

SOME ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN NORTH THAILAND

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During eight months of 1963-1964 Bennington College and Cornell University conducted a survey of hill tribes in northern Thailand which was designed to investigate systematically the past and present relationships of the inhabitants of defined mountain tracts to the land, to each other, and to peoples of the plains (Hanks and Sharp, 1962). While necessarily emphasizing the present of the regions in which they worked, the members of the Thai and American staff of the survey at the same time sought to learn what they could of the past. The terrain they traversed was carefully observed for indications of possible prehistoric and protohistoric sites. In each of some one hundred and seventy villages or settlements visited in Changwat Chiangmai (the area of Nihom Chiangdao), in Changwat Chiangrai (the area north of the Maekok River), and in several villages of Changwat Nan (from Muang Nan north to Pua and Ban Ngob) the inhabitants were questioned concerning the presence in the vicinity of ancient remains or "old things", whether architectural or artifactual. In some cases samples of chipped or polished stone tools, of sherds, and of bronze instruments were shown to headmen, teachers and other local people as an aid in defining the kind of artifacts of interest to the survey staff. Leads obtained through such inquiry were investigated and validated wherever possible and available artifacts—chiefly surface finds—were collected or recorded and annotated. However, no excavations were carried out by members of the survey group; nor has any elaborate description or analysis of the recovered or recorded artifacts been undertaken.¹

1. The Bennington-Cornell Hill Tribes Survey received financial support from the National Science Foundation and the Agency for International Development, Washington, and from the Cornell Southeast Asia Program and London-Cornell Project through the Cornell Thailand Project. Members of the survey staff are grateful for encouragement, advice or material aid provided in Thailand by the Fine Arts Department; Hill Tribes Division, Public Welfare Department; The Siam Society; and the Social Sciences Division, National Research Council. Help was given by many individuals of whom Mr. J.J. Boeles, Director, The Siam Society Research Centre, Bangkok; Mr. Dean Frasc , New York City; Nai Kraisi Nimmanahaeminda, Chiangmai; Prince Subhadradis Diskul, Fine Arts Department, Bangkok; and Nai Thongin Chundin, Superintendent, Public Welfare Department, Nihom Maechan, should be singled out for particular thanks in connection with the archaeological aspects of the survey. Site locations and altitudes have been worked out by Mr. William Wohnus of the survey staff.

This paper simply reports a variety of sites discovered through the efforts of the Bennington-Cornell survey which are deemed by the staff to be worth recording, in some cases for possible future detailed investigation by competent and authorized archaeologists. Almost nothing is known of northern Thailand's prehistoric past and little of its ancient relations with archaeologically better known neighboring areas. With the recent rapid accumulation of information on what may prove to be several distinct archaeological realms of the Kingdom it is hoped that this report may stimulate further professional inquiry into the prehistory and protohistory of the entire area which is now Thailand.

In the absence of known geological or cultural stratification, of inscriptions, or of other aids to the establishment of relative or absolute prehistoric or protohistoric chronologies in the areas and materials investigated, the data here reported have had to be dealt with solely in terms of cultural typology.

