

INTERMESSAGE

Kampung Jenderan Hilir

About 130 neolithic sites have been discovered in Peninsular Malaysia. To date, Kampung Jenderan Hilir is the only scientifically studied open neolithic site.

Malaysian and SPAFA scholar Ms Leong Sau Heng says the area around the Kampung Jenderam Hilir could have been a feeder point for the entreport trading at Pengkalan Bujang. The site, discovered in 1977, was first excavated on a small scale in 1979.

Located on a privately owned land in Kampung Jenderam Hilir, Sepang, it is about 40 kilometers from Kuala Lumpur. It is near the confluence of Sungai and Sungai Semenyih.

The site is multi-component meaning to say it bears evidence of having been lived in continuously from the Neolithic age onwards. Among the artefacts discovered were sets of round anvil stones and flat slabs of granite used for pot-making and adze carving.

From the archaeological finds, it has become evident that its inhabitants were a firmly settled farming community. They existed around 2000 B.C. This was brought to light when several stone adzes and about 44 heavy stone equipment for pounding and grinding purposes were discovered. They weighed approximately one to seven kilogrammes.

About 30 attractive clay pots were also found. Their cord-marked designs were created by pressing woven cord into the still wet clay. The pattern was not only aesthetic but also functional. It prevented the pot from tipping over.

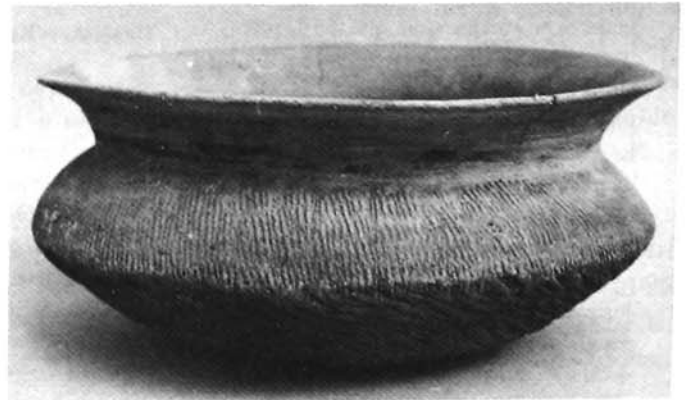
An analysis of the pots revealed they had a higher phosphorous content than the clay found near the site. This is highly indicative of the decomposition of organic matter associated with human activity. Such organic matter may include residues of human and animal excreta and food-type debris.

The civilization that once existed at the site was far from primitive. The neolithic community polished their artefacts. This shows they were already advanced in the manufacture of stone implements.



Left: Malaysian and SPAFA Scholar Ms Leong San Heng

Below: A piece of pottery with cord-marked design



A number of bronze bowls were also recovered. This indicates the continuous settlement of the site during the Bronze Age. The ceramic and stone wares found in the area could be dated between the 12th and early 13th centuries.

Among the other discoveries were tin ingots, weighing between 2.5 - 3 kilogrammes. They were probably used in barter trading, not later than the 14th century.

This neolithic site is presently under almost 10 meters of water resulting from the tin mining activities in the area. The constant sluicing of tin-mining also damaged unexcavated artefacts, flooded the 8 excavation area and brought archaeological work to a halt.

According to Malaysia's New Straits Times (Tuesday, April 5, 1988) archaeologists have, in 1983, abandoned an attempt to undertake full-scale diggings because of the high water table in the hills surrounding the site. The same archaeologists, however, are now saying they may conduct full scale excavations, if given the funds.