include: religion and beliefs, cultural roots, norms and values, social structure and family systems, economics and way of life, building construction norms, privacy needs and social interaction. The vernacular house is the center that reflects the culture of each society. These factors affect the forms, structures, space utilization and building components of the chosen architectural design.

However, it was observed that the impact of these variables varied across different regions. To ensure the study’s accuracy and clarity, preliminary assumptions were made to evaluate the importance of each variable within the scope of the research. This approach guided the analysis and facilitated the comparison of background information and local context between the Korat people and Thai people in the Central region, particularly in terms of classifying variables in each aspect. The analysis drew upon data collected through field surveys and literature reviews. In summary, the results of the analysis can be outlined as follows:

1. Physical variables: Despite both groups of people being located in a tropical savanna climate, variations existed in terms of location and geography. The central Thai people predominantly settled in the plains and coastal areas, displaying a preference for constructing their houses near rivers. In contrast, the Korat people established their settlements on a plateau, far from the coast, which featured a climate characterized by reduced rainfall and increased heat, dryness, and coldness. Consequently, their houses were mainly situated on hills. Additionally, both groups adopted a similar architectural style, emphasizing prefabrication and a post and beam system in house construction. Basic tools were utilized for the construction process. Wood served as the primary building material, while thatched roofs and partial coverings made from natural plant fibers were common features. Nevertheless, variations were observed in the specific types of wood and natural plant fibers employed for construction purposes.

2. Socio-cultural variables: Both groups shared common cultural roots, which encompassed the observance of Buddhism and beliefs in supernatural entities. Similarities were also evident in norms, including the hierarchical organization of social status based on seniority. Males assumed the role of family heads and inheritors of the lineage, while the customary practice involved the husband relocating to the wife's residence after marriage, fostering the formation of large extended families. Nevertheless, there were variations in certain values between the two groups. Furthermore, both communities thrived in agrarian societies, relying on collective labor practices. The delineation of public and private spaces, as well as the perpetuation of traditional house-building customs, were transmitted through collaborative efforts involving family members and neighbours. However, distinctions emerged in the norms governing construction techniques. Despite their shared administrative region and concurrent political developments, the central Thai people enjoyed greater ease in intermingling and were not geographically distant from the capital city. Conversely, the Korat people encountered challenges in traveling to the capital and engaging in cultural exchanges with the ethnic groups residing there.

In summary, the analysis of all variables was compared with the environment and socio-cultural context between the two groups. It can be concluded that the various variables exerted influences on the similar characteristics observed in Korat houses and traditional central Thai houses. However, distinctions in geography, locally available building materials, norms and values, building construction norms (construction method), and social interaction played significant roles in shaping the architectural differences between the two groups. Consequently, during the process of data analysis and discussion, all variables were collectively taken into account, with specific emphasis placed on the importance of these five variables. The working hypothesis posited that this approach would unveil distinct architectural traits.

To ascertain the factors that influenced the adaptation of the Korat house among the Korat people, it was imperative to integrate local historical information and the concept of cultural interaction. These factors proved instrumental in comprehending how the architectural features of the Korat house manifested the Korat people's adaptability and shed light on their way of life and core societal beliefs. Furthermore, an integral part of investigating cultural diffusion entailed tracing historical events, as it facilitated a comprehensive understanding of

the contextual background and historical period from which the findings originated. This approach greatly supported the interpretation (Pongsapit, 2006; p.26). A study of historical evidence found that the Korat people are groups of central Thai culture who migrated to settle since the establishment of Nakhon Ratchasima (Korat) in the year 1662 C.E. (late Ayutthaya period). (Vongtes, 2015; p.179) Primarily, due to the historical role of Nakhon Ratchasima as a frontier city within the Kingdom of Siam important in politics, this positioning resulted in a continuous influx of cultural influences from the capital city towards the people of Korat. They still retain some of the original culture as well as incorporating the central Thai culture. Moreover, the strategic location of Nakhon Ratchasima, serving as a pivotal transportation and trade hub linking the capital with the provinces of the north-eastern region, Laos, and Cambodia, facilitated extensive interactions with diverse ethnic groups in the region. This dynamic exchange fostered the development of multiple facets of cultural identity, particularly in the form of residential architecture. Consequently, the formation of the Korat house can be attributed to a combination of physical and socio-cultural factors, along with the Korat people's adaptation to their environment and cultural context.

