

TRADITIONAL HOUSE OF MOSSI



Pic. 1: Traditional hut

FACTS

Altitude:	462 m above sea level
Building Age:	approx. 25 years
Dimensions:	ca. 4 x 4 x 2,5 m
Built surface:	ca. 16 m ²
No. of stories:	1
Typology:	adobe shelter
Climate:	dry savannah
Topography:	flat, small rocky hills
Used Materials:	clay, stone, straw

INTRODUCTION

The population of Gando consists of different ethnical groups like Bissa, Mossi and Peul (nomad people).

The economy is based largely on agriculture and self-supporting. So you will find permanent settlements only.

The most important issues of the region are population growth and increasing desertification. More and more young men leave the farmsteads to earn money in Ghana or in the Ivory Coast.

The traditional form of construction in the region of Gando relies on the use of natural materials that are plentifully available in the immediate area like earth, wood, fieldstones and vegetable fibres.

SITE / LOCATION

The farmstead is situated in the village Gando. The village of Gando with 300 inhabitants consists of more than 50 farmsteads scattered over the dry and meagre savannah-plateau. Around them are situated the acres. Every farmstead is composed of an agglomeration of several thatched roof huts, metal sheet covered huts and numerous storehouses.

INFRASTRUCTURE

In the village of Gando there is just one main road not made up. From this main road small paths guide you to the farmsteads and connect the farmsteads one below the other. During the rainy season the main road is often washed out and is closed to traffic.

Nobody in the cottage has a own car. The fewest inhabitants can afford bikes or mopeds therefore the people cover the common way by feet.

The farmstead have neither electricity nor running water. Water is one of the greatest problems of the region. The supply with drinking water occurred about a depth well.

On the central marketplace where once a week foods and things for the daily need/requirements are sold stands a mill and some religious facilities.

Hospitals and doctors are only in the greater towns like Garango and Tenkodogo.

SETTLEMENT STRUCTURE

The farmstead is the base for all social, political, cultural and economical behaviours.

The family is living in different houses.

One farmstead includes up to 5 generations, 30 to 40 persons.



Pic. 2: View on a farmstead:

Every farmstead is fenced by a wall as a defence against arguments with other ethnical groups.

One farmstead consists of a lot of huts which are connected by corridors and courtyards. On this way you can move from one unit to another. Between the huts are storehouses where the harvest can be stored or dried and stables for different animals.

In the middle of the farmstead is a central place which is commonly used.

A farmstead is subdivided into households. There are separated through small walls. This wall generates a little privacy with intimacy and individuality.

The housing conditions are reflected in arrangements, reservations and architecture. Every sleeping room is for 1 to 2 persons, not often more than 3 to 4 persons.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The head of the farmstead is the so-called Naaba. Mostly he is the oldest male of the family. He enjoys the highest public respect and decides in the important economical and social cases. Sometimes he guides meetings of the male persons - mainly older men - of the farmstead to find his decision.

His hut is normally standing on a favoured place of the courtyard. This can be across from the entrance or on the right side of it.

Sometimes the young men are leaving their farmstead to build their own one.

The head of the household is the father of the family. He is responsible for his family circle and some relatives which are committed to him. The expanded family circle includes related children of school age whose home is far away from school, single women, widows / widowers or unmarried members of the family.



Pic. 3: Break under a mango tree

In every hut lives even a wife and her children, the children alone ore the father of the family.

Not every person who belongs to the estate is always present. The unused rooms are never empty because they are used by other members of the family. But if the owner is back he has still the right to his house.

Every man belongs to his farmstead from his date of birth. But not even a wife. As a child or unmarried women she is just tolerated on the farmstead of her parents. From the day she marries she belongs to the farmstead of her husband. A man has to build a house for his wife during the time of engagement.

USE

Traditional huts are used to sleep and gives protection against weather. In the hot summer time the members of the family often sleep together in the courtyard.



