

Thai Studies



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Prehistoric phases of Thailand : knowledge from archaeological findings



Scope of the Lecture

1.Introduction of Archaeology 2.Prehistory of Thailand



Some important abbreviations used in this lecture

B.C. : Before Christian Era :

ex. *500 B.C.* = 500 + 2,000 (2016) = c. 2,500 years ago

**A.D. : Anno Domini (Latin) = In the year of our Lord,
since Christ was born**

: ex. *A.D.200* = 2000 (2016) – 200 = c. 1,800 years ago

B.P. : Before Present Time, at present

:ex. *800 B.P.* = 2016 – 800 = A.D.1216

M.Y.A. : Million years ago

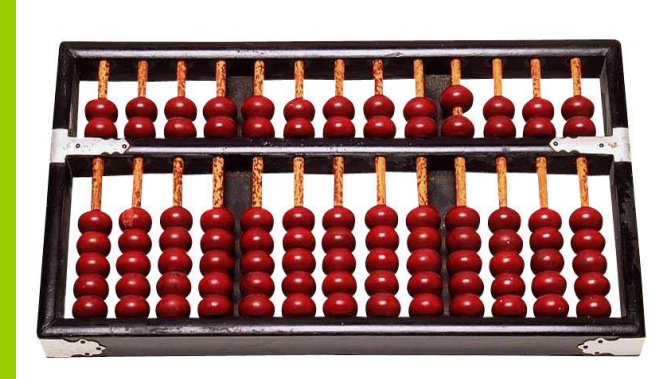
C. : circa = about, approximately

Why do we have to study the past ?



There are many good reasons !

- Time passed.
- Many things changed.
- New creations, inventions, innovations.
- So easy for us to forget our past.
- The nature of us : Human always wondered about their origins and culture.



- There are many kinds of the past such as :

*Past of the Human,
past of the Nation, past
of the Community, past
of the Town, past of
your University or even
past of your Family, etc.*



- In fact the Past is very important for everyone, Societies and the Nations, perhaps beyond your imagination.
- What is your idea about the Pasts ?



The poppies blossom at the Tower of London

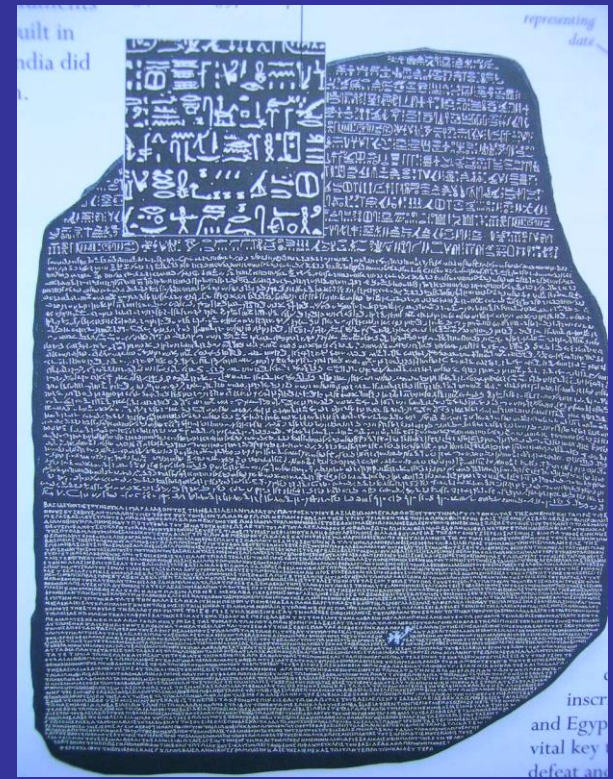
The connection of Past Present and Future



Archaeology VS *History*

The difference between history and archaeology

- History study the past by collect data, analysis and interpret *evidences of the inscription or writing language.*
- Archaeology study the past by collect data, analysis and interpret *evidences of the ancient objects and other evidences.*



Archaeology : The methods to get information from the past



- Archaeologists collect data (mostly from the ancient rubbishes) by the method of excavation.
- They classify, analysis, interpret the data and writing the report.

Heart of Archaeology

- *Interpretation* of the ancient material culture and related evidences to understand the remote past of human societies.

The Methodology in Archaeology



Data in Archaeology

- There are 2 kinds of data in archaeology
 1. *secondary data* : data from documents, reports, articles, books, etc.
 2. *primary data* : data from interviews, site survey, excavation

Fieldwork in Archaeology

- Sites Survey
- excavation

Site survey

- To entering the site area to find some evidences or clues that will support our ideas before the decision making.



Mounds looking from the sky



The prehistoric mound at the surface



Interview the villager



Interview the farmers



Surface artifacts collecting

Checking the exact position of the site with GPS for making the archaeological map