Methodology

Data Collection

A total of 80 Korat houses located in Nakhon Ratchasima Province, spanning across 11 districts, were analyzed in the case study. The selection process employed purposive sampling, which meticulously took into account houses that had maintained their original appearance. This encompassed both existing houses and old houses documented through architectural drawings and photographs sourced from books, research papers, as well as houses that were surveyed at a later stage. Additionally, interviews were conducted with three scholars knowledgeable about Korat houses and the traditional central Thai house. The purpose of these interviews was to gather information for subsequent analysis.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the data followed two key principles: Firstly, a morphological analysis was conducted to examine the architectural features of the houses.

This comprehensive analysis encompassed various aspects, including the orientation of the houses, the style in which they were built, the arrangement of living spaces, circulation, materials used, structural elements, as well as the specific components of the houses that related to living practices and spatial utilization. Secondly, a comparative analysis was performed to compare the architectural characteristics of two distinct types of houses. On one hand, the Korat house represented the residential building style of the Korat people in the Nakhon Ratchasima Province. On the other hand, the traditional central Thai house represented the house-building style of the central Thai people in the central, eastern, and part of the western regions of Thailand (Figure 1). To facilitate this comparison, information about the architecture of the traditional central Thai house was gathered from various sources, including summarized content, architectural drawings, and photographs available in books, articles, and research reports. The results obtained from data analysis were further discussed to reveal the unique identity of the Korat house. Moreover, interpretations were made to provide insights into the factors that influenced the architectural style of the Korat house in comparison to the traditional central Thai house. All of these discussions and interpretations were conducted within the framework of the research concept.

Results

In a comparison of the architectural characteristics between the Korat house and traditional central Thai houses, it was found that the houses of both groups are similar as follows: (1) Architectural style: Both groups created the basic house in the same style- single storey with a raised platform and a high gable roof; (2) Orientation of house: Both groups have a similar layout with awareness of the sun's path (the narrow sides facing east-west); (3) Living space: The basic living space such as bedrooms, balconies, terraces and kitchens were clearly defined areas aligned with the activities and needs of the agricultural society; (4) Building materials: The houses are made from solid wood. Additionally, fiber plants are utilized for roof coverings and assembling the walls; (5) Structure: The house structure is a prefabricated system, column-beam system and modular wall system. In particular, structural elements and traditional wood joining methods are the same; (6) Door position: Determining the location of the entrance door to the house is the same (a single entrance door located in the middle room); and (7) wall system: Both groups have the same method of assembling the walls, using the prefabricated wall system, in which wood, bamboo or fiber plants are assembled to form a wall panel with door and window frames then lifted and installed with the house structure (Figure 2 and Figure 3).

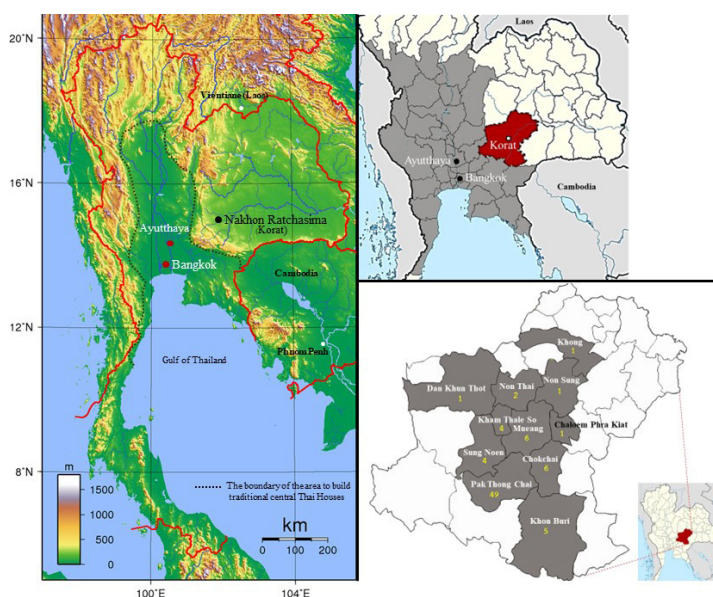


Figure 1 Location of the study area in Korat.

