

SEVERAL FEATURES OF RURAL HOUSES IN POHNPEI

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1. Introduction

We surveyed and researched ten rural houses for a week from ten Nov. to sixteen in 1994. These houses were traditional in Pohnpei. We had two aims in order to survey and research rural houses. The first purpose was to clearly discover several features of rural houses. The second purpose was to the intercourse between Japanese and Pohnpeiese rural houses. Many rural houses were surveyed all over the island by us. Community space, consisting of the unfloored part and the board floor, was especially researched.

2. The Site for Rural Houses

The site for rural houses was not controlled by human forces. Therefore the site is natural and narrow. In the highest position is the main house and in the lowest position are attached cottages: washing space, lavatory and pig hut. In wider places is built the community space in front of the wide space or nearby the way. It is in the common sense that the community space is necessary to the family and unnecessary to one main house. The community space and attached cottages are independent in the traditional style. Recently the community space attached to the sleeping room or the washing room attached to the main house for convenient use. In early days the main house and the kitchen room were built on the site.

In later days were built the community space, the lavatory and the washing room. These architectures were built independently as a result of the different building period. Clothes and sheets were formerly washed in the river. The washer room was lately built and recently attached to the main house. There is a growing tendency to unite the main house with the attached cottages in the same site.

3. Sleeping Room and Community space

The most important room is the sleeping space in rural houses. The sleeping room is closed in order to protect it from the wind and rain by the wall. We will feel at ease in a closed room. It is important that the rural house has the closed sleeping room in Pohnpei. The opened space is attached to the closed sleeping room (Fig. 1) in the traditional rural house. The unfloored space is the kitchen room. The traditional house has the sleeping room and the kitchen room since olden times in Japan, but these rooms are independent in Pohnpei (Fig. 4). There is one high floored house in it (Fig. 2). The gas range was recently used in the kitchen room attached to the sleeping room (Fig. 3). The open floored space attached to the sleeping room was important in their life for the reason of walking barefoot, for they sat down on the open floored space. This is one feature of rural houses in Pohnpei. I will next describe the interesting nature of the community space of rural houses in Pohnpei. The community space consists of an open unfloored place in the half open floor (Fig. 5). The fired range is attached to the unfloored place and sometimes to the half open unfloored place (Fig. 6, 7). The half open floor was lengthened on the left and right side like a long chair (Fig. 8.

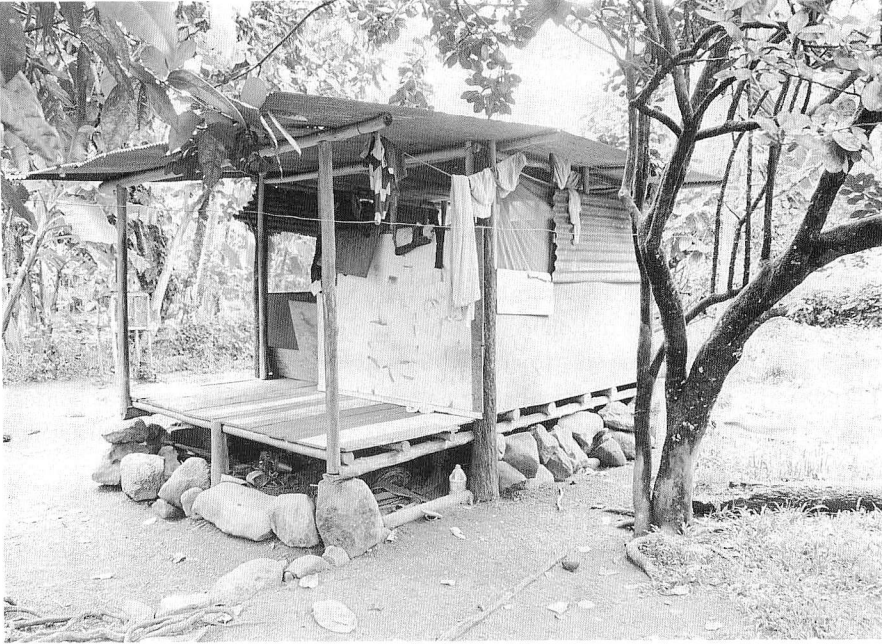


Fig. 1 The opened space is attached to the close sleeping room.