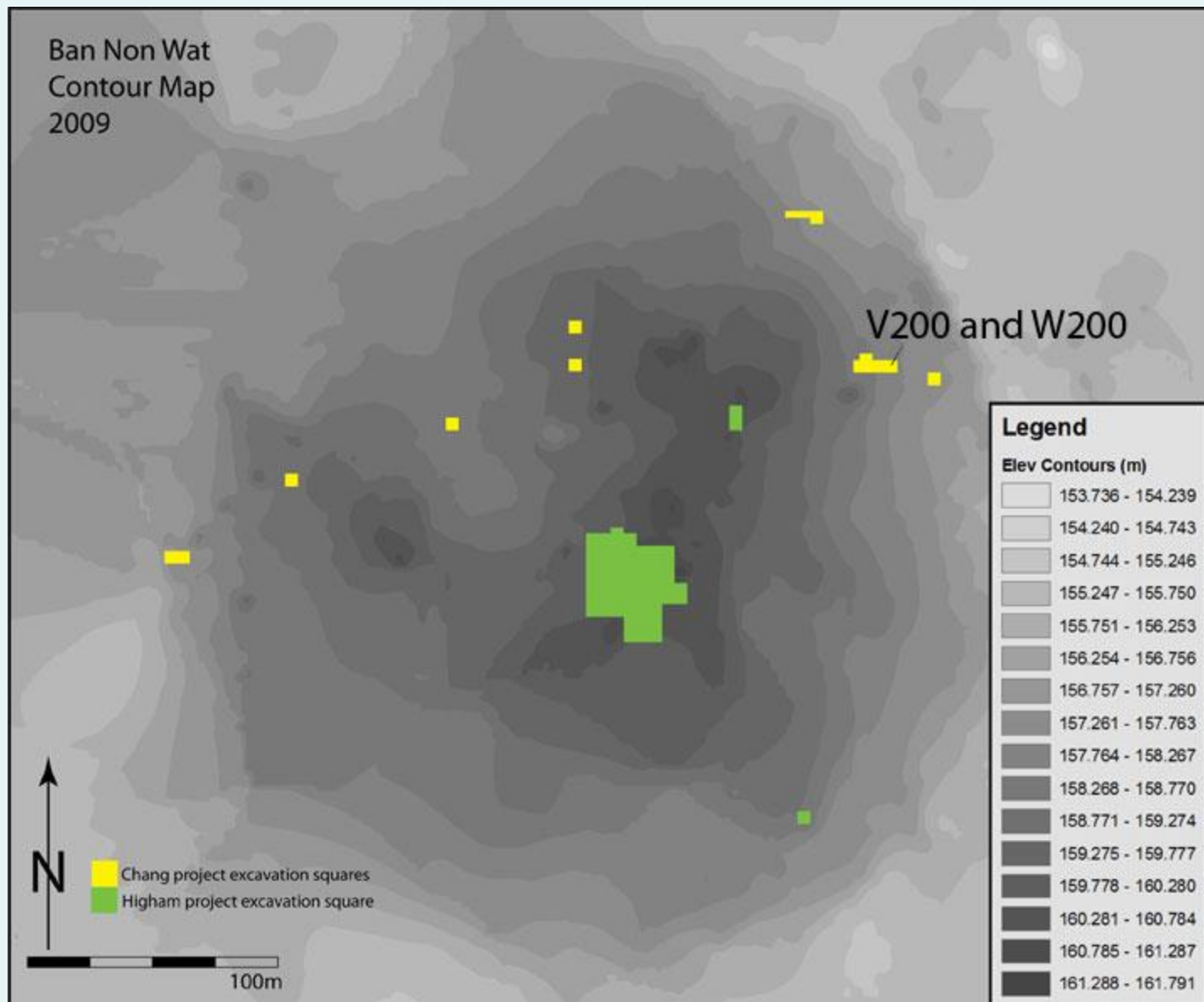


Sometime during site survey we used the handheld GPS for indicating the exact geographical location of the site





Ban Non Wat
Contour Map
2009



Excavation = Digging



Bronze age burial at Ban Non Wat, age c. 1,000 B.C.



Occupation layer showing the post holes



The archaeological excavation
at *Ban Non Wat*, Korat



- Very busy excavation



Digging in the square by archaeologist



- Excavation in progress by local workers



Scraping dark soil by using trowel



Removing post hole feature



Planning and Drawing

In many times
drawing is still very
important for
recording evidences
in archaeology

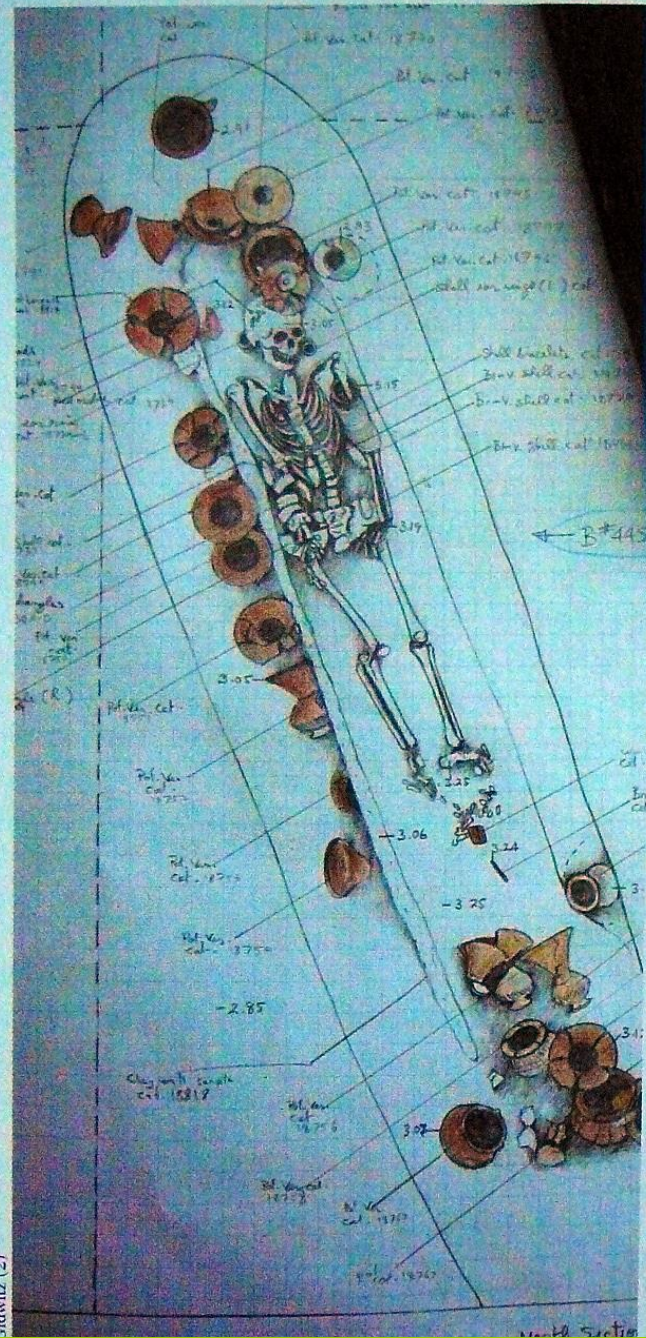
w at Ban Non Wat
Age graves, while
l school watches.
one of the burials
ned coffin, 26 pots,
and a bronze awl.

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the region's pre-
n archaeologists
o had discovered



Taking photography in the square





Measuring depth level in the square

lucky me, it's fun



K.U. student (in 2005) exposing the 3,000 years old burial at the prehistoric site of **Ban Non Wat**



The archaeologists at work : Removing the burials



**End of excavation when we reach *The Natural Layer*
of the square, which sometime called *The Sterile***



“Bottom up the bucket” : Screening all soil from excavation



Cleaning the potsherds



Ceramics classifying by expert

Looking carefully to this picture. What are they finding?



They found the burial !



The burial exposing in action



Finally, the rich burial
“The Super Burial”
after exposing





The scientific method of dating

- Dating or Chronology is the important process in archaeology.
- In the old time archaeologists used the comparative methods to find out date of the events in the past.
- Now **Radio Carbon Dating** or **C14 dating** technique were replaced and became the important scientific tool in archaeology

C14 dating

- **The first scientist who applied this knowledge for finding the date in archaeology is Prof. Willard Libby, he got the Nobel prize for this accomplishment.**

C14 dating For short and simple explanation of how its work.

- **All living creatures during their life received the unstable C14 isotope from atmosphere of the Earth.**
- **These C14 begin to decay or change after these living creatures died, with the constant rate of the Half Life at about 5,500 years**

The Prehistoric Finding



What shall we find in prehistory

Artifacts

: Material cultures from the past which belong to the societies prior to the invention of writing language.