Source: Adapted from Wikipedia

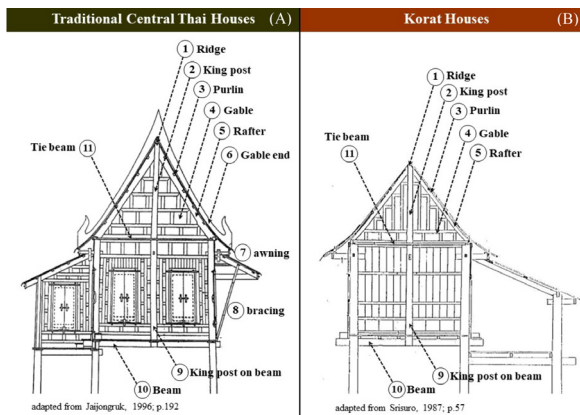


Figure 2 Comparison of structure between the Korat House (A) and the Traditional central Thai houses (B).

Source: Adapted from Jaijongruk, 1996, p.192; Srisuro, 1987, p.57.

However, there are differences in building components such as the number, position and size of windows. The Korat house has small-narrow window size. Moreover, there are no window on the narrow side of the house. While the traditional central Thai houses has wide windows on both the long and narrow side of the house.

The study conclusions revealed that Korat people had undergone partial adaptation from the traditional central Thai house construction norm resulting in the existence of a shared architectural style, such as the layout of the living space, construction system and structural elements. Simultaneously, modifications were made to certain elements to accommodate the local environment and socio-cultural context, leading to the emergence of distinct architectural styles and features. Over an extended period, the integration of new designs occurred to address evolving needs and correspond to the changes observed in each era. Consequently, a unique Korat house style evolved and was perpetuated through cultural processes, as follows

1. Adherence to traditional central Thai house patterns in the following ways:

1.1) Preservation of the original architectural style involved constructing houses as single-gable structures with raised floors and open under floor space. The side balconies were covered with roofs and positioned at a lower level than the living quarters. The overall proportions of the houses were tall and slender, resembling the traditional central Thai house style.

1.2) The layout of the living space followed a consistent pattern, especially in basic-style houses.

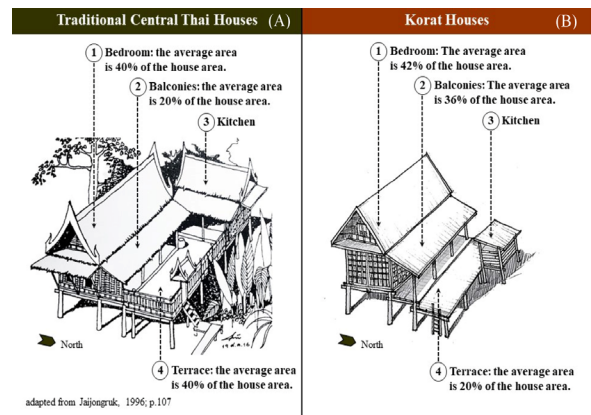


Figure 3 Comparison of Architectural features between the Korat House (A) and the Traditional central Thai houses (B).

Source: Adapted from Jaijongruk, 1996, p.107

Bedrooms, balconies, terraces, and kitchens were clearly defined areas with designated functions aligned with the activities and needs of the agricultural society.

1.3) Local materials were used in the construction, with all the structures and components of the houses made from solid wood. Additionally, fiber plants were utilized for roof coverings and assembling the walls.

1.4) Construction followed a standardized system, utilizing a prefabricated approach and traditional joining methods. Basic construction tools were used to assemble the prefabricated wall panels according to the observed pattern in the traditional central Thai house.

1.5) The orientation of the houses took into account geographical principles, with the narrow sides facing east-west, and balconies situated along the longer sides of the house.

