

THE VERNACULAR SETTLEMENT IN CENTRAL THAILAND'S WATER SHADE: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMAN BEINGS AND ENVIRONMENT IN THE THAI WAYS OF LIVING

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The physical geography of the central region of Thailand is mostly the alluvium plain caused by sediment from alluvium. This kind of plateau is large, but not too high from the sea level, which is always flooded.

Streams bring humus and cause sedimentation then fertility for cultivated area which can be reflected by expression as 'there are fish in the water and there is rice in the field'. Also, rivers and streams are for transportation which was one of the main factors causing linear settlement.

Lifestyles of Thai people have directly related with water and basins, especially in the central region. People have been living compatibly with environment, reflected by ways of life and local wisdom in the vernacular architecture comprising distinctive characteristics including construction materials, technology, as well as creation of accommodations which bring about the unique cultural landscapes.

The study revealed that vernacular architecture along the water shed in the central region of Thailand can be categorized as floating houses, houses on stilt made of wood, bamboo houses, and shop houses. The wisdom and knowledge used in the construction of such vernacular architecture are not academic, in other words, they do not

follow lessons taught in academic institutes, but from learning and adaptation of lifestyle to their surroundings. This then becomes the local wisdom which can practically be helpful under each individual ecological system and local culture.