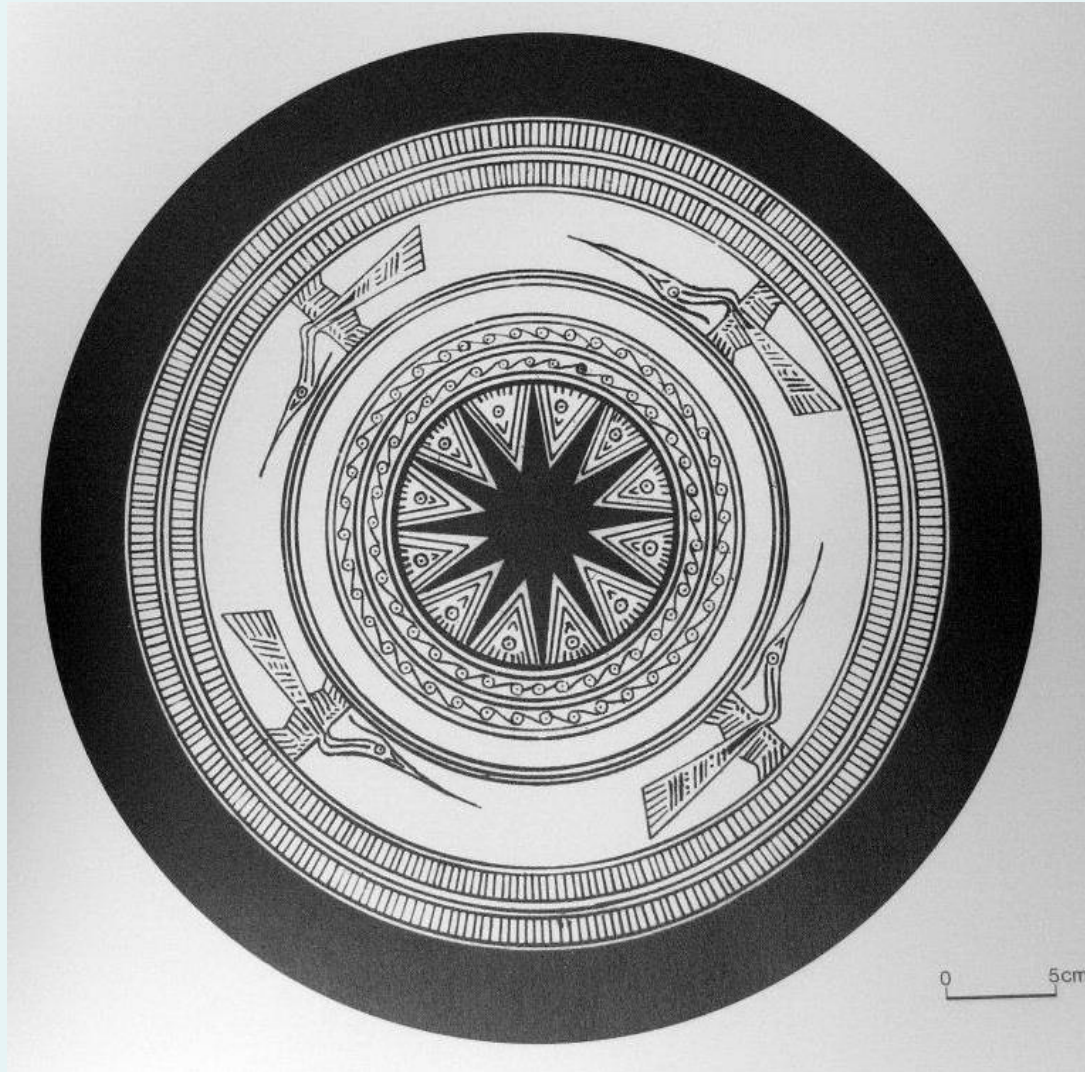
Evidences found in the prehistory of Thailand

- Ceramic : pottery, potsherds, clay figurines
- Small finds artifacts : stone bangles, glass beads, bronze tools, iron materials
- Human Burials : extended position burials, flexed position burial, burial jars

Evidences found in the prehistory of Thailand

- Animal bones : pigs, dogs, cattle, birds, snakes, etc.
- Shells : fresh water shells, marine shells
- Features : postholes, rubbish pits

Artifacts in Prehistory



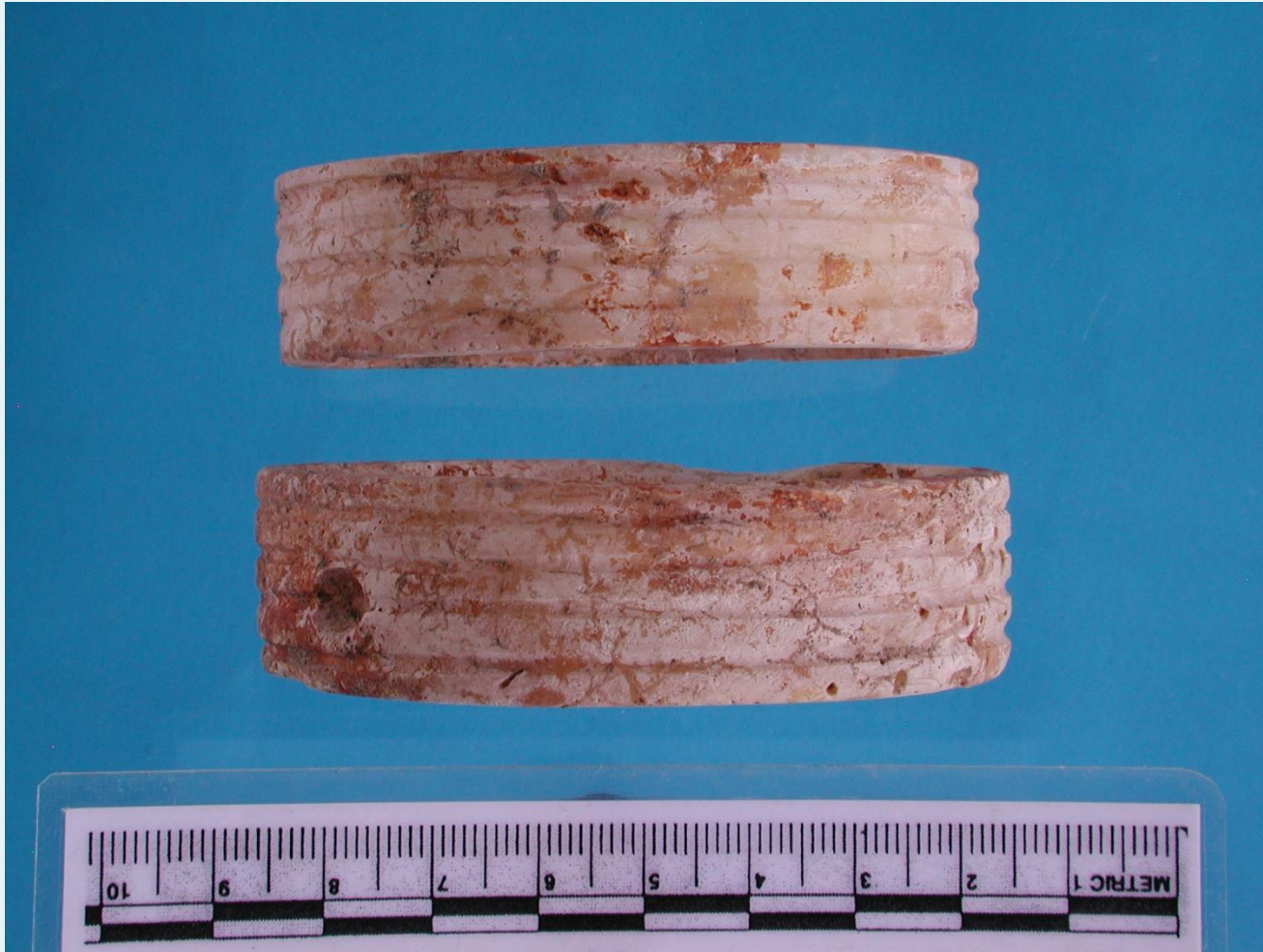
Burial jar at *Ban Chiang Hian*



Group of pots as grave offering



Small find :The shell bangles





Small find :The polished stone axes



The bronze socket tool



The animal teeth beads





The
necklace
with stone
and glass
beads

The bronze socket tool mould





- แวดินเผา (Clay Spindle Whorl)

The cattle figurines



Pot Sherds the alphabets of archaeologist



The cave art at PhaTam



The Prehistory of Thailand

Generally the Prehistory of Thailand can be divided into 5 periods

- The Palaeolithic Age
- The Mesolithic Age
- The Neolithic Age
- The Bronze Age
- The Iron Age

