

## **Mapping Thagara Village: Intangible Heritage of an Ancient Site near Dawei**

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### **Introduction**

This paper documents the rapidly changing rural vernacular architecture of the ancient site of Thagara. The style of the house facade, the building materials, the hearth, the rice barn and the shrine illustrate aspects of the social, economic and religious daily life in the villages of Lower Myanmar.

Studies have been made of the religious domestic architecture in Myanmar, such as the layout of monastery grounds and the particular function of each of the buildings but the domestic rural architecture remains largely neglected.<sup>1</sup> While both religious and domestic architecture are endangered by development, the elaborate wood carving of the monasteries has attracted more attention than the simple domestic structures.



Figure 1 Owner of House No 1 Daw Khin Mya Kyi

### **Vernacular Architecture and Heritage**

Vernacular architecture is significant in today's intangible heritage and in relation to the past. Our focus is rural domestic architecture, in contrast to town houses such as seen in Dawei. A study of town architecture of the northern Thai town of Phrae showed that the earliest vernacular town architecture was bamboo. Wood became popular there only about a hundred years ago with the rise of teak

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<sup>1</sup> Fraser-Lu, S. *Splendor in Wood: monasteries of Burma*, Silkworm, Bangkok, 2001; Chotima Chutiwong, *The Architecture of Mon Buddhist Monasteries in Lower Burma*, E. T. Publishing, Bangkok.

exports in the late nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Bamboo and wood long preceded the use of brick and stone for rural and town architecture in most parts of Southeast Asia, seen in the Austronesian architecture of predominantly island Southeast Asia.<sup>3</sup>

### Thagara Rural Architecture

We have selected an ancient site called Thagara located ten kilometers north of Dawei for two reasons. Firstly, as explained above, the habitation areas of ancient Thagara are little known. The site is a raised mound clearly demarcated with a series of up to four earthen and brick ramparts and moats. The area inside the walls is densely populated while the perimeter outside the walls is cultivated, primarily rice fields. Secondly, the Dawei houses are urban rather than the rural types found at Thagara. The traditional hearths and rice barns of the Thagara houses typify the agricultural way of life of southern Myanmar. While some houses have modernized, using income from family members who have returned from periods of work abroad, most of Thagara's houses use traditional methods of construction.



Figure 2 Map of Thagara showing location of houses in article and map of Myanmar showing its location on the southern peninsula

### Thagara's Tangible Heritage

Thagara is the first site in Tanintharyi Region to be included on the national list of forty-six Notified Zones of Cultural Heritage Regions and Buildings maintained by the Ministry of Culture, Department of Archaeology. A field office of the Department of Archaeology has been opened at Thagara, where changes to the ancient site can be monitored. In addition, the Ministry of Culture is opening a new museum in 2015. This complements the family collection housed at Hpaya Gyi pagoda since 1975, presently curated by U Htay Lwin Kyaw, son of Dawei Kyaw Min whose pioneering book, *Dawei Culture* (1962) profiled the heritage of this area. Dawei Kyaw Min was the son of U Kyaw Yin, a balloonist who flew over the region in the 1920s. While Dawei Kyaw Min, the historian U Than Swe (Dawei) and one of

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<sup>2</sup> Abhakorn 2011:10

<sup>3</sup> e.g. Waterson, R. 1990.

the co-authors Winn Myintzu have provided valuable documentation of Dawei's intangible heritage, our survey, is the first of the Thagara's rural intangible heritage.<sup>4</sup>

### **Census methodology**

Our team made a census of Thagara village architecture, photographing each house and if present, the household rice barn. We interviewed villagers to collect information and photograph traditional crafts and customs. These included a shrine to U Shin Gyi, mat making, production of toddy juice and welding to make knives and possibly other goods. We planned to survey the making of traditional snacks, (mote hpet htote), as many of those at Thagara and Dawei are similar to Thai snacks. However, even at the morning market near the main stupa of Thagara, Shin Zalun, modern commercial snacks such as potato chips are now the main snack being sold.

In our survey, not all information was available. For example, the house number and census number of some houses are not available because some houses have just been rebuilt, seen with our example No 5, the house of U San Nyunt and Daw Mu Mu Aye house that is newly rebuilt. In addition, some house owners that we interviewed have forgotten these numbers.