Pic. 4: Closed loam oven

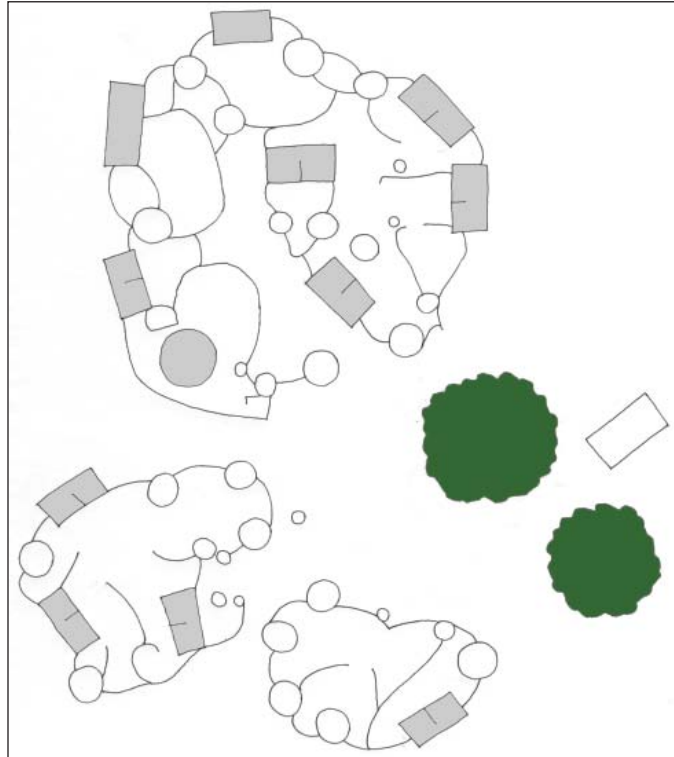
Pic. 5: Open cooking place

Every wife has its own cooking place even inside the cottage or in the courtyard. The pots are putted on open wooden fires. Wood is the only energy source they can use. Sometimes they have closed loam ovens which needs less wood then open fireplaces.



Pic. 6: Earthenware vessels

Pic. 7: „Shower“



Pic. 8: Plan (grey - huts)

Hugh earthenware vessels are used to stow and cool fluids and foods.

In a small fenced part of the hut the people are cleaning themselves with water from buckets. A little drain takes the poor water out of the farmstead and direct to the fields. The people use the fields as a toilet as well.

CONSTRUCTION

Every hut is fenced by a wall around 1,40 meters high that gives the courtyard. For the foundation you have to dig a ditch and fill it with natural stones from the field. This architrave block is around 50 cm high and gives protection against splashing water.

The cross section dimension of the hut is roughly 3,0 meters or 4,0 meters.

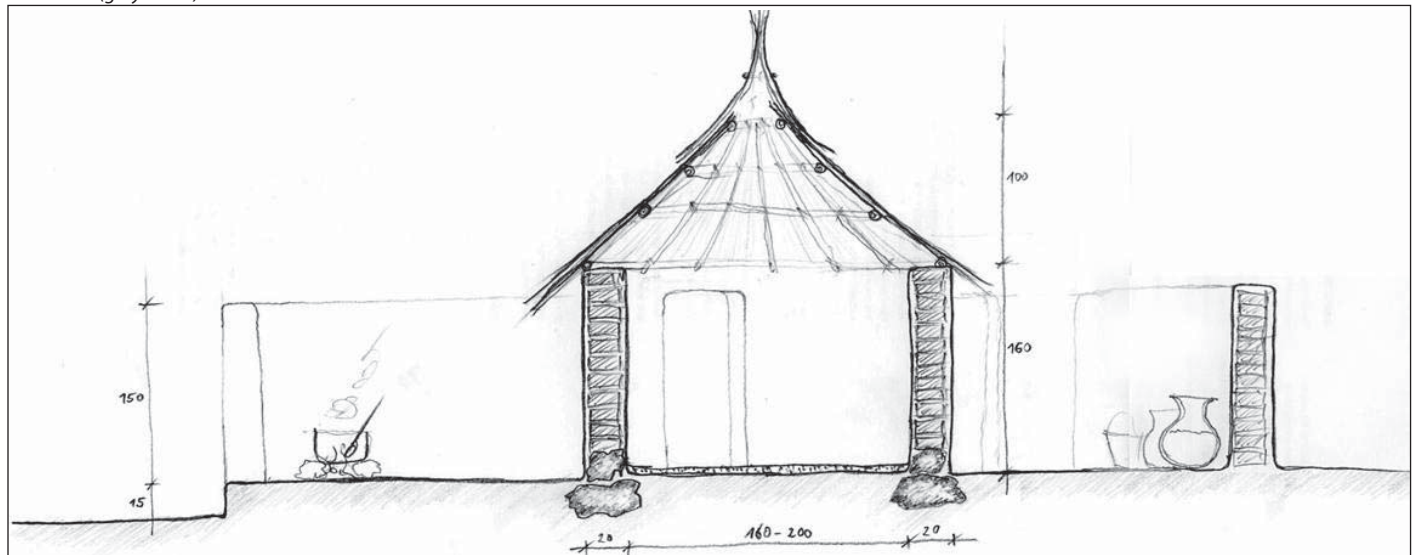
The height of the housewall varies between 1,60 meters and 1,80 meters.