Fig. 2 One high floored house.

9). After all the half open floor occupies three sides and the unfloored place is set in the center. People sit down on the half open floor and the open unfloored place of the center is the walking space. There are two stones in the walking space, and the wine is made of plant roots



Fig. 3 The gas range was recently used in the kitchen room attached to the sleeping room.



Fig. 4 A fired range in the unfloored place.

on the stone. People sit down on the half open floor and drink the wine while speaking together (Fig 10. 11).



Fig. 5 The community space consists of an open unfloored place in the half open floor.



Fig. 6 The fired range is attached to the unfloored place and sometimes of the half open unfloored place.

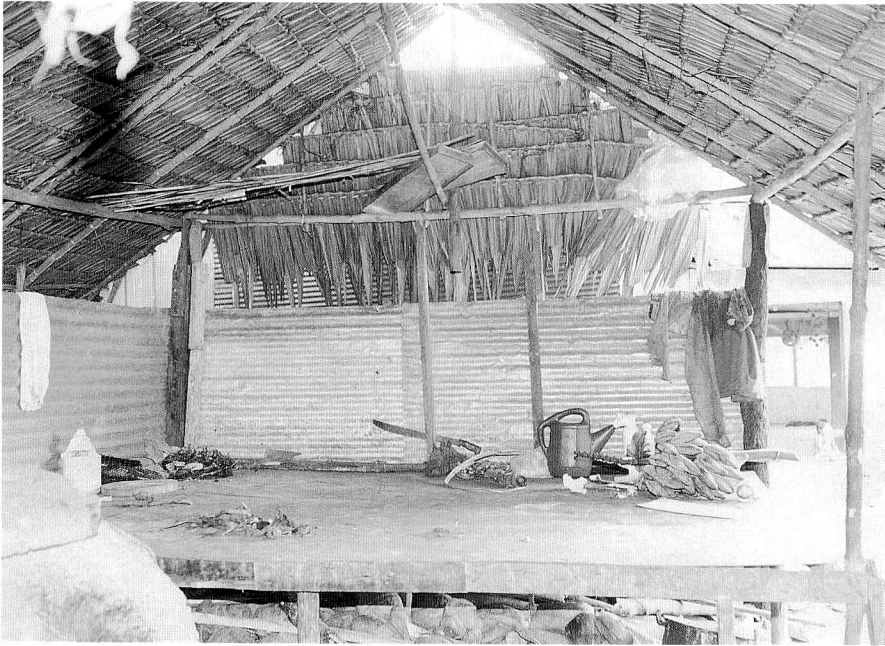


Fig. 7 The half open floor.



Fig. 8 The half open floor was lengthened on the left and right side like a long chair.



Fig. 9 The Community space.



Fig. 10 The half open floor in the community space.