We divided the walled village of Thagara into two quadrants, east and west, and then gave street and lane names to the east-west roads and the north-south by-roads, respectively. Our numbering begins on the south of the site and moves north following the grid sketched on the map below in the area enclosed by walls, the green curvilinear outline.

### **Spatial Aspects - Site**

We have recorded data for nine houses, one snack shop and one exterior shrine seen in the pictures and annotations at the end of our paper. The examples were selected to show the variety of rural architecture. None are located on the two main roads of Thagara, with most located along small lanes in the northeast quadrant between the two documented ancient temples of the site, Nan Oo Zeidi and Shin Zalun. The golden spire of Shin Zalun, which is located on a prominent hill on the northeast edge of the walled site appears between the trees around the houses of our survey.

The dominant spatial impression, however, is the environment, the trees fields and small lanes of the quadrant. Some houses had livestock areas, with an oxen or pig and often chickens. The houses are closely placed with many others of this quadrant not included in our survey. As we note below, most owners are farmers with rice fields located outside the city walls. The ancient walls and moats were built to protect the inner village from flood and continue to serve this function today. The road from Dawei to Thagara has recently been renovated, raising it to avoid flood, but during our June 2016 visit, parts were covered in several inches of water. Inside the walls, despite the rain and mud, however, there was no flooding.

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<sup>4</sup> See for example Aye Sandi 1999; Kyaw Min ; Ratana (Dawei) 2007; Shwe Wei Aye 1974: Than Swe 1996; Winn Myintzu 2011.

Usually, there is no separation by age, gender, etc. in the use of space in a room in the smaller houses but in most there is a wall between the cooking space and the main space with the main area (ein ma) used for living and sleeping. We have at times used the word 'room' but with rare exceptions, the interior areas of the house are not separated by walls. The members of the household all usually sleep together in the main room (ein ma) but some women often sleep in the cooking room (bu htauk). When they take a short nap in the afternoon, they either sleep in the porch or on the platform (cook pyit) under the house.

During the course of our survey, we also documented the seasonal making of sticky rice that comes from the neighbouring village of Taung Myin Pyaung. Its production in Thagara is due to the marriage of women from Taung Myin Pyaung to Thagara men, thus touching on the wider issue of migration, marriage and the rise of hybrid cultural traditions.

The building materials are all found locally, with hard woods used for the pillars, beams and floorboards, and various types of matting and thatch used for the roof. In Dawei, there are a number of local hard woods such as pyin-ga-dou or ironwood that are preferred for building. In our survey of the Thagara rural architecture, one house (No 11 of U Than Htun and Daw Oun Nwet) has a bamboo floor and frame and palm-slats wrapped around bamboo poles or dani phat (ခန့်ဖက်) used for walls. In our survey, the most common type of wood used was ironwood or pyin ga dou with one house (No. 7 U Thee Phoe) made of a local evergreen known as 'sweet wood' or thit cho (သစ္စာပုလူလူလူလူ) sideroxylon tomen tosum) and another (No.1 U Aung Kyi and Dawe Khin Mya Kyi) having a floor of thin kan (သကလံး).

Dawei house traditionally were always on posts, creating an area mainly for storage in both rural and urban areas. Most houses do not have formal rooms of the sort seen in European houses, although the areas in the house are designated for particular activities. This is also the case for the space created under the house by the use of stilts although this space has a number of uses.

A few houses in Dawei traditional houses in urban areas use this area for storage and as a kitchen, or for small pets like a dog, hens, or birds. In rural areas, however, the space under the house is used not only for animals and storage but also for socializing or taking a nap in the daytime and so forth. These customs are changing, so in many urban areas nowadays, when the family members increase or a son is grown up, they renovate the area by adding four walls and covering the earthen floor to make a new room. Moreover, some house owners especially whose houses are on main roads in Dawei and a few in Thagara rent this area to others for economic purposes such as to open a grocery, a tea shop, a store, a snack shop, a beauty salon, and so forth.

