

Another Prehistoric Site at Waeng in Thailand

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in prehistoric times the north-eastern part of Thailand was a fertile area inhabited by communities with comparatively advanced stage of civilization. In the northern section of this part of the country alone archaeologists have found traces of prehistoric societies scattered over many provinces, such as the Ban Chieng community in the Province of Udon Thani which was found to be an agricultural society (bronze age) dating back over 5,600 years.

The Archaeology Division of the Department of Fine Arts, Thailand, has recently started an excavation of another prehistoric site at Waeng in the District of Sawang Daendin in Sakonnakorn Province. The area where artifacts were concentrated was a high mound within the compound of the local school, the **Waeng Pittayakom School**, about 40 kilometres east of Ban Chieng. At least 18 burials were discovered, including jar burial, as well as other evidences of ancient use of the site : tools, household utensils and ornaments made of bronze and iron; crucibles for bronze casting; clay rollers, pellets and spindle whorls; terra-cotta in the forms of babies and animals; traces of clothing material, ivory, pottery of different patterns and forms; as well as skeletal materials of prehistoric man and animals. These material remains were found at different soil strata, the oldest being contemporary in age with the Ban Chieng finds, with later artifacts in the respectively higher levels of the excavated pits.

All the evidence points to the fact that the prehistoric society at Waeng owed its continual growth to a naturally advantageous economic environment. The site constitutes an area of high ground suitable for building their living quarters surrounded by fertile plains close to an ancient stream or water supply suitable for crop cultivation and animal husbandry. Food stock for the community could also have been augmented by fishing in the local streams and hunting in adjacent



forests. The daily struggle for survival led to various technological developments : metallurgy, pottery-making, weaving and other forms of artistic expressions which in time brought this prehistoric society to the stage of development which could be considered an "agricultural society" proper.

There was further evidence that the community maintained contacts with other contemporary societies both near and far to the extent that at the peak of its evolution the culture was such that when the community abandoned the site or became extinct it had reached a high level of sophistication as evidenced by the types of burial discovered indicating marked social stratification.

1. Position and condition of human skeleton and artifacts in the excavated pit.

3. A body-shape terra-cotta.
4. Burnished grey pottery with snake motif appliqué.
5. Bronze spearhead, found with human skeleton in early burials at Waeng.

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2. A burial containing a headless human skeleton. The condition of the skeleton shows that it was buried tightly bound. Cord-marked pottery and skull of a pig were also buried with the human remains.

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