1.6) Regarding the determination of door position and stair direction, most Korat houses featured a single entrance door located in the middle room leading to the bedroom. There was a tradition of avoiding stairs across the west direction, and the number of stairs was typically set to be an odd number. Some Korat houses also showed decorative elements reminiscent of traditional central Thai houses, such as window patterns, balcony blockings and gable end decorations. These features indicated that the Korat people brought cultural influences with them. This phenomenon aligns with Rapoport's notion (1969; 52) that "*immigrants bring their architecture with them, and persist in its use even though it is often unsuitable for the new area in which they live. The symbolic character is important to them, however; it is a piece of home, and hence familiar in symbolic terms*".

2. The study revealed various architectural styles and features, including:

2.1) Adaptation to geographical conditions was observed, such as the moderate elevation of the basement. This adaptation was implemented due to the majority of the Korat population residing in upland areas, far away from canals, resulting in a minimal risk of frequent flooding. Moreover, the slope of the roof was reduced, awnings and bracings were omitted. This decision was influenced by the location of Nakhon Ratchasima Province, which falls within a region experiencing relatively lower average annual rainfall due to its position in the rain shadow zone. Additionally, the number of windows was minimized, with narrow windows chosen instead. This design choice ensured an ample wall surface area for protection against sunlight, rain, and cold winds. These modifications are consistent with the concept put forth by Rapoport (1969, p. 86) that states “*immigrants often bring forms with them to which they cling with great tenacity despite unsuitability for the climate, adaptations to the new climate are finally made.*”

2.2) Adaptation of Materials: Evidence of this adaptation was observed in the component of the wall referred to as “*Prue Kru Seang Dam*,” which incorporated design elements from the traditional central Thai wall known as “*Samruat*.” Local materials were utilized, and installation techniques were adjusted accordingly.

2.3) Adjustments in Space: The inhabitants of Korat made adjustments by reducing the size of the ground-level living area while expanding the width of the balcony compared to the traditional central Thai house design. This alteration aimed to accommodate functional needs and align with the geographical terrain. The ground

level of the Korat house primarily served as a multipurpose space connecting different parts of the house, while the balcony became the most utilized space during daytime.

2.4) Architectural Streamlining of Components and Proportions: Skilled craftsmen of Korat houses commonly decreased the roof slope, omitted the awnings and bracings, and minimized gable end decorations, resulting in a lower overall height and a less delicate appearance in contrast to the traditional central Thai house (Figure 4).

3. New Architectural Integration: After the completion and operation of the Bangkok-Nakhon Ratchasima railway line in the year 1900 C.E., a period of cultural development and modernization unfolded in the country. This brought about the widespread adoption of novel construction materials and technologies, such as corrugated iron sheets, nails, and metal construction materials. Consequently, craftsmen in Korat adjusted their construction systems, timber structures, and house components to incorporate these materials and technologies. This blending gave birth to a new architectural style that gained popularity in the post-era, serving the purpose of meeting functional needs, ensuring long-term stability, and adapting to changes in socio-economic and cultural lifestyles. As a result, houses in Korat acquired a distinct local character that set them apart from other regions. The following aspects were key to this transformation:

3.1 New House Construction: The Korat people favored house renovations that involved expanding the usable area along the balcony and covering the entire space with a roof. This led to the design of 2-gabled or 3-gabled houses, indicating distinctive architectural styles and structural system. The use of nails to secure the structural elements resulted in the removal of certain components in the roof structure. Each local craftsman employed different construction techniques, leading to diverse methods of construction (Figure 5).

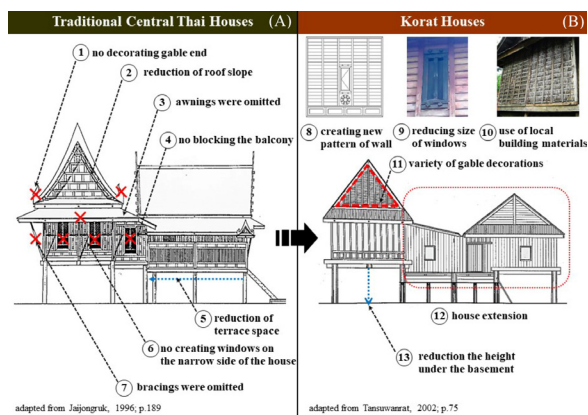


Figure 4 Modification of architectural features of the Korat house (B) from the traditional Central Thai house (A)
Source: Adapted from Jaijongruk, 1996, p.189; Tansuwanrat, 2002, p.75