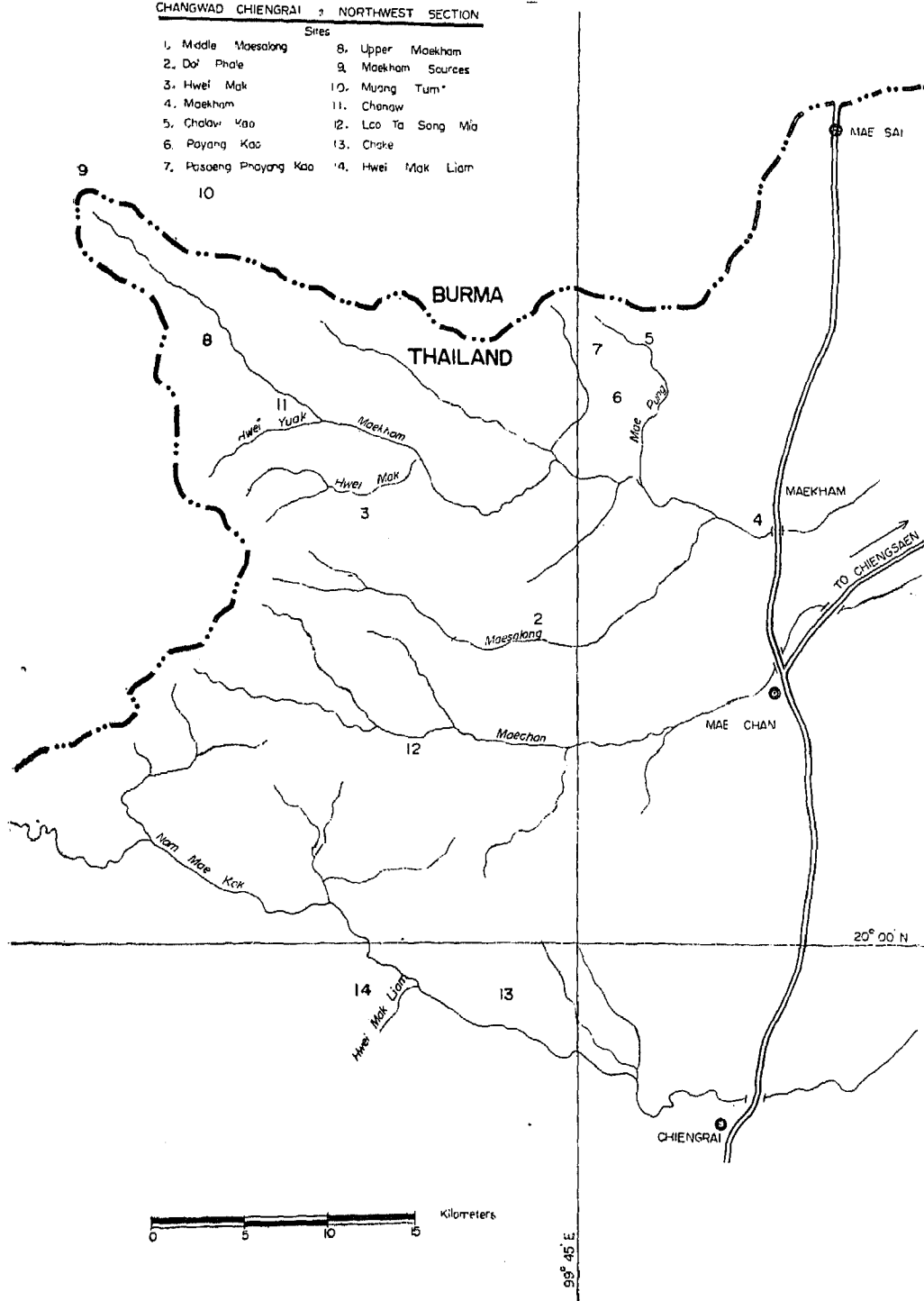
Palaeolithic

It was hoped that Old Stone Age remains might be found in the limestone formations or along the old alluvial terraces bordering some of the northern stream and river valleys which must have served for millenia as communication routes. However, no positive identification of palaeolithic sites or remains could be made. It should be noted that the method of investigation utilized was less likely to lead to palaeolithic findings than to the discovery of sites or materials of later date, for local people could hardly be expected to recognize palaeolithic artifacts as easily as they could identify the remains of subsequent stages of cultural development. It should certainly not be concluded that the palaeolithic is unrepresented in those northern regions investigated by this survey.

