



The Ban Chiang

Newsletter for the Friends of Ban Chiang

UpDATE

Preserving a **UNESCO** World Heritage Site Issue #14 Spring 2007

From the Director

by Joyce C. White

Monographs and the Creation of Knowledge

One of the primary objectives of the Ban Chiang Project Monograph Series is to change the perception of knowledge of prehistoric Southeast Asia. With our first monograph on the human skeletal remains, we have succeeded! How do we know? Because of the recent book, *Bioarchaeology of Southeast Asia*, edited by Marc Oxenham and Nancy Tayles, published by Cambridge University Press in 2006.

But first, you might wonder, how is archaeological knowledge actually created? How do we learn something new about the ancient past? You might think the discovery of something in an excavation or the lab is all that is needed. But the discovery does not create the *knowledge*. Publication of the discovery is needed to document the new understanding and its significance in order for the discovery to contribute

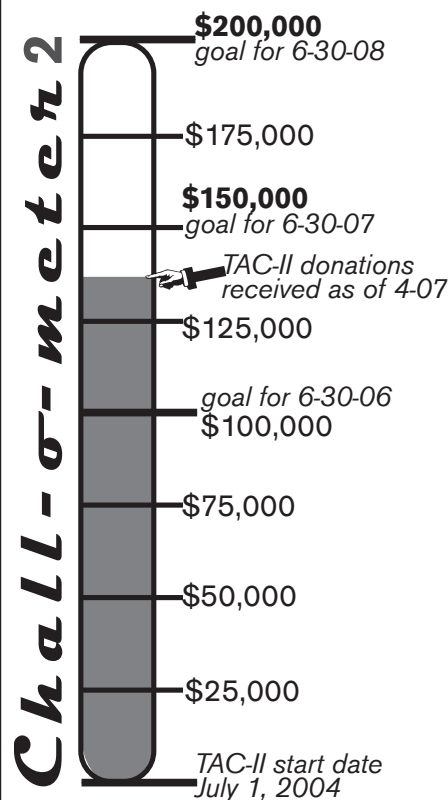
to accepted knowledge. Only through publication is a permanent record created that passes the new information to those interested, now and in the future.

Not all publications have an equal impact. Frankly, most scholarly publication is ignored by scholars. With the “publish or perish” academic culture, there is just too much to read, absorb, and integrate with previous understandings. Scholarship that challenges entrenched preconceptions and scholarly conventional wisdom often has a difficult road toward acceptance.

When a publication does significantly affect knowledge and adjusts the course of perception within a discipline, this is the “homerun with bases loaded” of scholarship. So I was ecstatic upon reading the *Bioarchaeology* volume to see that many of the key points on human biology made in Pietrusewsky and Douglas’s monograph on the Ban Chiang skeletal remains were integral to the chapters in the book.

For example, half of the *Bioarchaeology* book concerns topics in health and lifestyle. Our Pietrusewsky and Douglas volume was the first book to definitively point out several health patterns

Thai Archaeology Challenge II (TAC-II)



July 2004-June 2008

Please help us reach our goal of \$200,000 by year 2008!

at Ban Chiang and other sites in Southeast Asia that differ from other parts of the world. Instead of a clear decline in health (e.g., increase in dental cavities, decrease in average height) that commonly followed the adoption of agriculture, Ban Chiang

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people stayed generally healthy. Several authors of chapters in the *Bioarchaeology* book supported, refined, and expanded on this observation while studying additional collections of skeletons from all over Southeast Asia. Not only is the Southeast Asian pattern interesting to Southeast Asianists, but such distinctive patterns will affect how general theories concerning the impact of agriculture on human health will be rewritten.

Several authors of *Bioarchaeology* chapters, young to senior scholars, built upon many other aspects of the Ban Chiang monograph. Biological variation (what laypersons might call “racial” variation) is much more complicated than some archaeologists have proposed. This was pointed out in the Ban Chiang monograph, and several *Bioarchaeology* articles developed this theme further. Pietruszewsky and Douglas’s observations from the Ban Chiang skeletons on prehistoric diet were followed up by Christopher King with chemical isotope analyses of the bones. And the raw data of Ban Chiang skeletons provided on a CD with our monograph, and also downloadable from the web, were used in several studies to compare with skeletons excavated elsewhere in Thailand, Vietnam, and Asia generally.