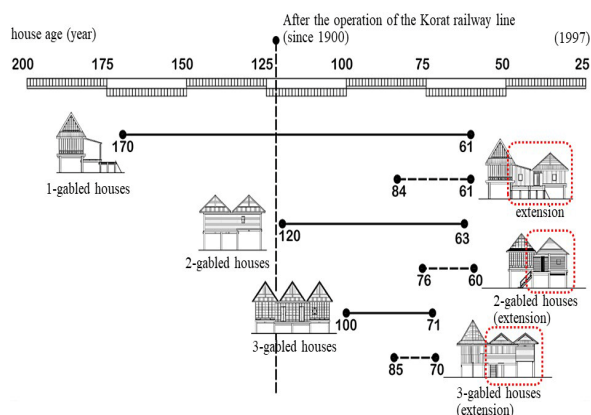


Figure 5 The development of the Korat house style

3.2 New Wall Patterns: The people of Korat commonly utilized nails to fasten wall components while maintaining a similar pattern layout to the traditional design known as “*Prue Kru seang Dam*.” This new wall design came to be known as the “*Fa Non Ti Mai Tub Gad Neaw Tung*” wall, characterized by vertical overlapping wooden shingles. This style gained popularity and widespread use becoming local identity (Figure 6 and Figure 8).

3.3 New Doors and Windows: During a progressive period when the town experienced increased prosperity and security, there was a preference for installing folding doors in houses. Consequently, Korat craftsmen enlarged the size of doors and windows, and adjusted the outward opening direction towards the outside of the house (Figure 7).

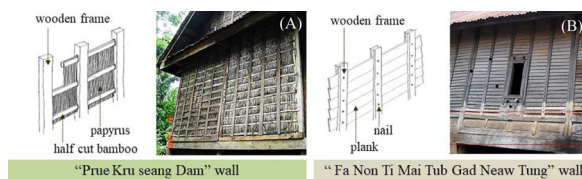


Figure 6 “Prue Kru seang Dam” wall (A) and “Fa Non Ti Mai Tub Gad Neaw Tung” wall (B)



Figure 7 The original and new style door (A) and The original and new style window (B)

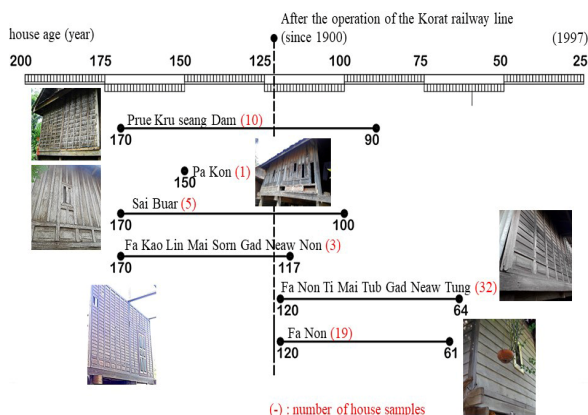


Figure 8 The wall pattern of Korat house

3.4 New Decorative Gables: Korat Craftsmen frequently decorated the gables with various patterns, distinct from the central Thai house style. This variation resulted from the preferences and ideas of craftsmen in different areas involved in the construction of the gable panels. Simultaneously, they maintained a unique identity derived from the collective characteristics of the components and the overall design.

Discussion

Factors that influenced the transformation of Korat House styles from traditional central Thai houses: Considering the variables within the research framework, we can engage in the following discussions:

1. **Geography:** The architectural characteristics of both house groups were influenced by geographical conditions. The houses were designed to align with the direction of sunlight and prevailing winds. However, variations in location, topography, and microclimate gave rise to architectural differences. These differences encompassed the height below the house’s platform and the slope of the roof. Not creating a window on the narrow side of the house, and making small and narrow window openings. The people of Korat adapted their houses to suit the local conditions, ensuring a comfortable living environment.