The Palaeolithic Period

**: Age of the Hunting and Gathering
society by human ancestors**

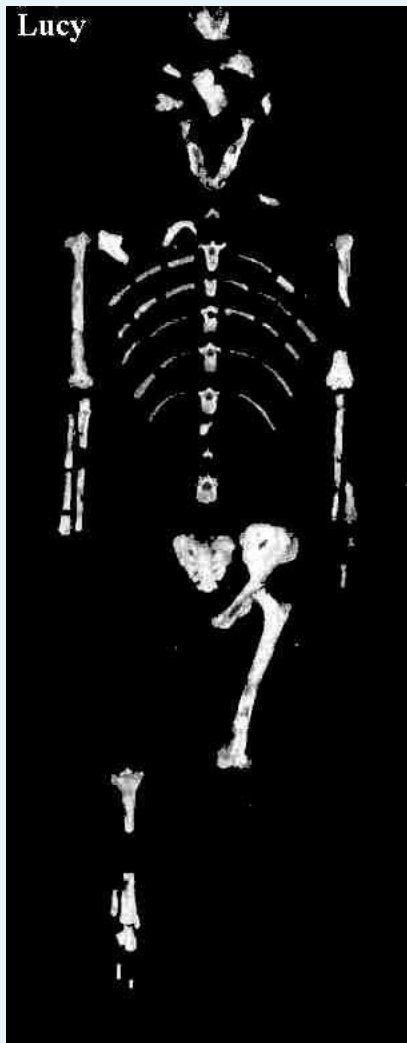
Who lived in Thailand during this period ?

Lucy ?

Sorry, no Lucy was found in Thailand.



- Model of Lucy at the Science Museum in Thailand



Lucy (*A. afarensis*)

Australopithecines like Lucy (*right*) were mainly herbivores; their upright stance, manual dexterity, and hard teeth enabled them to live on a varied vegetarian diet. They may have used convenient rocks, sticks, and other debris for various tasks, such as cracking nuts.



The Hominids

- **The Australopithecus**

Australopithecus anamensis

Australopithecus afarensis

Australopithecus robustus

Australopithecus boisei

- **The Homo**

Homo habilis

Homo erectus

Homo sapiens archaic

Homo sapiens neanderthalensis

Homo sapiens sapiens

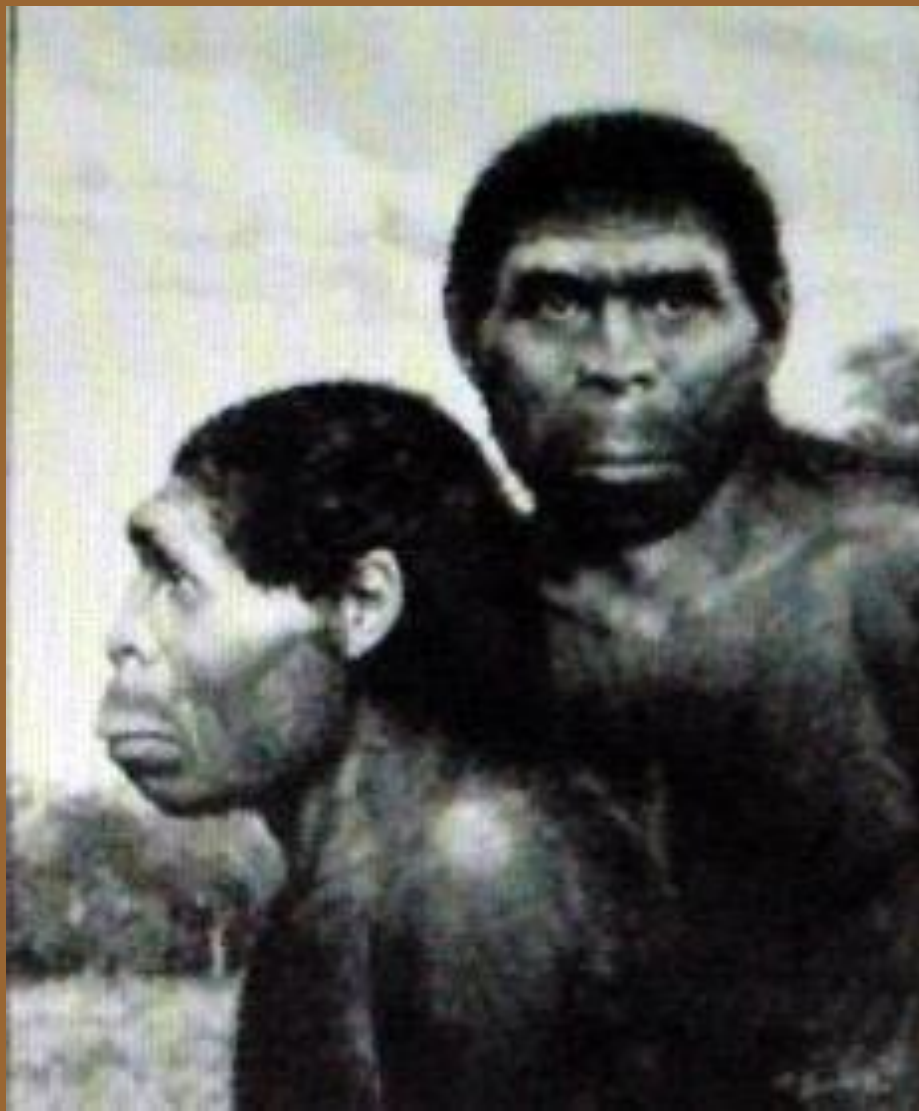
Homo erectus in Thailand

- Small piece of skull fossil was found in the Northern region of Thailand age c.700,000 B.P.
- Thailand located in the middle between China and Indonesia so some scholars believed that Thailand should be *the Missing Link area*.

- Peking Man and Java Man are the simple name of *Homo erectus*



This picture
showing,
probably, the
food gathering
of Homo
erectus in the
palaeolithic
period



Homo erectus may looked like this

Stone tools of Homo erectus found in Thailand

- During the W.W.II Dutch war prisoner name *Van Heekeren* found the palaeolithic stone tools at the bank of *Kwae Noi river* in *Kanchanaburi*. Later these tools were called *Fingnoian* culture these tools were probably belong to Homo erectus



The ancient technology of mankind may represent by these stone tools : The Chopper and Chopping Tools, can you believe it the ancient man used these tools for million of years without any change.



The Mesolithic Period

: Age of modern human Hunting and Gathering with better stone tools

Who lived in Thailand during this Age

- Only modern species of Homo sapiens sapiens found in Thailand.
- No others ancient species found anymore so archaeologists believed that the others species of human except us all extinct.