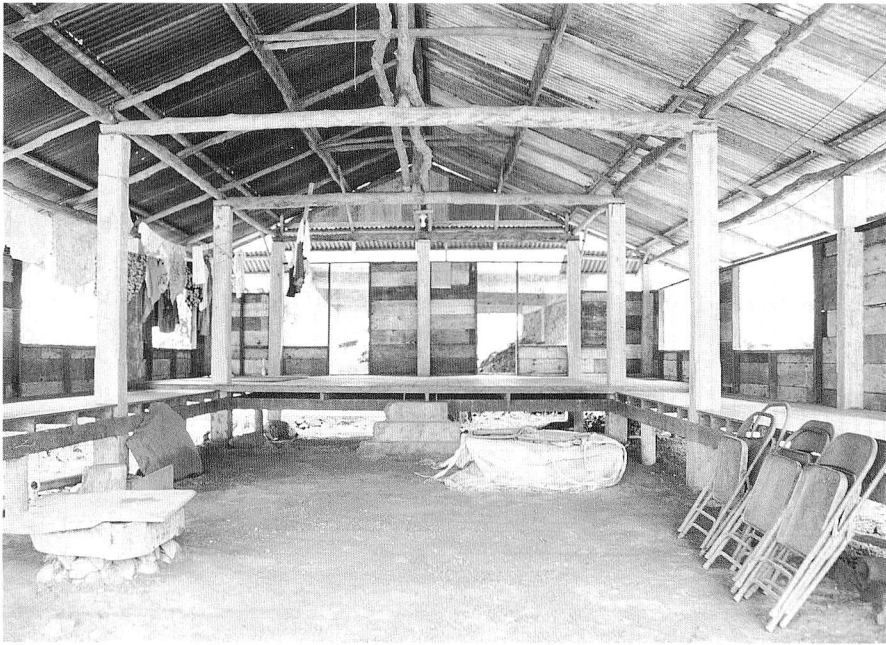


Fig. 11 The unfloored place in center.

4. The Use of the Open Unfloored Space

People sleep on the high floor in rural houses of Pohnpei and sit down on it in order to drink wine, speak their stories and eat together - the community space. The unfloored space is separated from the board floor in Japan. On the one hand, the open unfloored space mixes with the board floor in Pohnpei. For Japanese put on shoes and take them off in front of the board floor. The open unfloored space is used to walk here and there around the board floor. It is different that people surround the table on the board floor in Japan. Recently the table and some chairs were put on the open unfloored space in Pohnpei. It is equal to sit down on the chair as to sit down on the board floor. The use of the open unfloored space is more important in Pohnpei than in Japan.

5. Construction and Measure of Planning

Columns of rural houses are built from Mangrove trees and dug in the earth. The beam is put on them and tied with palm string. Columns are partly caved so that beams will fit strongly.

Roofs of rural houses consist of palm leaves and are replaced once every three years. Columns are about 11 centimeters in diameter. The style of rural houses is simple and temporary. The unit of measure in planning is about 30 centimeters (one foot) in one unit between columns.

6. Conclusion

It is said that Japanese rural houses are influenced by Micronesia, for the range space is separated from the main house. There are the unfloored place and the board floor in the range

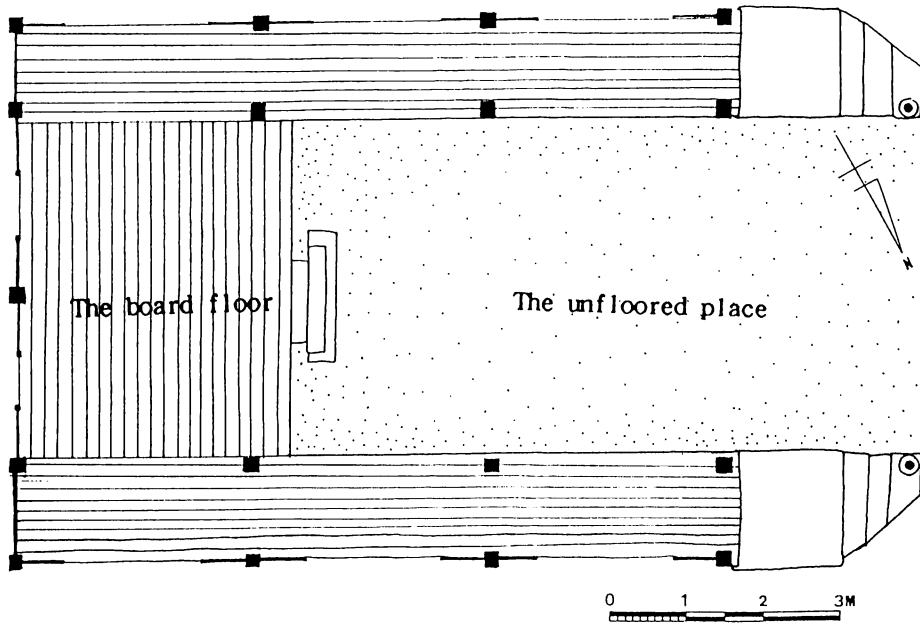


Fig. 12 Mr. Florentino Amor's rural house.
The plan of Fig. 10 and Fig. 11.

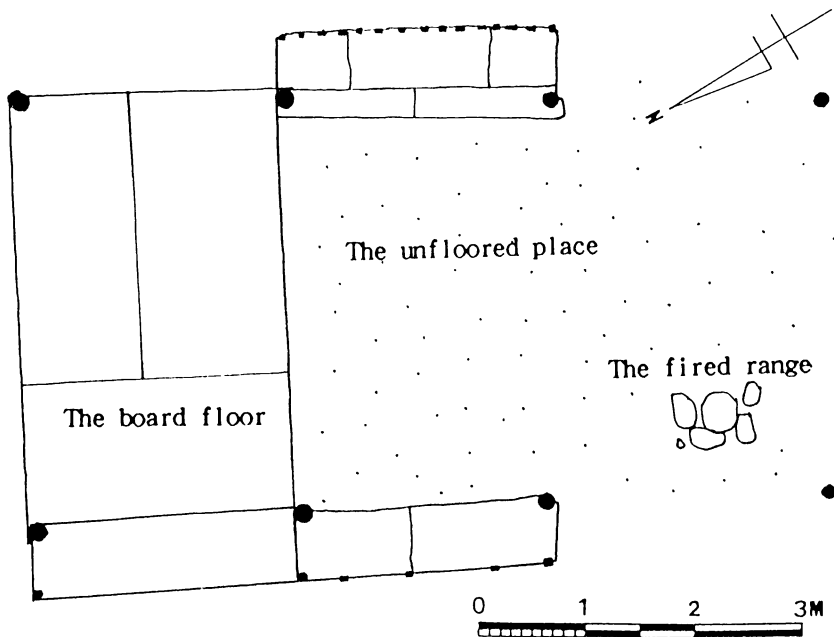


Fig. 13 Mr. Minorusan's rural house.
The plan of Fig. 8 and Fig. 9.

space in Japan. People sit down on the floored place and put their foot in front of it in Pohnpei. It is different in Japan. People carry on their better life in Pohnpei on the open

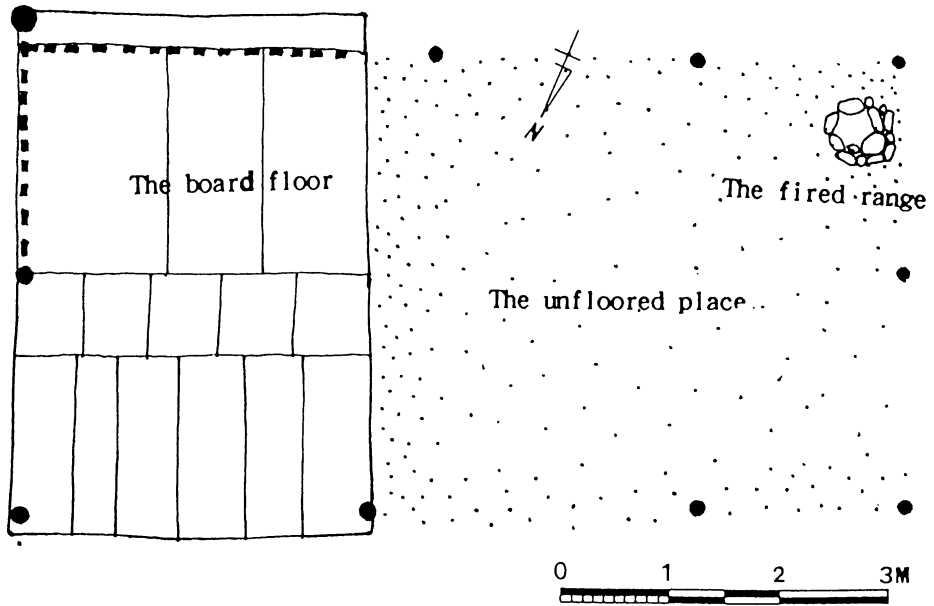


Fig. 14 The plan of Fig. 5.

unfloored space than in Japan. The community space is especially good in Pohnpei. It is one interesting feature of the rural house in Pohnpei. Therefore it is not thought that Japanese rural houses are influenced by Micronesia.