There are mainly two types of traditional houses (without including other types of modern brick buildings) in Thagara. These houses (ein) are called (1) Ein Taw Yar and (2) Ein Wine.

Ein Taw Yar = အံ့မ့တာ့

Ein Wine = အိမ်ဝိုင်း

The Ein Taw Yar is the most common type of house, usually built with a rectangular plan and simple peaked roof or Ein khaung moe (အိမ်ခေါင်စိမ်း). Sometimes, a lean-to is attached to the house, either at the side of the house or at the back for the purpose of cooking, keeping vehicles, making a cowshed, or other domestic functions including at times the rice barn. Teacher Daw Saw Thee's house (No. 3) is a good example of Ein Taw Yar. The Ein Wine has a slightly rounded layout with a gambrel roof with a symmetrical angled shape. Sometimes, instead of using a gambrel roof, the Ein Wine is constructed with a hipped end at the front of the house, also called a mansard roof. House No 6, Daw Aye Mi San's house is the only Ein Wine among the eleven houses we have surveyed. The functional reasons for the hipped roof are not recorded, although the layered roof construction may have assisted wind flow. Of the two types of roofing, the Ein Wine is considered the more ancient.

### **Types of roofs and building material preferences**

None of the houses in our survey uses thatch for roofing. What they actually use is stitched nipa palm leaf flaps and some use galvanized iron sheets for roofing. The making of the nipa palm flaps (ခန့်ဖက်) is a time-consuming operation with the roof needing periodic repair. Many buy the nipa palm flats, including No 7 U Thee Phoe. The longevity of the roof depends on how closely the dani phet are spaced, with a tightly spaced roof lasting three years before requiring repair. Thus while the iron roofing is noisier in the rainy season and hotter in the summer months, the maintenance is lower.

Most people prefer new brick houses to their traditional houses. The reason why they are still using traditional houses is that they cannot afford to build new brick houses. There is no particular pride taken in sustaining the traditional forms given the pragmatic outlook of the villagers. During our June 2015 survey, however, we found a number of house owners responded at length to our questions on their houses and the surroundings.

### **Types of hearths**

There are two types of hearth found in the houses we have surveyed at Thagara. One type is built in a higher position and used in a standing position while cooking. The other type is built in a lower position and used while sitting. Both types of hearth are called 'mi hpou'. We mainly found the former higher type of hearth in the houses we have surveyed.

The 'mi hpou' (မီးဖို) is a fireplace or a hearth. It is not only a Burmese name but also a Tavoyan name. 'Bu htau' (ဘုထော့), a back room, is a room in which a 'mi hpou' is located. Sometimes, mi hpou is located in the kitchen (mi hpou khan, where 'khan' means 'room') as in U Meh Yin and Daw Phwa Kyi's house (no 9) and Daw Aye Mi San's house (no 6).

Each house has a traditional hearth, inside the house, while the washing-up area is outside. This is often seen at Thagara but is now unusual in Dawei. Interestingly, 'mi hpou' in U Hsan Oo and Daw Win Htay's house (no 4) is in the washing up area (ye-kan-sin). Some houses in our study use the back room

as a kitchen with a fireplace as in Daw Khin Mya Kyi's house (no 1), U San Nyunt and Daw Mu Mu Aye's house (no 5) and U Thee Poe and Daw Ma Myint's house (no 7).

'mi hpou' (မီးဖို) = a fireplace or a hearth

'bu htau' (ဘုရားခန်း) = a back room

'mi hpou khan' (မီးဖိုခန်း) = a kitchen or a cooking room

### **Types of shrines**

Two houses (No 9 and No 10) had exterior shrines. All the houses have interior shrines. Some are attached to the wall while others use a table or showcase. The location of the shrine depends on the orientation of the house. If for example the house faces to the north or south, the shrine room should be on the east but if it faces west or east, the shrine is on the south. Within the orientation of the house, the shrine is usually on the southeast.

Most of the wall and inset shrines in our survey had an upper and lower tier, with three vases of nyaung ye oh representing the Triple Gems on the upper shelf.

One exterior shrine (No 10 Daw Than Htay) is dedicated to U Shin Gyi.