Rock painting at Phu Plara
Uthai Thani



Cave art at Pha Tam, Khong
Chiam, Ubon Ratchathani



Prehistoric cave art at Khao Chan Ngam, Si kiew, Korat







*The Mesolithic
stone tool* like
this sometime
called *the
Hoabinhian
stone tool* or

Sumatralith





flexed position burials



The burial in
flexed position
without grave
offering found
within the
Neolithic layer

The Neolithic Period

**: Age of the mega change from hunting
and gathering society to the food**

producing society

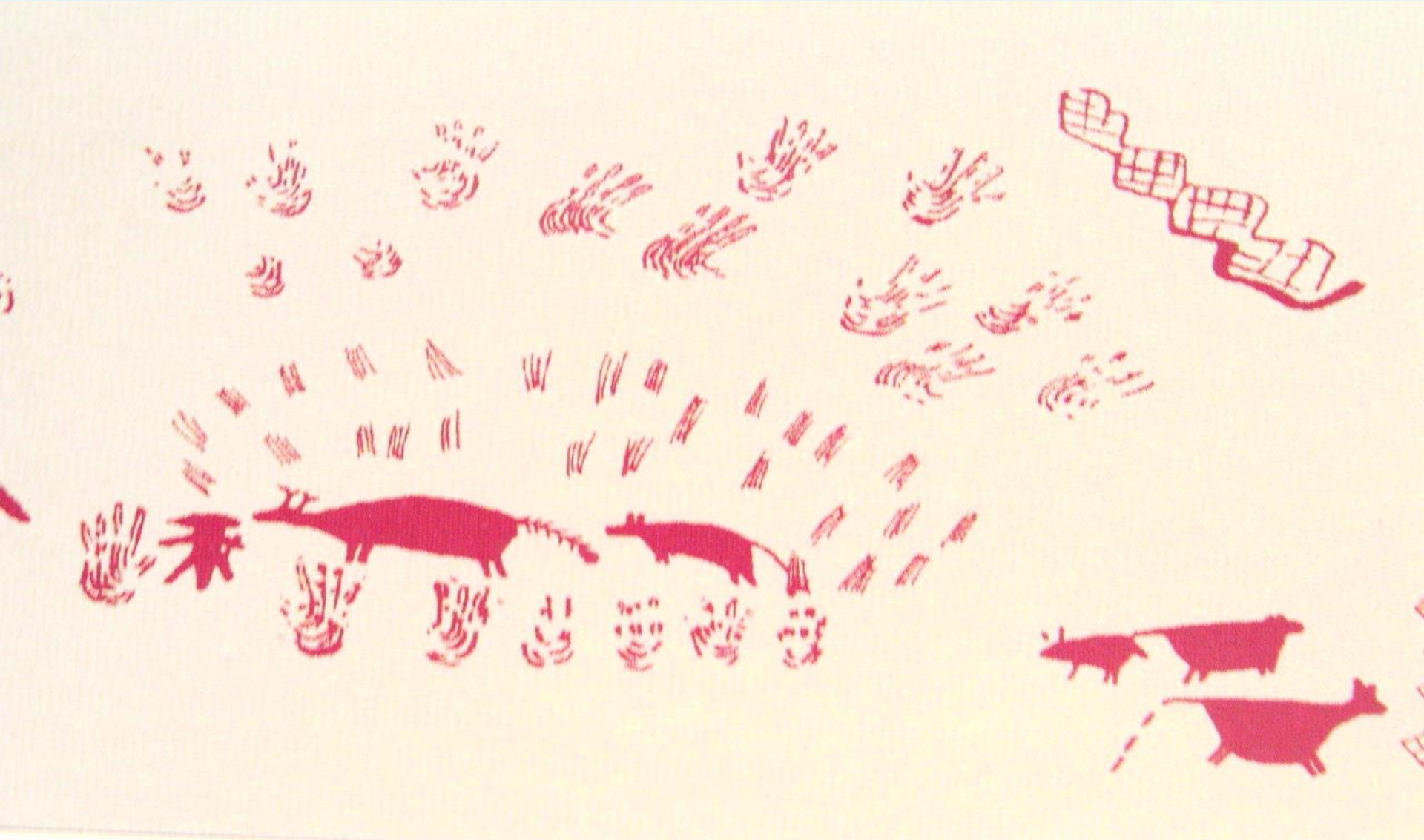
The Neolithic Period

- This transition period of food production in Thai prehistory represented by the rice farmer and the earliest villages in many parts of Thailand especially in the Northeast and the Central part.

The major characters of the Neolithic way of life found in Thailand called “The Neolithic Package”.

The Neolithic package

- Permanent village life
- Growing rice and domesticating the animal for their living
- Making pottery
- Using polished stone tools
- Weaving basket and cloth
- Contact and exchange with the other communities
- Shared Community knowledge and beliefs



This cave art at Pha Mon Noi may represent the scene of agriculture and rituals in prehistory of Thailand

early rice agriculture sites

- 7000-4500 BCE
- 4500-3500 BCE
- 3500-2500 BCE
- 2500-1500 BCE
- 1500 BCE-500 CE

spread of early rice farming

spread of Austroasiatic languages

area of loess soils

600 km
400 mi



Khok Phanom Di









0

20cm















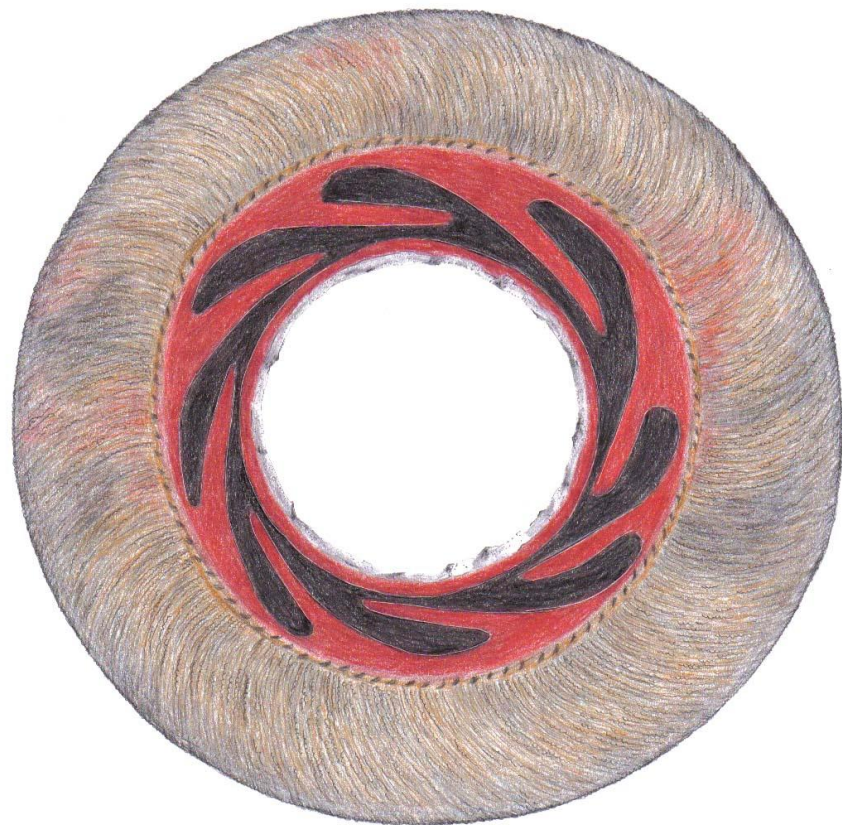
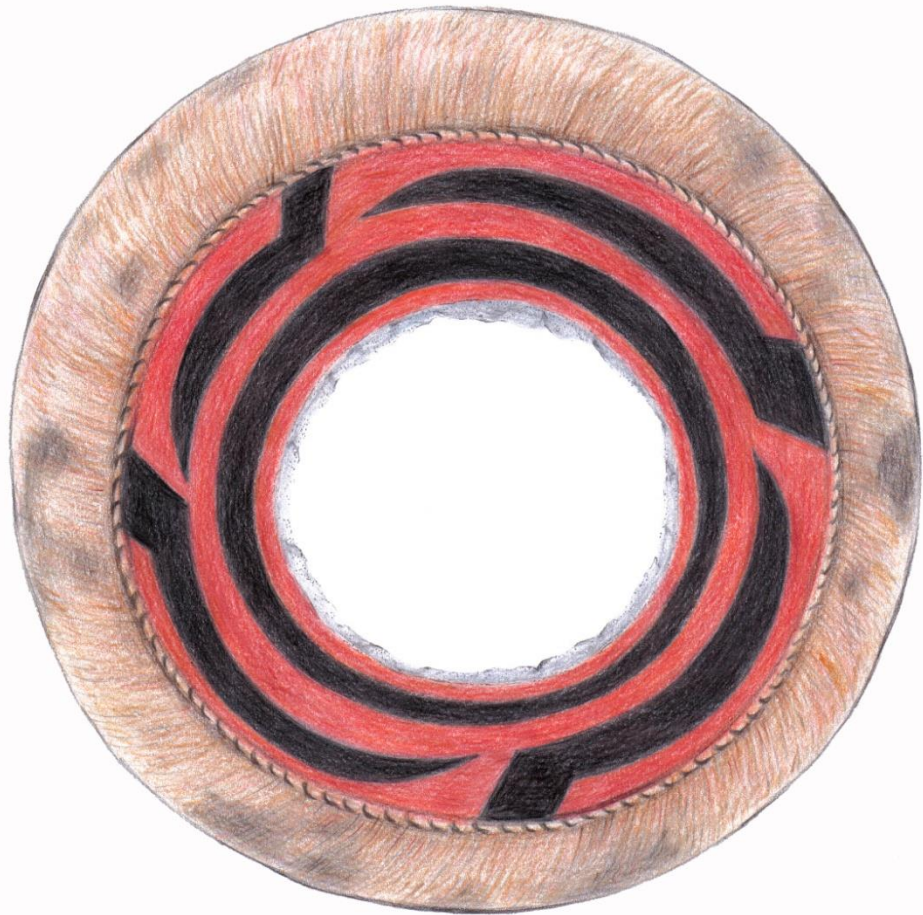


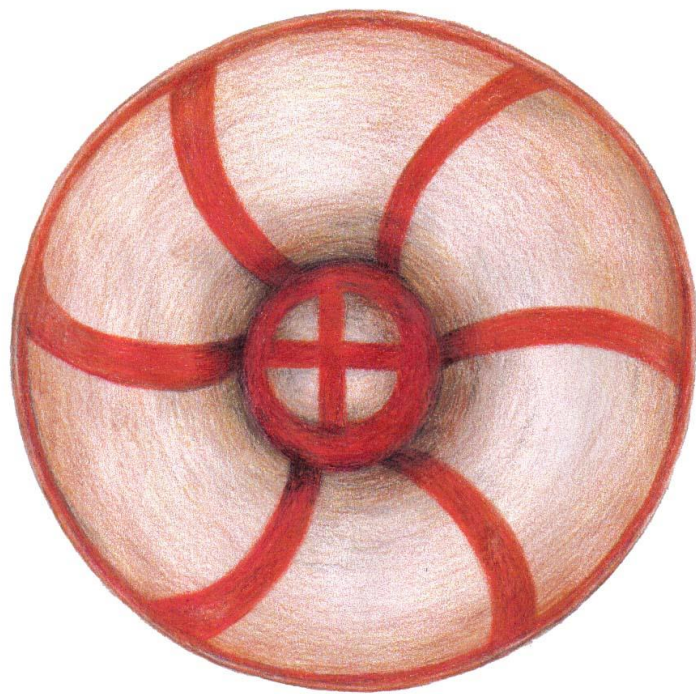


the Neolithic burial jar









The Bronze Age

: Age of the first Metal tools

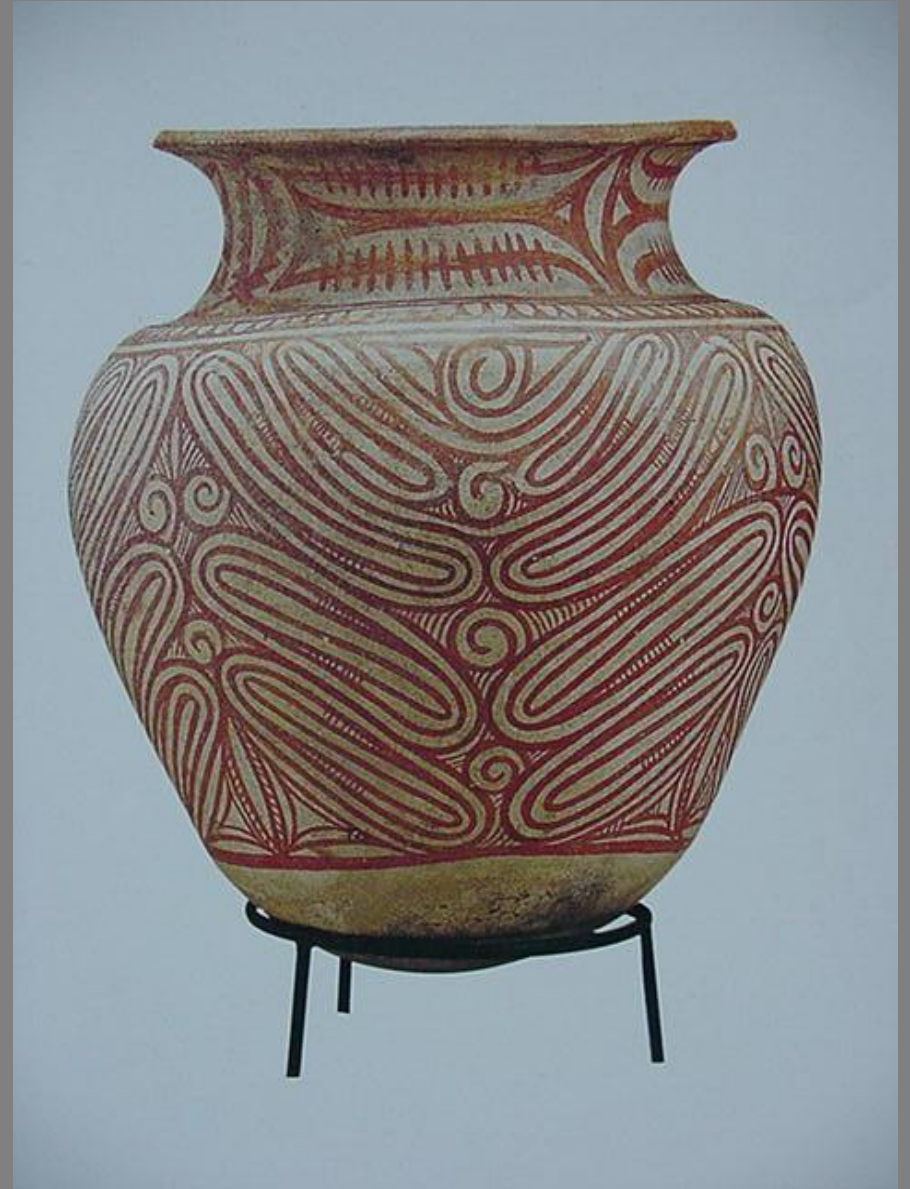
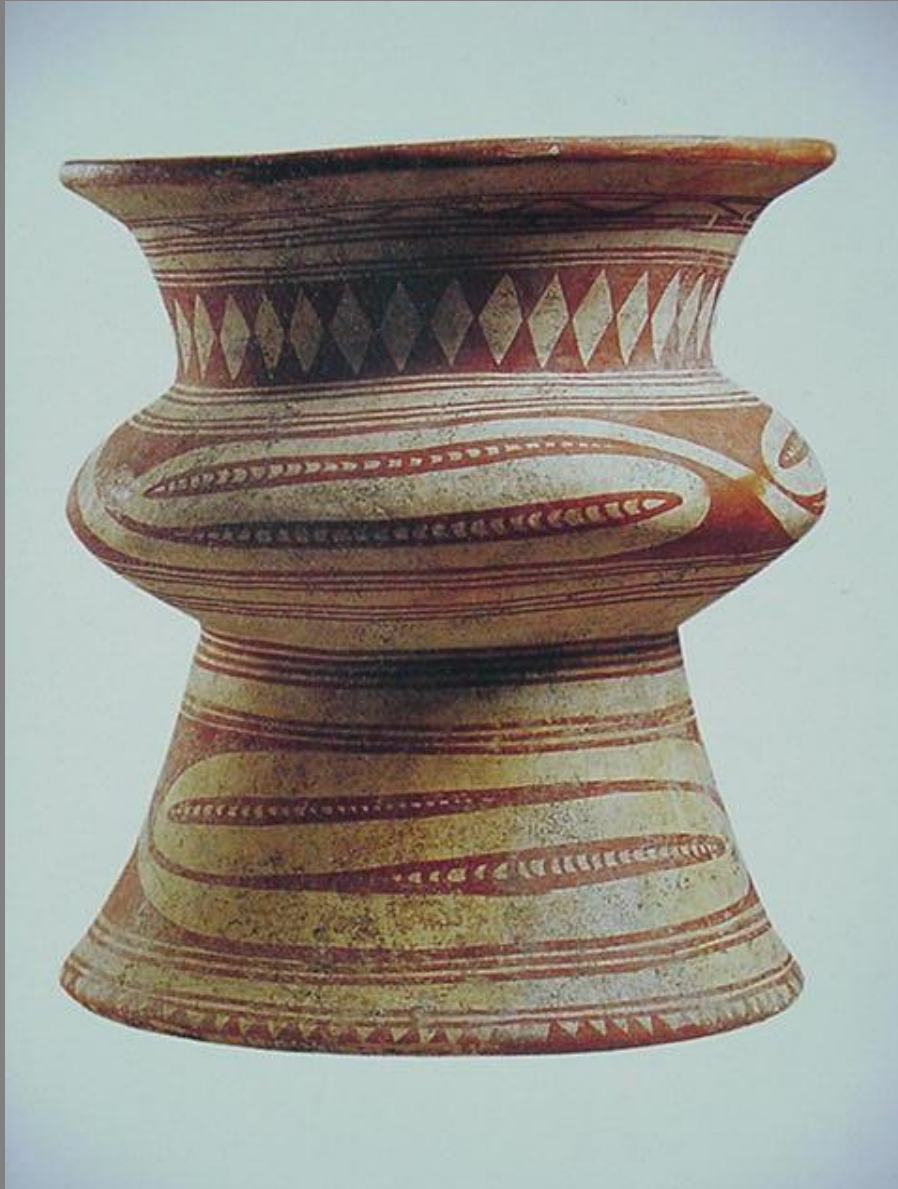
Ban Chiang : *The most famous Bronze Age Site in Thailand*

- This site located in Nong Harn district, Udonthani province.
- There are many excavations undertaken at this site during the last 40 years ago.
- Archaeologists found many important evidences of the Bronze Age culture, age over 3,000 years ago.
- One of the most well known artifacts found at this site were called “Ban Chiang painted pottery”.

The village of Ban Chiang



Red on Buff pottery







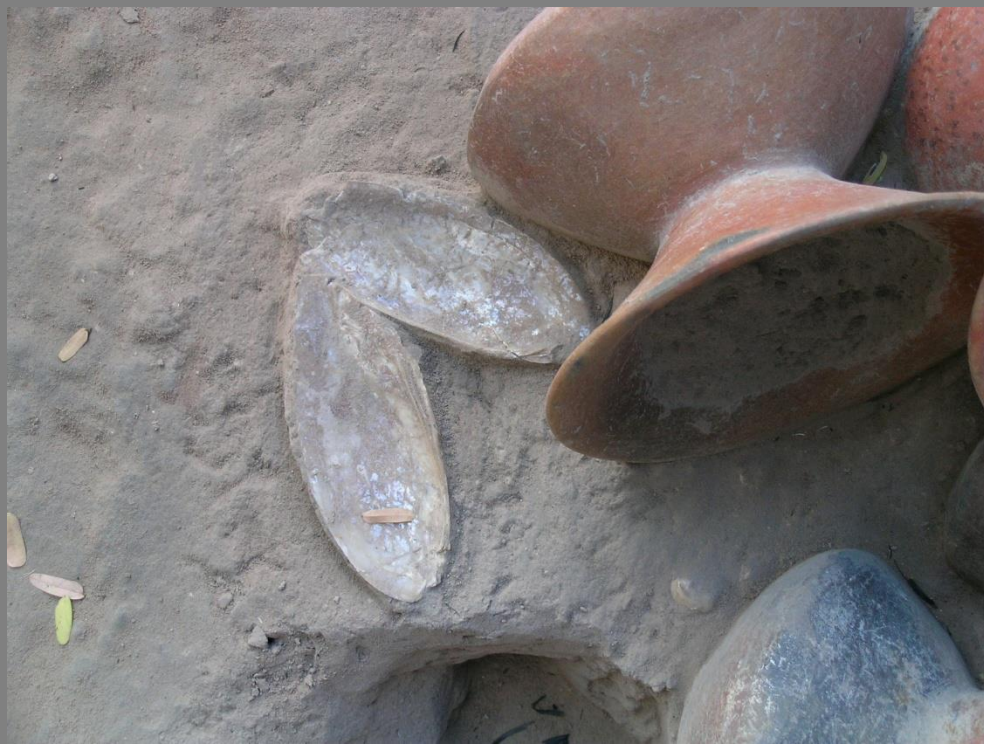
Ban Non Wat







The burial jar and the rich burials
of Bronze Age at Ban Non Wat,
Khorat











The buffalo
foot prints
found in the
late Bronze
age at Ban
Non Wat

ed
r this
and
e were
y as
hey



t
own
holes
evel
han



181



170



171

(width 10 cm)



BNW 06/07
B# 553
cat. 26357



BNW 06/07
F9 B#553
cat. 26334
actual size

BNW 06/07
B#553
cat. 26334

166

(width 13 cm)



167

(width 14 cm)



165

(height 18 cm)

The Iron Age

**: Age of the new Metal, long distance trading and
expanding of the people and the settlements**



207



208

Crowded burials frequently found during the excavation of the Iron age layer



Crowded burials, crowded evidences : crowded people



The importance of iron in the human society

- Best value when compare the quality with the price.
- Better quality when compare with bronze or others.
- Easy to find iron ore in many areas of Thailand.

Case study : Noen U-Loke

- A large Iron Age settlement site at the Mun river valley in Khorat.
- The excavation uncovered a large amount of mortuary artifacts that can tell us about the ritual and material culture.
- Burials were filled with rice and covered by clay coffins, and bodies interred with gold, silver, agate, carnelian, iron, bronze and glass ornaments, tools and weapons.