2. **Availability of local materials:** Since both groups resided in the same climatic zone, they had access to similar resources for house construction. Nevertheless, the majority of central Thai residents built houses in flatland and riverside areas where local timber resources were scarce. Consequently, they procured timber from transportation routes through waterways from the northern region or acquired wooden posts transported by trains from the northeastern region. This contrasted with the people of Korat, who relied solely on locally available materials. This disparity in resource accessibility resulted in distinct characteristics in the use of construction materials and directly impacted architectural variations, such as the refinement in joining the wood.

3. **Availability of constructing technology:** Both groups employed basic construction tools, leading to similarities in how craftsmen assembled wooden structures.

4. **Religion and beliefs:** Both groups adhered to similar customs regarding house orientation, such as avoiding westward staircases, incorporating odd numbers of steps, and orienting the headboard southward.

These practices resulted in shared characteristics in house layouts which indicate the Tai ethnic groups believe system.

5. Cultural roots, norms, and values: Despite their shared cultural roots, the groups' distinct cultural values gave rise to unique architectural features that became representative of their respective local identities. These features encompassed roof designs, doors, windows, and decorative elements. Notably, central Thai residents maintained the traditional proportions of Thai houses, even when modifying roofing materials like corrugated iron sheets. This demonstrated their deep appreciation for the aesthetic proportions of traditional Thai architecture. Conversely, individuals from Korat tended to adapt forms and proportions according to the ideas of individual craftsmen, leading to a greater diversity of house styles.

6. Social structure and family system: While both groups shared similar social structures and family systems, their approaches to expanding house spaces diverged. Central Thai residents preferred constructing interconnected houses with shared terraces, emphasizing the significance of communal areas for circulation, storage, and community activities, particularly during the monsoon season. In contrast, Korat residents favored two-gabled or three-gabled houses, prioritizing enclosed spaces to ensure security.

7. Economics and way of life: The residential houses of both groups served as essential living spaces that accommodated the agricultural way of life with similar pattern of use spaces. However, Central Thai residents opted for wider terraces, which supported their daily activities and catered to diverse uses, especially during the monsoon season. On the contrary, people from Korat favored wider balconies but had smaller living spaces, primarily used during the daytime. These variations gave rise to distinct architectural characteristics.

8. Construction norm: Both groups adhered to identical building construction norms, encompassing the utilization of prefabricated structural systems, post and beam systems, and roof components. Nevertheless, craftsmen in each region possessed distinct concepts when it came to constructing houses that fulfilled both functional and aesthetic purposes which were resulting in unique architectural features. These features comprised variations in the design of two-gabled and three-gabled houses, as well as discrepancies in the style of walls, doors, windows, and gables. The nature of these variations hinged on the local knowledge and skills of the craftsmen within each group.

9. Privacy needs: Both groups arranged their living spaces and circulation based on their privacy requirements, but they differed in certain aspects. In the case of Korat houses, there are no windows on the narrow side of the house, small and narrow windows are created to enhance safety and prevent theft. This adjustment is an adaptation to the social context and becomes a cultural pattern and preference within the community.

10. Social interaction: Due to Nakhon Ratchasima's strategic role in politics, governance, economy, and transportation, there was continuous interaction between the residents of Korat and the central Thai inhabitants. This interaction resulted in cultural exchanges, including the adoption of architectural styles, materials, and construction techniques leading to a convergence of architectural features. Additionally, the people of Korat had cultural interactions with other ethnic groups in the region, such as the Lao Vieng and Mon, who incorporated Korat architectural norms into their own residential houses. As a result, houses in Korat displayed a diverse range of architectural characteristics unique to each local area.

To summarize, all variables resulted in the Korat house being similar to the traditional central Thai house. However, factors such as geography, locally available building materials, values, family system, way of life, construction method, privacy needs, and social intercourse played a significant role in shaping the adaptation of the people of Korat, leading to the development of distinct architectural patterns in their houses. As a result, these factors contributed to the creation of unique architectural features (Table 1).

The identity of Korat houses: Despite sharing the same cultural roots as the central Thai, the people of Korat found themselves in a distinct geographical location on a high plateau. Being situated near Nakhon Ratchasima, a frontier city of the Kingdom of Siam and a gateway to the capitals of Laos and Cambodia, influenced their adaptation and cultural interactions with other ethnic groups in the region. This cultural exchange resulted in the development of various distinctive cultural characteristics, particularly in the unique features of their houses. Korat house emerged as a cultural manifestation of the local population, featuring architectural plans similar to those of traditional central Thai houses. However, Korat craftsmen developed their own construction practices when building houses. Simultaneously, they made modifications to the use of space, materials, structures, and certain components to align with the geographical and socio-cultural contexts. These transformations gave rise to distinct features that set them apart from the standard central Thai traditional house design, establishing a new pattern that was consistently embraced and practiced.

Table 1 Similarities and differences in architectural features between the Korat house and the traditional central Thai house

Factors	Similarities in architecture	Differences in architecture
Physical variables		
geography	orientation of house	Under floor space height/ roof slope/ no creating windows on the narrow side of the house/ small-narrow window size
locally available building materials	the house is built with wood and fiber plants	types of wood and fiber plants
availability of constructing technology	basic construction tools	
Socio-cultural variables		
religion and beliefs	orientation of stair/ number of steps	
cultural roots, norm and values		pattern of the wall, door, window, gable/ house proportions
social structure and family system		house extension
economics and way of life	basic living space	terrace and balcony area
building construction norm construction method	prefabrication/ column-beam system/ roof structure	pattern of the wall, door, window, gable/ 2- gabled and 3- gabled houses structure
privacy needs	positioning of living space	number and size of windows
social interaction		Korat houses of other ethnic groups

The early-era Korat houses, with a history of over 100 years, showed designs and components reminiscent of traditional central Thai houses, indicating the strong adherence of the people of Korat to the original architectural style but with minor adaptations. However, as time passed, particularly following the inauguration of the Bangkok-Nakhon Ratchasima railway line in 1900 C.E., which brought significant development to the city of Nakhon Ratchasima across various domains, the residents of Korat started receiving new building materials and modern construction technologies from the broader society. In response, they flexibly adapted their house designs to accommodate evolving needs and align with contemporary trends, all while considering the principles of simplicity and aesthetics, such as the construction of 2-gabled houses and 3-gabled houses, the creation of new patterns of wall, doors and windows. This adaptive process was born from the creative ingenuity of craftsmen hailing from different regions who shared a common building construction norm but added their own innovative ideas. Consequently, the Korat house showed a diverse range of characteristics while upholding a unified identity.

The characteristics of marginal culture differed from those of mainstream culture, as exemplified by the distinction between the great tradition and the title tradition (Pongsapit, 2006, p.14). As a result, Korat houses emerged as a testament to the creativity of local craftsmen situated far from the capital city, reflecting the cultural expressions of various ethnic groups. The diversity of Korat houses, on the other hand, originated from cultural interactions, where different

ethnic groups incorporated the architectural norms of Korat houses into their own housing designs. This adaptation gave rise to a hybrid architecture, resulting in distinct features observed in Korat houses across different settlements, while still adhering to a common underlying blueprint. In conclusion, the “*identity of Korat houses*” can be defined as the unique residential house style of the Korat people, initially based on the original architectural norms of traditional central Thai houses. Over time, these plans adapted and transformed to harmonize with the geographical and socio-cultural context, ultimately giving rise to a distinct identity. These adaptations were influenced by the creative ideas and craftsmanship of local artisans, showcasing simplicity and a broad range of variations within the framework of the adopted architectural norm, which has been passed down through generations.

Conclusion

In this study, it was found that Korat people, who have the same cultural roots as the central Thai people, have preserved some of the traditional central Thai house construction norms. At the same time, some elements were adapted to accommodate the local environment and socio-cultural context. This led to the emergence of different architectural features and became a unique style. The variables that result in architectural differences are such as geography, locally available building materials, values, family system, way of life, construction method, privacy needs and social intercourse.

Therefore, it can be concluded that groups with the same culture can reflect diverse architectural characteristics, depending on the geographical and socio-cultural contexts. These contextual factors play a significant role in shaping the construction of houses, leading to both commonalities and variations. As groups migrated and formed new settlements, they preserved the original architectural norms, giving rise to shared architectural features. However, the creation of distinct architectural traits was driven by the local's capacity to adapt and integrate different design elements. Consequently, unique architectural identities emerged for their residential houses.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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