Another exterior shrine (No 9 U Meh Yin ) is dedicated to Phoe Thu Daw.

Both No 9 and No 10 also have interior shrines.

### **Types of rice barns**

There are three types of rice barns found in Thagara village.

(i) pu: This is the smallest type of rice barn, constructed using a circle shaped bamboo matting with a mixture of clay and straw covering both its interior and exterior surfaces. Both wood and bamboo are used for its floor and the floor is also covered with a mixture of clay and straw. The rice barn at Daw Khin Mya Kyi's house (No. 1) is a 'pu'. Of the rice barns that we surveyed, this example was the only one where the rice was stored loose, while in the others it was stored in bags. The villagers said the bags were used to protect against moisture from the damp floors of the bar kup and bar ham.

(ii) bar kup: This is a medium sized rice barn. The walls are made with bamboo slats and then stitched nipa palm leaf flaps are firmly attached to the bamboo slats. Both wood and bamboo are used for its floor and the floor is also covered with a mixture of clay and straw. Instead of using a mixture of clay and straw, waterproof canvases are sometimes used. The ricebarns at U Thee Po and Daw Ma Myint's house (No. 7), U Hsan Oo and Daw Win Htay's house (No. 4) and U Ba Moe and Daw Kyu Meh's house (No. 8) are this type.

(iii) bar ham: This is the largest type of rice barn that is usually built separately from the house. Wood is mainly used for the floor and the wall. Galvanized iron sheets are sometimes used for the wall. The rice barns at teacher Daw Saw Thee's house (No. 3) and Daw Aye Mi San's houses (No. 6) are examples of 'bar ham'.

The size of the rice barn is described according to storage capacity, the number of tin (တင်), a basket that holds approximately sixteen pyi (ပုဆိုး), about one bushel. A large bar ham may hold 700 tin while a pu may hold only 100 tin.

There are also cow sheds seen attached to houses, called 'nwa gau' and not to be confused with the rice barns or 'pu'. There is no classification between types of cowshed.

### **Comparison and Wider Issues on Vernacular Architecture**

Our study of the rural domestic architecture also contributes to the interpretation of Thagara Ancient City in the relationship of the houses to the walls that surround the old city and the ancient stupas and palace inside the walls. We are not implying that the present quarters in Thagara village are the same as that of hundreds of years ago. Nonetheless, our paper begins a new process of investigating the spatial and social relationship between the habitation areas, the environment, the ancient pagodas and walls, and present monasteries.<sup>5</sup>

A recent study comparing Bhutan and Burma considered primarily the religious vernacular architecture.<sup>6</sup> Of interest for our present study, however, was the author's graphic placement of the role of vernacular architecture within centre of the wider cultural dynamics of religion, ecology, politics, economy and family structure and kinship and gender roles.<sup>7</sup> Lim ends her article on an idealistic note on the vernacular architecture as an expression of local community living and cooperation.

Vernacular architecture has been called the 'real subject of the mainstream' in any discussion of tangible and intangible cultural heritage.<sup>8</sup> The houses themselves are of course physical but the techniques used to construct in danger of being lost with the sharp rise in Lower Myanmar of brick architecture. For example, the father of Soe Thainkha, one of the co-authors of this paper, is a traditional architect. He learned the craft as a young man, and explained the two types of houses in Thagara we describe below. He no longer receives commissions for wooden houses, as their cost is far higher than brick ones. His son has recorded some information but is not apprenticed to learn the trade. The reconstruction of wooden palaces in Mandalay, Shwebo and Bago under the guidance of traditional architect U Win Maung (Tampawaddy) has been criticized for designs based on manuscripts

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<sup>5</sup> Excavations undertaken in 2014 by J. Stargardt near the Yahanda-gu on the southwest side of the Sri Ksetra site of the Pyu Ancient Cities have been aimed in part at documenting ancient habitation areas.