The roof is made of straw.

CONSTRUCTION PROCESS

In each farmstead is a man who is qualified a special work to do. Some of the young man are educated in handcraft and the older ones are working like their ancestor did.

When there is no need to harvest new houses where built or older ones are repaired.



Pic. 9: Section

CONTINENT: Africa > LAND: Burkina Faso > REGION: Boulgou > SUBREGION: Gando > OBJECT: **Traditional House of Mossi**

The new building and the overhaul is done by everybody of the farmstead and the neighbors.

For the foundation they use natural stones. They were collected by the women and children and carried on top of their heads.

The loam bricks are handmade and produced on the spot.

The bigger stones are removed from the digged loam. Then the loam is crushed and mixed with water. This mixture is filled in prefabricated forms. Thereafter they are removed from the forms. The bricks were protected against sun and wind air-dried and stored.

The bricks sometimes mixed with vegetable fibres and juices or dung from cows to increase the stability. But the additives are of little use in the rainy season. They also attract white ants which destroy the wall for the long term.

The straw for the roof comes up on the harvest of the sorghum. It is stored and used when needed.

FOUNDATION

The foundation consists of a architrave block around 50 cm high.

The floor is the natural ground. A small layer of loam is put on the ground. The stones are removed. Thereafter the loam is irrigated and hit with a selfmade block of wood. This is done several times as long as the floor is compressed.

WALLS

The walls are build from air - dried loam bricks and are later on plastered with loam from inside and outside.

The loam plaster are subject to attack by wind, rain and white ants and requires annual maintenance and repairs.

OPENINGS

The entrance door is the only opening which can be closed by planks or sheet metal. This is to protect the room against heat and dust.

The opening provides a mean of ventilation and daylighting the room.

Images:

Pic. 1, 6, 13: Shayan Bahluli Zamani; Pic. 2. Thi Hien Phuong Pham; Pic. 3, 10: Franziska Laue; Pic. 4: Simone Maxl; Pic. 5, 11: Sylvain Rocher; Pic. 7: Mascha Egberts; Pic. 8 - 9: Inka Göbel, Heike Holtschke, Simone Maxl, Jan Schreiber; Pic. 12, 14: Francis Kéré



Pic. 10: Handmade loam bricks

Pic. 11: Everybody helps



Pic. 12: Women carrying fieldstones



Pic. 13: Tamping of the loam floor

Pic. 14: ...nearly finished

Literature / Source:

students excursion in march 2005 with Dipl. Ing. Francis Kéré, Technical University of Berlin

ROOF

On top of the housewalls lies a scaffolding from weaved branches. Therein is binded straw as a cover. Finally they put a hat from straw on the top of the roof to make it waterproof.

The roof projektion little protect the wall against erosion and the penetration of moisture.

ENCLOSURE

The wall around the cottage is circa 1,40 metres high. This is a protection against rain, wind and animals and generates a little privacy.

INNER BUILT ELEMENTS / FURNITURE

The only elements inside the rooms are blankets and straw for the sleepingplaces and something for the kitchen like earthware vessels and calabasses.

PROBLEMS / CHANCES

Under a thatched roof it becomes not as hot as under a corrugated iron sheet. But this roof must be reuned from time to time because it has no weather resistance.

As a result more and more industrial products such as steel, corrugated iron sheet and cement are being use. The advantage of increased weather protection offered by these materials is offset by a number of negative effects. The industrial products are expensive and the bulk of the inhabitants cannot afford them.

The transition to modern architecture is defined by using modern materials together with traditional matters (loam - concrete - corrugated iron sheet - straw).

Loam as a construction material is unlimited and free available in the whole region. But when it is wet the loam swelled and cracked. Therefore after each rainy season the houses must be repaired.

There is no chance to use wood as construction material because there are to much white ants. Before use the surface of wood must be treat with bitumen or other materials.

Websites: