



# The Ban Chiang

## Newsletter for the Friends of Ban Chiang

# UpDATE

Preserving a UNESCO World Heritage Site Issue #1 Fall/Winter

## Project Director's Statement

### *Friends of Ban Chiang Celebrate their One Year Anniversary*

We are celebrating the anniversary of our founding with the launch of our newsletter, the Ban Chiang UpDATE! I would first like to thank our Friends for their support and devotion. If you have not yet joined our ranks, I encourage you to consider the enormous impact Friends can have on the future of the Ban Chiang Project, one of the world's archaeological treasures, and to lend your support.

Ban Chiang was discovered by chance in the late 1960's and was excavated during the mid-1970's. Excavations were carried out jointly by the University of Pennsylvania Museum and the Fine Arts Department of Thailand. The two institutions then divided the responsibility for analyzing and publishing materials from the site.

The Ban Chiang Project at the University of Pennsylvania Museum is a world renowned research venture. Archaeologists, volunteers, and work study students have devoted years to the research and understanding of the Ban Chiang Cultural Tradition.

In December 1992, UNESCO declared Ban Chiang a World Heritage Site. This designation is reserved for sites considered to be unique, irreplaceable, and of such outstanding universal value to humanity, that they are worthy of special attention and protection. The World Heritage Committee considers Ban Chiang to be "without question the most important prehistoric settlement so far discovered in south-east Asia". The Friends were founded by the Ban Chiang Project in celebration of this honor.

As a project dedicated to understanding the culture of ancient Thailand, we believe that the proper investigation and publication of excavated materials is essential to a more complete understanding of human prehistory. If our findings cannot be fully published, years of

study will be lost.

We do our best to bring the Ban Chiang research to the public. In the past, we have sought to increase public understanding of the site through the Smithsonian Institution-produced traveling exhibition "Ban Chiang: Discovery of a Lost Bronze Age" and its associated publications. The exhibit is now housed in Ban Chiang village in a museum specially built by Thailand's John F. Kennedy Foundation. This wonderful museum has served as a profound economic stimulus for the village. Our current attempts to bring Ban Chiang to the forefront of public understanding include:

1. Establishing Friends of Ban Chiang to support the Ban Chiang Project and to enable the public to get an insider's look at it's archaeological research.
2. In the spring of 1995 the University of Pennsylvania Museum will have an exhibition, "Illuminating the Past: Art and Artists of the Ban Chiang Project," to open April 15, 1995.
3. The first volume of a monograph series on the Ban Chiang research to be published in 1997.

We plan to have a biannual newsletter and periodic events for our Friends. I look forward to seeing you at the next Friends gathering!

Joyce C. White  
Director, Ban Chiang Project

## Editor Brings You Inside the Ban Chiang Project

The UpDATE is your key to the Ban Chiang Project. As editor, I will update you on Ban Chiang happenings. The main articles will inform you of the latest activities, cutting edge research and findings of the Project. Interviews with FOBC V.I.P.'s will breath "personality" into the Project. Reviews of Thai restaurants will encourage those of you in the Philadelphia area to

taste Thai cuisine. We also include a Thai recipe from our featured restaurant you can try at home. The Events section will keep you informed of FOBC activities.

Send your QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, or SUGGESTIONS to me, editor of the Ban Chiang UpDATE. I will respond to your letters and print selections in the newsletter. Write me at: Attn. Heather McGrath, Ban Chiang Project, University of Pennsylvania Museum, 33rd and Spruce Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19104-6324. I hope you enjoy the newsletter because it has been created for YOU, the Friends of Ban Chiang!