<sup>6</sup> Lim, Regina Mapua. 2014, in *Cultural Sustainability and Development: Drukpa and Burman Vernacular Architecture* Zetter, R. and Watson, Georgia. Designing sustainable cities in the developing world. Ashgate, Hampshire. pp. 21-51

<sup>7</sup> Lim. 2006: 32

<sup>8</sup> Murphy 1995:372

but the commissions enabled him in the past to employ and train seventy apprentices in this endangered tradition.<sup>9</sup>

As Lim argues, the rural domestic houses of Thagara are at the centre of the site's ancient role and its present day survival. As we have noted, whenever possible, bamboo and wood are being replaced with brick. The art of traditional wooden architecture remains alive through religious commissions but these too are predominantly for concrete or brick structures. It is with a similar hope that we have presented the houses of Thagara, to widen understanding and documentation of a small but densely populated ancient village in a rapidly changing region.

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<sup>9</sup> U Win Maung (Tampawaddy), pers. comm. 06.2015



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## Appendix 1: House Survey

### Example 1

**Owner** - U Aung Kyi and Daw Khin Mya Kyi

**Present residents** - U Aung Kyi, Daw Khin Mya Kyi, Maung Taing Kyaw,  
Ma Muiar Soe

**Family occupation** - farming and orchard or plantation lands

**Location** - N 14°10.472', E 98°10.073'

**House number** - 117

**Census** - 3/11

**Constructed** - 1997

**Type of house** - Ein Taw Yar

**Type of wood for house** - ironwood (pyin ga dou) or thin kan (သံကန်)

**Type of roof** - Ein Taw Yar Khaun ('khaun' is 'roof')

**Type of material for roof** - wood, bamboo and stitched nipa palm leaf flaps

**Type of wall** - bamboo matting

**Type of hearth** - standing type

**Shrine** - interior, Four images of the Buddha and Arhat (Yahan Da) on upper shelf with Nyaung Ye Oh

**Type of rice barn** - pu

**Note:** The posts are 4 feet 6 inches high.

### Areas in house

The house has a traditional hearth, inside the house, while the washing-up area is outside. There is a staircase at the front, although the traditional Dawei house if larger has three staircases, one in the front, middle and back.

### Example 2

**Owner** - Daw Hla Kyi

**Present residents** - Daw Hla Kyi

**Family occupation** - snack house

**Location** - N 14°10.526', E 98°10.098'

**House number** - not available (as it is just a small shop)

**Census** - not available

**Constructed** - 2015 (reconstructed once a year)

**Type of house** - open shack

**Type of wood for house** - bamboo

**Type of roof** - unspecified

**Type of material for roof** - bamboo and stitched nipa palm leaf flaps

**Type of wall** - no wall

**Shrine** - none as it is a shop

**Type of hearth** - no hearth

**Type of rice barn** - no rice barn

Note: This simple structure remains popular because it is easy to build and is located across the street from the school.

### Example 3

<b>Owner</b>	<b>- Daw Paw Kyi (eldest), Daw Saw Thee, Daw Tin Thee (three sisters)</b>		
Present residents	- Daw Saw Thee, Daw Tin Thee		
Family occupation	- the owner is a teacher and the family business is farming		
Location	- N 14°10.523', E 98°10.042'		
House number	- they have forgotten (perhaps 116)		
Census	- 3/10		
Constructed	- 2011		
Type of house	- Ein Taw Yar		
Type of wood for house	- ironwood (pyin ga dou)		
Type of roof	- Ein Taw Yar Khaun ( 'khaun' is Dawei name for 'roof' )		
Type of material for roof	- wood and galvanized iron sheets		
Type of wall	- wood (vertical position)		
Shrine	- on a table; four images of the Buddha and Arhat (Yahan Da) with one Nyaung Ye Oh and two vases of flowers		
Type of hearth (fireplace)	- on the ground		
Type of rice barn	- bar ham (wooden floor; wood, bamboo and stitched nipa palm leaf flaps for roof; galvanized iron sheets on both sides of the wall and wood for front and back walls)		

Note: There is no stove in the cooking room (bu htauk). The fireplace is on the ground under the house. Nothing is used for covering the wooden floor of 'bar ham'. Also paddy is stored directly on the wooden floor. Although Daw Paw Kyi lives in another house, she is considered the actual owner of the house because she is the eldest of the three sisters their parents having passed away.

### Structures

The house is set on wooden pillars and has a staircase on the front. There is a rice barn separate from the house but located adjacent to it that measures 9'11" in width, 14'9" in length, and is 12' high. The rice barn is a freestanding walled structure set on low wooden posts.

### Areas in house

There are three areas in the house:

- (1) Main room (ein-khan, ein-ma)
- (2) Porch or balcony (byin-zauk)
- (3) Back room used for cooking (bu-htauk)

### Example 4

<b>Owner</b>	<b>- U Hsan Oo and Daw Win Htay</b>
Present residents	- U Hsan Oo, Daw Win Htay, Ma Aye Myat Mon, Mg Min Myat Thu and Mg Htet Wei Yan

Family occupation	- the family business is farming
Location	- N 14°10.462', E 98°10.037'
House number	- 130
Census	- 3/30
Constructed	- 2007
Type of house	- Ein Taw Yar
Type of wood for house	- ironwood (pyin ga dou)
Type of roof	- Ein Taw Yar Khaun
Type of material for roof	- wood and galvanized iron sheets
Type of wall	- wood (vertical position)
Shrine	- interior; four images of Buddha, an image of Arhat (Yahan Da) and a replica of the renowned Kyaik Htee Yo pagoda on the shrine.
Type of hearth	- standing type
Type of rice barn	- bar kup

### Structures

The house has a staircase on the east. The shrine is set into the wall in the main room. The kitchen is on the interior, with the wash area outside.

### Areas in house

The house has 4 areas:

- (1) Main room (ein-ma-khan)
- (2) Cooking area (bhu-htauk) The hearth is in the washing up area.
- (3) Porch or balcony (byin-zauk)
- (4) Washing-up area (ye-kan-sin)

There is also a room on the ground under the house with a large platform made of wooden slats on a low stand used for socialising or sleeping (cook-pyit). The rice barn on the side of the house measures 5'5" in width, 8'7" in length, and is 7'4" high.

### Example 5

<b>Owners</b>	<b>- U San Nyunt and Daw Mu Mu Aye</b>	
Present residents	- U San Nyunt, Daw Mu Mu Aye, Mg Naing Linn Htet and Mg Ye Linn Htet	
Family occupation	- The occupation of the owners is farming.	
Location	- N14°10.504', E 98°10.101'	
House number	- not available (because it has just been rebuilt)	
Census	- 3/104	
Constructed	- 2015	
Type of house	- Ein Taw Yar	
Type of wood for house	- ironwood ( pyin ga dou)	
Type of roof	- Ein Taw Yar Khaun	
Type of material for roof	- coconut palm (used instead of wood), bamboo and stitched nipa palm leaf flaps	
Type of wall	- brick for the ground floor and bamboo matting for the upper story	

Shrine	- interior; three vases of flowers and single image of the Buddha in display box
Type of hearth	- standing type
Type of rice barn	- no rice barn

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U San Nyunt and Daw Mu Mu Aye's house (old house)

Constructed	- 2005
Type of house	- Ein Taw Yar
Type of wood for house	- ironwood ( pyin ga dou) for posts, bamboo for the floor
Type of roof	- Ein Taw Yar Khaun
Type of material for roof	- bamboo and stitched nipa palm leaf flaps
Type of wall	- bamboo matting
Type of hearth	- standing type
Type of rice barn	- no rice barn

Note: The house has been rebuilt because the previous house was used only for temporary stays.

#### Example 6

**Owner** - **Daw Aye Mi San**

Present residents	- Daw Aye Mi San, Daw Ni Ni Swe, Ma Phyo Aung Mar and Ma Chaw
Mou	Mou Aung
Family occupation	- The occupation of the owners is farming.
Location	- N 14°10.523', E 98°10.042'.
House number	- 296
Census	- 3/127
Constructed	- 1980
Type of house	- Ein Wine
Type of wood for house	- ironwood (pyin ga dou)
Type of roof	- Ein Wine Khaun
Type of material for roof	- wood and stitched nipa palm leaf flaps
Type of wall	- wood (vertical position) in the main room and horizontal position in the cooking room
Shrine	- interior, set into wall with two tiers and numerous
	images, three vases of flowers
Type of hearth	- standing type
Type of rice barn	- bar ham

Note: The house's ironwood posts, 7' high, are set up on 6" concrete post shoes. The separate bedroom is mainly used either by a family member when he or she grows up or by a newly married couple.