In scholarship, success does not get much better than this. It is nice to have our monograph called “an exemplary study” (page 10 in *Bioarchaeology*). The glowing reviews our monograph received in scholarly journals have been gratifying. But what is truly significant is to see Ban Chiang scholarship

incorporated into the discipline and built upon by the ‘up and coming’ generation of scholars. By that measure alone can impact on knowledge be demonstrated.

Friends of Ban Chiang contributions are the main source of funds to create and produce the Ban Chiang Monograph Series. ❖ —J.W.

SPOTLIGHT

Rita DeAngelo

by Rita DeAngelo
and Ardeth Abrams

The work-study program of the University of Pennsylvania has provided thousands and thousands of “free” man hours of labor for the Ban Chiang Project since the late 1970s. One job in particular, archaeological illustrator, has employed dozens of students over the years. Under Project training, these students have done thousands of exacting pen and ink drawings of artifacts that will be published in the monographs describing the Ban Chiang finds. The illustrations will also be included in the online databases we will be posting. The project hopes that the opportunity provides students with a special employment experience where they can use their talents and get a “museum” type of experience at the same time.

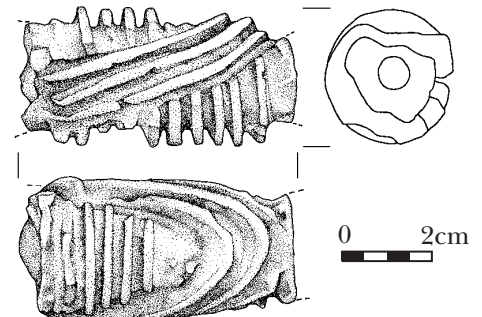
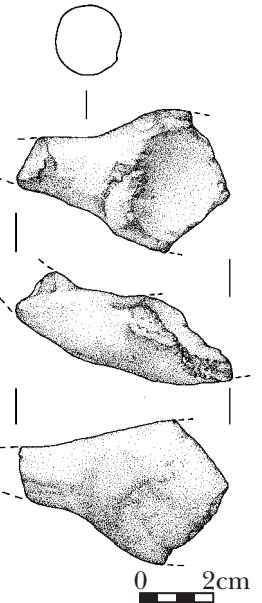
Our current work-study artist, Rita DeAngelo has been illustrating artifacts with the Ban Chiang Project for almost three years. She begins her task by making a carefully measured pencil drawing of the object on graph paper. The final illustration is then completed on vellum paper using a stippling technique with lines and

carefully placed dots of ink. When Rita was introduced to this process in September 2004, she began with Ban Chiang’s spoon collection. Two years later, when the collection of over 50 spoons was complete, she moved on to finishing the drawings of the carved clay rollers.

Most recently, Rita has begun yet another daunting task, illustrating the rocker stamp patterns and engravings that appear on Ban Chiang’s infant burial jars. Unlike the spoons and rollers which are quite small and easily fit in your hand, these are large scale illustrations. It can take Rita up to four weeks to complete a drawing because she is illustrating the entire “rollout” of the design on the pot. Rita is showing the viewer a never before seen, panoramic view of the intricate techniques applied by these ancient artisans (see image on next page.) I recently asked Rita some questions about her time here at the Lab...

AA: What was your first impression of the Ban Chiang Lab?

RD: Hidden, but in a good way, like buried treasure.



Examples of a spoon (above) and a roller (below) drawn by Rita DeAngelo.



Rita at work.

The whole museum is like that—beneath its outward appearance are secret rooms and passages that I’m still discovering.

Ban Chiang was housed in one of those rooms and after being here for 3 years, I’m still learning more about the Museum and the Ban Chiang Project in general.

AA: *Has anything changed in those three years since you began here?*

RD: Not too much has changed. A few people have come and left and the walls were painted, but this did not affect me too much. I suppose the biggest change for me was progressing from spoons to rollers to pots. With each new artifact came a greater understanding of Ban Chiang as both a project and a culture, and a stronger feeling that I know a very small percentage of information regarding both.

AA: *What do you think about your work here at the Lab?*

RD: Although it is grueling, it intrigues me. I’ve always had an interest in anthropology, and Ban Chiang has allowed me to explore it from an artistic perspective.

AA: *What do your friends think of your work?*

RD: The idea of what I do confuses my friends. They’ll often ask why we don’t just photograph

the artifacts, and when they hear I can only use dots, it blows their mind. That said, they think it’s really cool, and are quick to point out that I’m lucky I am getting paid to draw, which is more than most artists can say (this, I know and appreciate). I try to show them images of the work I’ve done, and when they see it, they have a better understanding of the process.

AA: *How has your work here affected your studio artwork?*

RD: In my own artwork, I constantly have to remind myself not to over-render anything—although my personal style can be fairly tight, I prefer looser painting. However, Ban Chiang allows me to render to the nth degree, and by the time I’ve been at work for 6 hours, I’m ready to smear paint all over anything I can find.

The constant “seeing” that I’m forced to do with the Ban Chiang drawings has helped my observational skills. Measuring and recording the details of a 7cm roller is no different from measuring and recording the Italian landscape; it’s all relative to the paper or canvas. Drawing for Ban Chiang has definitely fine-tuned my observational skills and helped me notice relationships and details more accurately while learning what works to create the

illusion of a three-dimensional form on two-dimensional media.

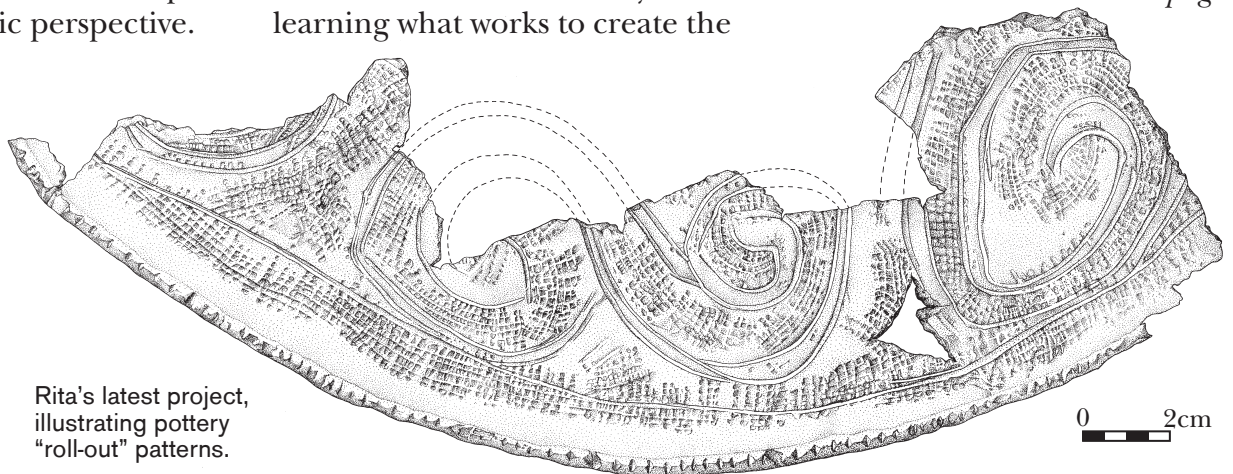
AA: *What do you take from here to your work with the theatre and backdrops?*

RD: Measuring pots with a 1.5 foot diameter and measuring 18’ x 36’ backdrops are the same process, and they have fed each other. My experiences with set design and illustrating for Ban Chiang have moved my artistic skills out of the solely artistic realm of painting alone in my studio and into other disciplines like theatre and archaeology.

AA: *What will you bring away from the Project after you graduate?*

RD: Definitely the skills mentioned above—those are invaluable. I’ll be glad to have been part of the project and experienced, though still from the outside, the workings of another field. I easily understand why archaeologists and anthropologists are so in love with their work; there is something satisfying about examining an ancient civilization. By learning about other cultures, we learn about ourselves. At the same time, we’re also gracefully intruding upon another culture, which is thrilling. The project has further inspired me to explore other societies, particularly their artwork and how they expressed their identities.

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Rita's latest project, illustrating pottery “roll-out” patterns.

Upon graduation this May, Rita hopes to find work where she can apply her Fine Arts degree while simultaneously painting in her studio. However, in the meantime, before Rita moves on to her future endeavors, Joyce and Ardeth would like her to finish the series of drawings in which she has put so much of her time and effort. Rita is happy to continue her work for the Ban Chiang Project, but after graduation she will no longer be eligible for work-study funds that pay for her time. Again, we need to look to the Friends of Ban Chiang for financial assistance.

This is a wonderful opportunity for the Friends to assist a young artist in continuing what she has been so painstakingly trained to do. We will need approximately \$2,500 to keep her drawing throughout the summer. The funds we raise for Rita will count towards the Thai Archaeology Challenge Fund II, as Rita's drawings will appear in future publications. Please help us keep Rita here in the Ban Chiang Lab with your generous donation! We have added a special "Rita's Fund" box to check in the "Renew or Join" portion of this newsletter on page three. As always, thank you for your support! ❖ —A.A.

TAC-II donors since July 1, 2004

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LAB *notes*

❖ **Joyce** attended the European Association of Southeast Asian Archaeologists, 11th International Conference in **Bougon, France** in September of 2006. She gave a paper in the Metallurgy session featuring a preview of the Ban Chiang Metals Monograph.

❖ **Chureekamol 'Soi' Onsuwan-Eyre** graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with her PhD spring of 2006. Her dissertation



Soei and Joyce on graduation day, May 2006.

involved a survey of metal age sites in Nakhon Sawan Province, Thailand. She is presently living with her husband Pete Eyre in Pasadena, California.

❖ **Christopher King** graduated from the University of Hawai'i with his PhD this past summer. His dissertation studied dietary changes at Ban Chiang by analyzing isotopes in human bone. In early January, **Christopher** visited the Ban Chiang Lab. During his ten day visit, he worked on the **Southeast Asian Bibliographic Database**, upgraded the server, (paid for with income from the Ban Chiang Endowment) and added the Non Nok Tha skeletal data. At our weekly brown bag lunch, he showed us a chilling Power Point presentation of his work with the Forensic Anthropology Regimes Crimes Liaison Office, Mass Graves in Iraq.

He is currently in Vietnam working on a Post-doctoral Fellowship with Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, in which he is searching for remains of US soldiers killed in the Vietnam war.

❖ **Joyce, Soi**, and **Olivia Given** will be attending the **SAA** meetings (Society for American Archaeology) in Texas and presenting papers on Thai archaeology. Joyce organized a session on **Residential Burial** that received this year's sponsorship from the American Anthropological Association/Archaeology Division. Her paper in the session proposes that burials at Ban Chiang were placed under houses, and not in a cemetery.

❖ **Sasha Renninger**, our work-study bibliographer, is spending her spring semester abroad. She is currently taking Egyptology and Anthropology courses at the American University in Cairo,



"Me and the Sphinx" Sasha in Giza, Egypt, Spring 2007.

Egypt. Sasha will be returning (*we hope*) to the Ban Chiang Lab in the Fall.

❖ Recent Publications

King, C. & Norr, L. 2006 Palaeodietary change among pre-state metal age societies in northeast Thailand: a study using bone stable isotopes, IN *Bioarchaeology of Southeast Asia*, **M. Oxenham and N. Tayles, editors**. Cambridge University Press, New York. 241-262 pp.

Is it time for you to re-new your support of the Ban Chiang Project? Every contribution is gratefully received!

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over \$1000	Bronze Castor
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- Enclosed is my tax deductible contribution of \$ ____.
- I would like to renew my support with a \$ ____ contribution.
- I would like my contribution to go to "Rita's Fund."

please make checks payable to the TRUSTEES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

name _____
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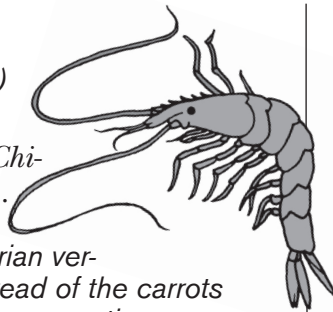
- I would like more information about the Ban Chiang Project.
- I have changed my address. See new address above.

Vietnamese Spring Rolls

(by Yee-Fan Sun, borrowed from DigsMagazine.com)

❖ *Olivia made these spring rolls at a recent Ban Chiang Gang get-together, we hope you will try them...*

Substitute the shrimp with fried tofu for a vegetarian version; use snow peas and crisp bean sprouts instead of the carrots and cucumbers. Serves 4 as light main dish, 12 as appetizer.



- 12 rice paper rounds (banh trang)
- 3 oz. rice vermicelli, soaked in hot water for 10 mins. until soft
- 24 medium shrimp, unpeeled
- 1/2 small head green leaf or romaine lettuce (about 10-12 leaves)
- 2 carrots
- 1 large cucumber
- 1/4 cup of any or all of the following herbs: Thai basil, mint, cilantro
- 3 stalks scallions

1. Bring a pot of water to a boil and cook the unshelled shrimp until opaque, around 2-3 minutes. Fish out the shrimp but keep the water boiling; add the rice noodles and cook for a minute. Drain and rinse in cool water.
2. When cool, peel and slice the shrimp in half lengthwise.
3. Peel apart the lettuce leaves and slice into thin strips. Peel and julienne the carrots and cucumber; mince up the herbs and scallions.
4. In a large bowl or pan (to accommodate the rice paper round), fill with warm water, and soak one wrapper for about a minute, or until it's soft and pliable.
5. Lay the wrapper on a plate or other flat surface. Place your ingredients in the bottom half of the wrapper (if this is your first time making spring rolls it's a good idea to start with smaller quantities.) Begin with a small handful of lettuce in the bottom third of the wrapper, and add an equal amount of rice noodles. Top with a neat row of cucumbers and carrots. Lay a row of shrimp close to the middle of the wrapper, pink side down. Sprinkle with some of the herb mixture.
6. Fold up the bottom, then the two sides; continue rolling up, keeping the wrapper firmly around the ingredients to get a good roll, but being careful not to tug too tightly so as to avoid tearing the wrapper. Place the roll seam side down on serving plate.
7. Continue making the rolls. Unfortunately, the rolls don't keep well, so serve them immediately with plenty of dipping sauce. If you're serving them as an appetizer, you can cut the rolls in half using a sharp knife.

hoisin-chili dipping sauce

- 1 shallot or 1-2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 cup hoisin sauce
- 1 Tbsp. rice vinegar
- 1/4 cup water
- 2 tsps. asian red chili paste (I use sambal oelek, but any chili paste will do)
- 2 Tbsp. chopped peanuts for garnish



Stir-fry the garlic or shallot for a minute, or until the garlic has softened. Add the hoisin sauce, rice vinegar and water, bring to a boil. Add chili paste to taste. Remove from heat, pour in dipping bowl, and garnish with chopped peanuts. ❖

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A New Face in the Ban Chiang Lab



Yanik Ruiz-Ramon is a freshman at Penn. He is from Fairfax, Virginia and has also lived in Argentina and traveled extensively in his young life. He is currently the bibliographer for the Southeast Asian Bibliographic Database (<http://seasia.museum.upenn.edu>). He enters data for scholarly works so that archaeologists worldwide can view and download the information for their bibliographies. Yanik is also interested in film production, photography, and languages. ❖



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