Heather L. McGrath



## Past Events

### *Water Lilies, Wine and the Thailand Palaeoenvironment Project*

\*April 1994: The first gettogether of Friends was held at the University of Pennsylvania Museum and featured wine, cheese, and presentations on the latest research. Dr. Joyce White, Director of the Ban Chiang Project and two volunteers, Bill Henderson (featured in this Ban Chiang UpDATE) and Claire White gave talks on their research for the Project. Dr. White gave a slide talk on the *Thailand Palaeoenvironment Project*. Lakes illuminated by the morning light and carpeted with water lilies, where Joyce White and the Project co-director, Lisa Kealhofer, took sediment samples, were the favorite images of the show. Project volunteers from over the years came to learn what was new. Friends asked questions and got an opportunity to mingle. Walapa from the Amara Cafe provided a carved vegetable arrangement to add a bit of taste and decoration to the warm and lively event. If you are too far away to attend our gatherings, and would like to become  
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(Continued from page 1, column 3)  
more involved, why not start a chapter of Friends in your area?

## Rhode Island Chapter Takes Time Out for Thai

\*August 1994: the Rhode Island Chapter of Friends had a slide talk on the latest research and a Thai meal prepared by Dr. Joyce White.

## Future Events

\*Spring 1995: Come see the University of Pennsylvania Museum exhibition, "Illuminating the Past: Art and Artists of the Ban Chiang Project." The show will highlight the archaeological illustrations and the artists of the Ban Chiang Project and demonstrate the partnership between art and archaeology. "Illuminating the Past" will be an educational and enjoyable way to learn more about archaeology and Ban Chiang. There will be an event to celebrate the opening of the exhibit, so look for an invitation announcing the time and the date of the festivities.

## The Ban Chiang Gang A Guided Tour of People of the Ban Chiang Project Today

When you enter the "Staff Only" catacombs of the University of Pennsylvania Museum, you realize how much activity goes on behind the display cases and carefully arranged exhibitions of the museum. The home base for the Ban Chiang Project is found in these catacombs. The laboratory is simply "home base" because research for the Project is also done throughout the museum, in Thailand, and around the world.

The affectionately termed "Ban Chiang Gang" is a research team of specialists, volunteers, and work study students. The following is a brief description of some of the people involved with the Project. Next issue, we will introduce you to a few more.

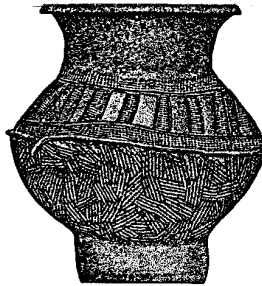
\*Dr. Joyce White at the University of Pennsylvania has worked on the Ban Chiang analysis since 1976. Since the early 1980's she has focused on the chronology and stratigraphy of the site. As Director of the Ban Chiang Project, White supervises all volunteers and work study participants of the Project and coordinates all specialist studies. This past winter she was principle investigator for the National Geographic Society funded Thailand Palaeoenvironment Project (TPP).

\*Dr. Lisa Kealhofer is an archaeologist at William and Mary College and codirector of the TPP. She organized the lake coring and is in charge of conducting the phytolith analysis of the samples collected by the TPP.

\*Volunteers are a vital and active part of the research done for the Ban Chiang Project and we have had an average of ten or more at any one time. Whether they are computer trouble shooters, like John Hastings, pottery reconstructors, like Sal Yeager, photographers, like Fred Keith, or bibliographers like Larry Levin, our volunteers are a valuable resource and we truly appreciate the humor, time and effort they each bring to the Project.

\*The artists of the Ban Chiang Project labor endlessly over the details of visually documenting Ban Chiang artifacts for publication. Ardeth Abrams, a "long time" Ban Chiang Project artist has been working on a map showing ethnographic landscape classifications of the Ban Chiang region based on research by Dr. White during her most recent trip to Thailand.

\*Work study students act as translators, artists, and general research assistants. Heather McGrath, a research assistant, is presently a "jack of all trades" for the project. On a given day she can be found working on this newslet-



EARLY PERIOD II POT

ter, instructing volunteers on computer operation, or organizing the many details a year's research generates.