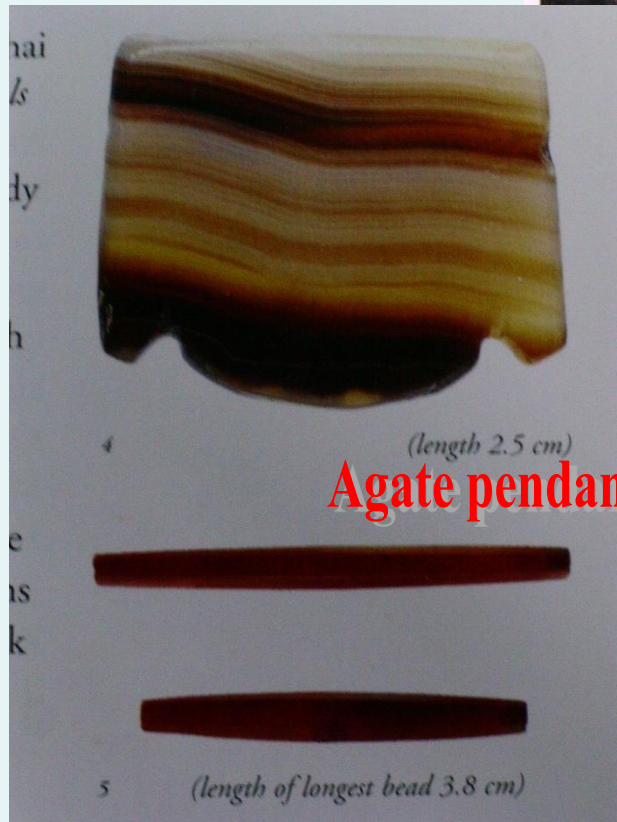
Adult male with
the evidences of
bronze ear rings,
body belts and
bangles found at
Noen U- Lok

The Social Complexity in Prehistoric Period of Thailand

- From about 500 A.D. many areas in Thailand and Cambodia presented the evidences of an increasing social complexity.
- The Iron Age people of these areas were sophisticated, complex, innovative and numerous.



spiral shape bronze head ornament



Agate pendant



carnelian beads



- New precious metal found in the Iron Age, the gold beads



The burial
Jar of new
born baby
with bronze
bangles,
glass beads
and bowl



The carnelian figurine



205

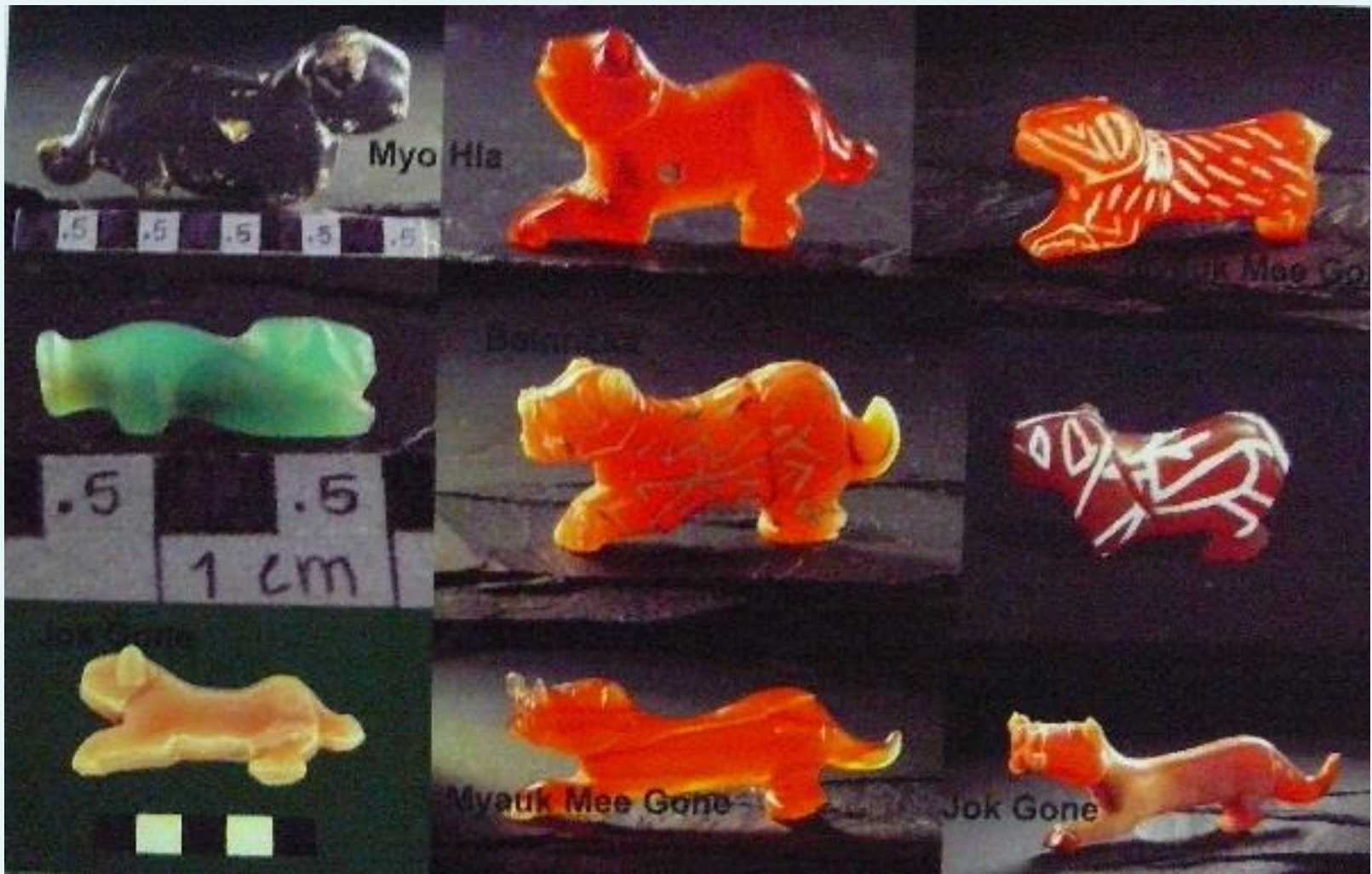
(length 6.7 cm)

Double head jade ear ring



216

(length 4.5 cm)



- Carnelian figurines found in Myanmar. Solid evidences of early Buddhist in this area

- By the 100 B.C. the Han Chinese were expanding their empire to the South for new territories and exotic trade goods.

- Large communities at that time already have an existing level of social complexity and a proper social structure for the necessary changes to take place.

- Chinese pilgrims from China to India during the 7th century also described a State called “*Douluobodī*”, located west of a place called “*Isanapura*” and east of “*Srikasetra*”.

The most important prehistoric sites in Thailand

- Ban Kao, Kanchanaburi
- Spirit Cave, Mae Hong Son
- Non Nok Tha, Khon Kaen
- Ban Chiang, Udonthani
- Ban Na Di, Udonthani
- Khok Panom Di, Chonburi
- Ban Non Wat, Nakorn Ratchasima



- Ban Don Ta Phet, Kanchanaburi
- Lang Rong Rien Cave, Krabi
- Khok Charoen, Lopburi

The End

Workshop

: finding the archaeological data

- Each group select one topic only.
- Try to find most valuable data relate to your selected topic.
- Select important data and write it down into the paper, 1 page only.
- Complete your workshop and send it back within 30 min.
- Show every data sources, or references at the end of your page.

Topics

- Neolithic Period in Thailand
- Bronze Age in Thailand
- Iron Age in Thailand
- Ban Chiang, the World Heritage site
- Ban Non Wat, the new and most important prehistoric site