#### Structures

The house has a staircase on the east and on the west. The rice barn is 14' high, 9' wide and 11' 11" long.

#### Areas in the house

It has a traditional hearth with the washing area on the porch

There are six areas in the house:

- (1) Main room (ein-ma)
- (2) Back room (bhu-htau)
- (3) Porch or balcony (byin-zau)
- (4) Washing-up area (ye-kan-sin)
- (5) Cooking area (Mi-poe-khan)
- (6) Bedroom (Thi:-thant-ein-khan:).

Most traditional houses in the region do not have a separate bedroom so this example is unusual with its listing of (6) Bedroom (thi:-thant-ein-khan:).

### Example 7

**Owners** - U Thee Poe and Daw Ma Myint

**Present residents** - U Thee Poe, Daw Ma Myint, Ma Khin Myat Myat Su,  
Mg Aung Ye Zaw and Mg Aung Zaw Htwe

**Family occupation** - The occupation of the owners is farming.

**Location** - N14°10.472', E 98°10.073'

**House number** - 127

**Census** - 3/96

**Constructed** - 2002

**Type of house** - Ein Taw Yar

**Type of wood for house** - ironwood ( pyin ga dou)

**Type of roof** - Ein Taw Yar Khaun

**Type of material for roof** - wood, bamboo and stitched nipa palm leaf flaps

**Type of wall** - wood (vertical position) and bamboo matting

**Shrine** - interior; affixed to wall with two tiers having a single images of the Buddha in a display box, two Arhat (Yahan Da) with three Nyaung Ye Oh on the upper tier

**Type of hearth** - standing type

**Type of rice barn** - bar kup

**Note:** The hearth is in the back room. The platform under the house measures 5' wide, 11' long and 2'6" high.

### Structures

It has one staircase on the east and a simple traditional hearth on the upper story. The rice barn is located under the house, rather than being separate or attached to one side. It is a freestanding structure measuring 6'6" wide, 11' long and 6'6" high.

### Areas in the house

There are four areas in the house:

- (1) Main room
- (2) Back room (bhu-htau)
- (3) Porch or balcony (byin-zau or ein-byin-khan)
- (4) Washing up area (ye-kan-sin)

There is a large platform made of wooden slats on a low stand used for socializing or sleeping (cook-pyit) under the house. Platforms of this type are commonly seen under the house or in front of the house. In upper Myanmar it is always put in front of the house and usually under a tree, especially under a tamarind tree.

#### **Example 8**

<b>Owners</b>	<b>- U Ba Moe and Daw Kyu Meh</b>
Present residents	- There are no residents currently living in the house
Family occupation	- The occupation of the owners is farming.
Location	- N14°10.416', E 98°10.076'.
House number	- not available
Census	- 3/61
Constructed	- 2005
Type of house	- Ein Taw Yar
Type of wood for house	- ironwood (pyin ga dou)
Type of roof	- Ein Taw Yar Khaun
Type of material for roof	- wood and galvanized iron sheets
Type of wall	- bamboo matting
Type of hearth	- standing type
Shrine	- not available
Type of rice barn	- bar kup

#### **Structures**

It has one staircase on the east and a simple traditional hearth that is 'up' on the upper story. There was previously a thatched shelter attached to the house under which the tractor was kept and sometimes clothes were hung. It has now been removed because there is no vehicle as no one is residing in the house.

We include as an example of the periodic change and ease with which the structure can be modified given the building materials. The rice barn is attached to the house, and is 5'2" wide, 7'4" long and 6'8" high.