## Spotlight Volunteer: Bill Henderson

Until two years ago, Ban Chiang Project volunteer and Friend of Ban Chiang, Bill Henderson was a businessman. In February of 1992, Bill found his way to the Ban Chiang Project. In a recent interview Bill explained why he decided to volunteer for the Project.

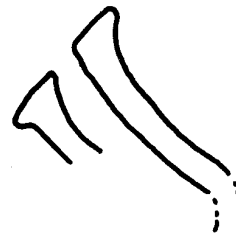
"You can only paint the house so many times before you get bored. Even the garden begins to lose its appeal after a week of retirement. I have always enjoyed archaeology and even went on digs in Crow Canyon, Colorado and Colonial Plantation, Pennsylvania. Now that I am retired, I have a few days a week to devote to volunteering, I find I can really enjoy the analysis side of archaeology and it keeps me out of mischief!"

Bill thought he might be useful to the Ban Chiang Project since he has a working

knowledge of computers. Dr. Joyce White quickly put him to work with archaeology computer programs, which he assured me, are nothing like the accounting programs he used to handle.

"Volunteering for the Ban Chiang Project is always a challenge. When I entered the bustling office I saw four volunteers reconstructing pots and several artists laboring over detailed drawings. Joyce handed me a printout of data that I was supposed to shape into "battleship curves" on the computer. From that point on I have worked on the rim sherd analysis."

"The project I am working on now will take years to complete. I am trying to organize a comprehensive typology for rim shapes in the area and then to demonstrate stratigraphic changes in shape over time. This is essential for developing regional ceramic sequences. Other parts of the world may have developed these sequences decades ago. We are just starting to do this essential task in Thailand. Ceramic sequences enable the archaeologist to relate sites to each other. They help the archaeologist to estimate the date of a site during field survey. No one has ever done this for the entire Sakon Nakhon Basin of northeast Thailand!



EARLY PERIOD II RIMS

Rim sherd analysis has brought Bill to some unexpected places. In the winter of 1993-1994 he and his wife Barbara joined Dr. Joyce White and volunteer Claire White on a trip to Thailand for the IPPA (Indo Pacific Prehistory Association) Conference where Bill et

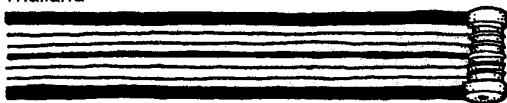
al. presented papers on Ban Chiang. The businessman turned rim sherd "specialist" had the following to say about his experience at the Conference.

"I never imagined that I would give a talk on Southeast Asian archaeology when I began my first Ban Chiang assignment. Representatives from twenty-six countries were present at IPPA to discuss Southeast Asian and Pacific Island archaeology. I gave my paper in front of approximately sixty people and after some early problems with the slide projector, my presentation went quite well. It was exciting for me, the accountant, to be part of an archaeology conference!"

"I have truly learned to appreciate the importance of the nitty-gritty work in archaeology. Without it, publication would be impossible and the larger picture as well as the details of prehistory and therefore man's line of cultural evolution in this part of the world, would never come into focus."

*Papers on Ban Chiang  
Presented at the Indo - Pacific  
Prehistory Association  
Conference in Chiang Mai*

1. M. Pietruszewsky—University of Hawaii “The People of Ban Chiang; an Early Bronze Age site in northeast Thailand”
2. W. Henderson and J. White—University of Pennsylvania  
“Cultural Phases before Ban Chiang Early Period II: Evidence from regional rim studies”
3. J. White—University of Pennsylvania  
“Methodological challenges from Ban Chiang”
4. C. White and J. White—University of Pennsylvania  
“Current work on Ban Chiang roller typology”
5. William Vernon—Dickinson College  
“Chronological variation in Ban Chiang crucible technology: a preliminary assessment.”
6. Michele Douglas—University of Hawaii  
“Paleopathology at Ban Chiang, Northeast Thailand”



**National Geographic  
Funds The Thailand  
Palaeoenvironment  
Project**

**Why:** To understand the life of an ancient people, we need to be able to reconstruct a region's prehistoric climate and environment. Yet despite nearly three decades of archaeological research, few factual details on Thailand's ancient landscape are known. The Thailand Palaeoenvironment Project (TPP) seeks to fill this void by scientifically investigating long term transformations in the climate and ancient forests in the region over the last several thousand years. The first field season focused on the Ban Chiang region, where archaeological evidence shows humans have lived for at least 5000 years.

**Who:** The TPP is a multidisciplinary-multinational research project. The principle investigator for the TPP is our own Dr. Joyce White. Team members include Dr. Lisa Kealhofer, co-principle investigator and phytolith analyst, and collaborating scholars: Dr. Bernard Maloney (a palynologist from Queens University, Belfast) and Dr. Mauro Cremaschi (a geomorphologist from the University of Milan, Italy).

**Where and When:** The focus of this field season was on the west-central Sakon Nakhon Basin and took place during two phases,

November 23-January 3, 1994, and February 10-March 2, 1994.

The team set up base in the Ban Chiang village, home of the world renowned Ban Chiang site. Dr. White enlisted the aid of Lung Li, a Thai villager who had been her assistant during her ethnoecological research from 1979-1981. Li acted as a guide, informant, and greatly valued right and left hand man.

**The Fieldwork:** The main goal of the first research period was to take sediment cores from several lakes in the Ban Chiang region. Potential coring sites were selected based on aerial photographs and maps of the region. Sixteen lakes were chosen for more in depth investigation. These lakes were then inspected on foot and discussed in detail with local inhabitants to assess their potential. Ultimately three lakes were chosen for coring.

After several logistical challenges involving unsteady rafts, uncertain anchors, and finicky equipment, the TPP managed to obtain five cores, including a 5.6 meter core from Lake Kumphawapi. The cores were shipped home to be dated and studied for pollen, diatoms and “phytoliths.” Phytoliths are silica bodies that help identify certain species, especially grasses.

The second part of the study involved a geomorphological survey conducted by Dr. Cremaschi and Dr. White primarily between Ban Chiang and Lake Kumphawapi. This was done to understand the “history” of the landscape and the lakes cored, including age and changes in size.

Finally, Dr. White and Lung Li conducted an ethnoecological survey of the landscape zones between Ban Chiang and Lake Kumphawapi.

**Results:** The soil, pollen, diatom, and phytolith analyses are now under way in Philadelphia, Milan, Belfast, and Australia. Two samples from the long core from Lake Kumphawapi have been dated. **The lowest date was older than 12,000 years before present!** This is the first core with this time depth in Thailand and on mainland Southeast Asia. It will permit the TPP to study the climate and vegetation during the Pleistocene/ Holocene transition for the first time in Thailand. It also means that the TPP will be able to examine the regional vegetation during the Ban Chiang Cultural Tradition and the impact rice agriculture had on the environment of northeast Thailand. The project next plans to core in northern and southern Thailand in 1995-1996.

**Join the Friends!**

If you have not already done so, join the Friends and help ensure the continued analysis and preservation of this important link to man's past! The opportunities to impact the Ban Chiang Project are many and all contributions are gratefully received. Those who contribute at the level of Bronze Caster have the privilege of directing their gift. For example, towards the enormous costs of dating archaeological samples or underwriting the cost of publication of a volume of the Ban Chiang monograph series. You might consider a memorial or tribute gift, or perhaps a gift “down the road” in the form of a bequest or other planned gift. The University of Pennsylvania can provide professional assistance in structuring planned gifts.

In less than a year we have raised nearly \$8000.00 from forty-three Friends with gifts ranging from \$20 to \$3000. Their contributions are helping to pay for dating the site and other critical needs. Our long term goal is to endow a center for Southeast Asian archaeology including fellowships for Thai archaeologists. Friends receive the UpDATE and invitations to FOBC gatherings. All Friends' contributions are tax deductible and go to both present and future needs of the Project.