Three apparent artifacts which might belong to the chipped core tradition of the palaeolithic so-called "chopper tool" type (or perhaps of the mesolithic Hoabinhian type) were recovered from the surface sands and gravels of what was judged to be part of a neolithic site lying along the road which skirts the left or northern

CHANGWAD CHIENGRAI : NORTHWEST SECTION

- | Sites | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Middle Maesalong | 8. Upper Maekham |
| 2. Doi Phole | 9. Maekham Sources |
| 3. Hwei Mak | 10. Muang Tum |
| 4. Maekham | 11. Changaw |
| 5. Chalaw Kao | 12. Lao Ta Song Miao |
| 6. Payang Kao | 13. Choke |
| 7. Pusoeng Phayang Kao | 14. Hwei Mak Liam |



bank of the Middle Maesalong River two kilometers east of Nikhom Maechan, Tambon Pasang, Amphoe Maechan, Chiengrai (see below and Map, site number 1). A fourth possible implement of the same type was recovered from Upper Phale village on Hwei Dua, a small northern tributary of the Maesalong, some six kilometers by road west south west of the location of the other three stones (see below and Map, site number 2).

It has long been recognized that the "chopper tool" type of implement found in isolation or out of geological or cultural context is hardly useful as an artifact diagnostic of any particular cultural level or type. Indeed, the whole typology of the "chopper tool" tradition is brought into question when it is recognized that the Oriental area within which these ill-defined tools have been found—the great triangle lying between Peking, the Pamirs, and Java, with important regions such as most of the Indonesian Archipelago and India excluded—is better characterized as a palaeolithic culture area which *lacks* the fist axes and other early lithic forms found in western Eurasia, Africa, and southern India than one marked by the *presence* of artifacts of "chopper tool" type. For the time being, therefore, these Middle Maesalong and Doi Phale finds of possible palaeolithic or mesolithic implements must be left in a cultural limbo.

Neolithic

1. *Middle Maesalong Site.* A sufficient number of polished stone implements has been recovered since 1963 and in sufficient concentrations from limited areas of the old alluvial terraces lying above the north bank of the Middle Maesalong River to warrant the designation of this location as a neolithic site.

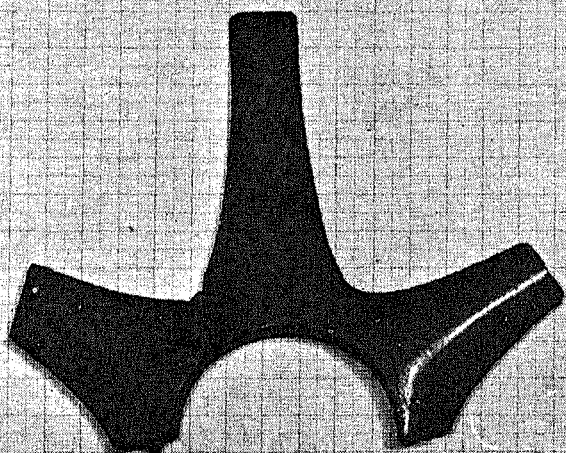
In early 1963 the Public Welfare Department began the construction of its headquarters for a Hill Tribes Nikhom on the Maesalong River some eighteen kilometers west and north of the town of Maechan. This involved the improvement and bulldozing of a road along the middle course of the river. It is from areas along the last three kilometers of this road where it reaches the Nikhom headquarters, with particular concentrations from the flat, lightly

bulldozed site on which the main Nikhom buildings have been erected and the stretch between kilometers 2 and 3 to the east, that artifacts of neolithic type have been recovered.

These materials consist of some two dozen polished stone objects and an uncounted quantity of pottery fragments. No whole pottery vessels, no bone or shell implements, and no remains of habitation refuse have been found so far in this area. It is therefore as yet undetermined whether this open-air "site" is in fact made up of several fairly permanent separate habitation sites with remains scattered thinly between them or is simply a series of camp sites located conveniently along the old river banks. It is also conceivable that artifacts found on or just under the surface may have arisen from deeper burials; but there is no evidence that this has occurred. It is also possible that the materials may have washed down from hillsides lying immediately to the north of the road between kilometer 3 to within about half a kilometer of the Nikhom headquarters. Some of these hillsides as well as some areas lying between the road and the river to the south have been under recent cultivation of dry crops. An examination of the easily accessible slopes and ridges of these adjacent hills and of the area between the road and the river disclosed no signs of what might be habitation sites serving as a source of the recovered artifacts. These adjacent areas should be more closely investigated, of course, if future excavations uncover nothing from the deeper levels of the sandy soils which we judge to be an old river terrace lying about 15 meters above the present river bed and from which all the materials here described derive.