#### **Example 9**

<b>Owner</b>	<b>- U Meh Yin and Daw Phwa Kyi,</b>
Present residents	- U Meh Yin, Daw Phwa Kyi and U Soe Myint (others in Thailand)
Family occupation	- fresh water fishing in ponds and streams (not the sea) and farming.
Location	- N14°10.307', E98°10.312'.
House number	- 339
Census	- 3/105
Constructed	- 2002
Type of house	- Ein Taw Yar
Type of wood for house	- ironwood (pyin ga dou)
Type of roof	- Ein Taw Yar Khaun
Type of material for roof	- wood and galvanized iron sheets
Type of rice barn	- no rice barn

- Type of wall - wood (vertical position for the main room and horizontal position for the back room) and bamboo matting for the kitchen room
- Type of hearth - sitting type (taing-lyet).
- Shrine - Interior Buddhist shrine with two tiers and, several images of the Buddha and Arhat (Yahan Da) on lowershelf with three Nyaung Ye Oh on the upper tier. There is an exterior nat shrine.

### Structures

The house has one staircase on the front with wooden posts (7' high) set up on 6" concrete post shoes. The roughly built nat shrine (2'9" wide and 2'8" long) is set on 5' high wooden posts. It is unpainted with a galvanized iron roof. The owners of the house believe that this white-robed acolyte, Phoe Thu Daw, protects and brings good luck for them. The white-robed acolyte is part of the founding story of Dawei: he was the caretaker of the brother and sister who became the first king and queen of Thagara. There is no rice barn. The owner keeps his hand-made cane fish traps (၁၆၀၀)(circa 3' long) in front of the house.

### Areas in the house

There are 4 rooms:

- (1) Main room (ein-oo-khan)
- (2) Back room (bhu-htauk)
- (3) Porch or balcony (byin-zauk)
- (4) Washing up area (ye-kan-sin)

### Example 10

This example is not a house but a nat shrine at Daw Than Htay's house that she inherited from her mother Daw Tin Nyunt. Her house is very similar to U Hsan Oo and Daw Win Htay's house (No 4).

- Owner - Daw Than Htay
- Constructed - 2013
- Location - N14°10.430', E98°10.052'
- House number - 132
- Census number - 3/32
- Type of wood for the shrine - ironwood ( pyin ga dou)
- Type of material for the roof of shrine - wood and galvanized iron sheets
- Type of wall of the shrine - plywood (only at the back)
- Shrine - Interior recessed Buddhist shrine and exterior nat shrine to U Shin Gyi

Note: Certain facts such as the present residents, house number, census number, etc. are left out from the list because these facts are not relevant to the nat shrine. The nat shrine is painted blue because according to the owner, this colour is pleasing to the eye.

### Structure

The nat shrine is 6' high and 1'6" wide. Like most nat shrines in Dawei, this one is dedicated to U Shin Gyi associated with good luck and prosperity.



### Example 11

**Owners** - U Than Htun and Daw Oun Nwe

Present residents - U Than Htun, Daw Oun Nwe, Maung Zin Thu, Ma  
Eigari Hpu, Ma Hsaung Kyippar Let

Family occupation There are presently five people living in the house, with the occupation of the owners is farming and making toddy palm structures, making and selling toddy juice in their shop (htan-yay-hsaing).

Location - N14°10.472', E98°10.073'.

House number - 338

Census - 3/104

Constructed - 2012

Type of house - Ein Taw Yar

Type of wood for house - ironwood (pyin ga dou) and other woods

Type of roof - Ein Taw Yar Khaun

Type of material for roof - bamboo and stitched nipa palm leaf flaps

Type of wall - bamboo slats and stitched nipa palm leaf flaps

Shrine - Interior Buddhist shrine and Phoe-thu-daw-kyaung)

Type of hearth - standing type

Type of rice barn - no rice barn

Note: The wooden posts of the house are 4 feet high. The floor is made of slit bamboo rather than wood.

The rectangular bin in the cowshed is used for storing cow dung. The kitchen is in the back area of the main room.

During our visit in June 2015, U Maung Kyaing, a local shaman brought the talismanic stone he inherited from his mother. The stone reportedly cures ills when placed on the affected part of the body.

### Areas in the house

The single staircase is on the end of the house and not parallel as in our other examples but at a clockwise angle. The staircase is simply made. There is low hearth, and a elevated structure (yat-lyet-htamin-kyet) for cooking rice where the cook is not seated as is usually the case but cooks while standing. There are two areas in the house:

- (1) Main room (ein-ma)
- (2) Porch or balcony (ai-byin-pyin-zauk)