**-Levels of Giving**

- \$25-99 Stone Carver
- \$100-499 Iron Smith
- \$500-1000 Pottery Painter
- over \$1000 Bronze Caster

**- Make Checks to:** Trustees of The University of Pennsylvania

**-Send to:** Friends of Ban Chiang University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology 33rd and Spruce Streets Philadelphia, PA 19104-6324

**Become a Friend of Ban Chiang!**

Enclosed is my contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to support the Ban Chiang Project.

I would like to renew my contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to support the Ban Chiang Project.

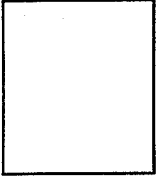
I would like more information about FOBC and the Ban Chiang Project.

I have changed my address. The following is my new address.


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FRIENDS OF BAN CHIANG  
University of Pennsylvania Museum of  
Archaeology and Anthropology  
33rd & Spruce Streets  
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6324



UNIVERSITY OF  
PENNSYLVANIA  
MUSEUM  
of Archaeology and  
Anthropology

## Lemon Grass Thai Restaurant

3630 Lancaster Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 222- 8042

The best noon time bargain in Philadelphia's University City can be found on the renovated 36th Street section of Lancaster Avenue. In 1992 Philadelphia Magazine rated Lemon Grass Restaurant as the "Best of Philly for Thai Food." When Dr. Joyce White invited volunteer Sallyann Yeager, Ban Chiang Project artist Ardeth Abrams, and Heather McGrath out for lunch to the Lemon Grass, we readily accepted.

We ate from the *prix fix* lunch menu of \$6.95 per person, which includes soup, an appetizer and an entree. No one left hungry. We sampled the soups and our collective favorite was the Coconut Milk Soup. Coconut Milk Soup is a surprisingly subtle soup made with chicken, coconut milk, lemon grass, galanga, mushrooms, lime juice and coriander.

For our next course, we decided upon Thai Dumplings, which are stuffed with ground pork, shrimp, bamboo shoots and black mushrooms, and the Chef's Special Salad of mixed vegetables and tofu topped with peanut dressing. Both were excellent choices!

We all ordered noodle dishes for our main courses. I completely enjoyed my Pad Thai ( a traditional Thai dish of stir-fried thin rice noodles with shrimp, tofu, bean sprouts, scallions, egg and ground peanut) while Joyce raved about her Drunken Noodles (stir-fried jumbo rice noodles topped with chicken and spicy basil). Although dessert is not included in the *prix fix* lunch, we splurged (calorie wise) and shared an order of fried bananas with custard sauce. Delicious!

The chef from the Lemon Grass Restaurant has provided us with a recipe to try. We hope you enjoy both the preparation and the taste of "Evil Jungle Princess," specially created for the Friends of Ban Chiang!



### Evil Jungle Princess

#### Ingredients for Chili Paste

1 Cup Sliced fresh lemon grass  
2 Tbsp Chopped hot chili pepper  
8 Cloves Chopped garlic  
1 Cup Chopped shallots  
1 Tsp Grated lime rind  
1 Tbsp Vegetable oil  
Combine all ingredients of paste and grind into a fine paste in food processor. Set aside.

#### Ingredients for dish

2 Tbsp Vegetable oil  
12 oz Sliced chicken breast  
6 Cups Vegetable medley: tofu, cabbage, baby corn, bamboo shoot, eggplant, green beans, asparagus, etc. Cut as desired.  
2 Tbsp Fish sauce  
2 Tbsp Oyster sauce  
1 Tsp Sugar  
1/4 Cup Chicken broth  
1/4 Cup Coconut milk (optional)

Heat oil in a big pan or wok. Then sauté the prepared chili paste until aromatic (about 4 minutes). Add chicken to the paste and stir until lightly cooked. Add chicken broth and coconut milk gradually while stirring to avoid sticking and burning. Add all of the vegetables and seasonings to the chicken mixture in the wok. Do not overcook vegetables. Serve with steamed rice. This dish serves 4-5.