Most of the stone artifacts were uncovered in the bulldozing operations or found in the debris created by the road work and turned in by workers to the Nikhom superintendent who has conserved them; some were surface finds discovered by farmers in areas adjacent to the road between kilometers 2 and 3 and kept by them as curios. However, Nai Thongin Chunklin, Superintendent of the Nikhom, while digging a water trench 60 cms. deep beside his house at the Nikhom headquarters, uncovered two adzes, one shouldered and one lenticular in cross section, associated with unglazed pottery

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2



I

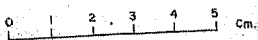
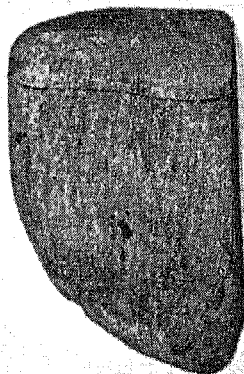
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3



0 1 2 3 4 5 cm



II

fragments; and at several locations along the three kilometers of road other sherds have been uncovered *in situ* in the red sandy soils lying beneath some 15 cms. of humus. Plate II.

Of most interest diagnostically are the polished stone artifacts. These include fourteen adzes, complete or partly damaged, but all recognizable in form. Eight of these are shouldered adzes, rectangular in cross section, or with a slightly curved "roof", and ranging in total length from a tool 4.5 cms. long (perhaps better described as a chisel than as an adze) to a large 16.6 cms. long implement beautifully fashioned from a green stone. Of the remaining adzes, three are ovoid or lenticular in cross section, and three are rectangular, and all six are about 10 cms. in length. This is, of course, a small sample of the unknown universe of adzes which may eventually be found at this site, but it is, perhaps, a random sample. If so, it is most striking that over half of these adzes are of the shouldered type. For the Bang and Lue neolithic sites near Ban Kao, Changwat Kanchanaburi, Sørensen (1964, 81) reports that the Thai-Danish Prehistoric Expedition's careful excavations recovered only four shouldered adzes among a total of some 1,200 complete or identifiable fragmentary adzes found at these sites. This contrast alone suggests the value of further investigation of the Middle Maesalong site as a possible source of information on the content and context of the still highly problematical shouldered adze "complex" of Southeast Asia and adjacent areas (Heine-Geldern, 1932).

Other stone artifacts found at the Middle Maesalong site during the past year include fragments of polished stone rings of a type and condition very similar, apparently, to the plain ones described and illustrated by Sørensen from Ban Kao (1964, 81-82 and Fig. 7); polished rather flat round stones about 5 cms. in diameter, each with a hole drilled neatly through the center from both surfaces; a polished grooved stone which might have been used for sharpening bone implements; and other unidentified pieces of polished stone work.

The pottery fragments found at the Nikhom grounds and all along the three kilometers of road represent a considerable variety

of wares, none of which is as yet identified. Included in the collection of several hundred pieces are several sherds of a glazed celadon type, presumably later intrusions. However, the bulk of the material is unglazed and gives the impression of a technical level rather more simple than that represented by any of the wares from Ban Kao. The unglazed pottery, some with a slip, ranges in color from pale grey to black to red. Some of the grey ware carries comb incised designs of waved or straight lines, some is decorated with perforated designs and some apparently with cord or mat impressions. Sherds vary in thickness from thin to thick, using Sørensen's scale (1964, 96, Note 26); and a closer study of some of the fragments would permit inferences to be made regarding size, form, and other features of the original vessels.

It should be noted here that just south of the road between kilometer 2 and 3 there rises from the present floor of the valley a large outcrop of limestone pitted with caves and crevices. From these, according to local report, Thai from the plains in recent years have removed many images of the Lord Buddha; and under an overhang on the southwest side, have dug an apparently sterile excavation to a depth of 1 to 1½ meters. On the surface around this impressive rock are found pottery fragments of a thick, grey, unglazed ware with imprinted designs which seems unrelated to any of the wares found in the road above this location. In the hills across the Maesalong valley south of this point, in the vicinity of the present Akha village of Magonh, local Thai and Shan informants point to a location they call "Muang Lawu" which they believe to have been an ancient Lawa settlement in which, they claim, "old things" have been found similar to the artifacts uncovered along the road of the Middle Maesalong site. The exact location of this alleged Lawa site could never be determined, and nothing further can be reported on it.

2. *Doi Phale Site.* An interesting set of artifacts of neolithic type has been recovered from an area which extends for two or three kilometers along the Hwei Dua, a small stream which flows down the south-eastern slopes of Doi Phale to join the Maesalong River from the north. Material so far found or reported seems to focus

at or near the Yao village of Phale, also known from its present headman as Lao Chi, which is situated on the Hwei Dua some 550 meters above sea level and about four kilometers west south west of Maechan Nikhom headquarters.

From the village site itself come a polished stone adze, rectangular or almost square in cross section and a shouldered adze, also rectangular in cross section and much worn at the blade end by resharpening, carefully worked from a fine grained grey stone. Villagers report that other adzes of these two types have been found at Phale but were not preserved. In 1958, in the forest within an hour's climb above the village, the headman recovered from the surface one half of a remarkably fine polished stone ring apparently fashioned from the same kind of stone as was the shouldered adze. The ring has an exactly circular center hole 5.75 cms. in diameter; and was originally made with six arms or spokes of which three are preserved, two of these broken off and one complete which extends 12.15 cms. out from the center of the ring to what was presumably the circumference of the original artifact. In a dry crop field or *rai* adjacent to the village a Yao farmer recently found a stone "sickle", a curved, flat, knife-shaped artifact rather roughly flaked or chipped over most of its two surfaces but with its inner or cutting edge finely polished. The "handle" end of this implement has been broken off; its present greatest length across the arc is 16 cms. The risk of attributing function to recovered artifacts is recognized, but it is almost impossible to resist the temptation to call this tool a "sickle" and to note that the modern Yao of this area use only a finger-knife in harvesting their crops. Plate I.

As reported by the Nikhom Maechan superintendent, Nai Thongin Chunklin, there was recovered last year "from Phale village" a very heavy, thick pottery jar about 10 cms. in diameter at the belly of a dark grey ware, undecorated but roughened over its external surface. It is not known what the profile of this vessel is or whether or not it is slipped, burnished, or glazed. From the surface of the Phale village plaza a quantity of pottery fragments was collected which are quite varied in thickness and color, but which are all unglazed and quite unlike any wares used in Phale

today. Village informants reported that in 1961 a European foreigner who spoke some northern Thai visited the village and excavated a large pit in the middle of their plaza from which he removed whole pottery vessels and polished stone implements, including shouldered celts. The Yao point to a depression about two meters square as the site of this now filled-in excavation in the vicinity of which sherds are still found. However, four or five meters west of this reported pit a cut was made in May, 1964, in bulldozing a road to the village entrance which exposed a vertical soil section three meters deep; an examination of this cut and the debris immediately after the bulldozing indicated that this section of the site, at least, was sterile. Who this *farang* might be, or what may have happened to his collection, could not be ascertained; but assuming some basis of truth in the Yao statements regarding his finds, it is to be hoped that his interest in the archaeology of the north may lead him to offer some report on this or any other excavating he may have done.

3. *Other possible sites.* No other neolithic sites were found in the north which so clearly indicate the need for proper investigation as do the Middle Maesalong and Doi Phale sites, both of which, furthermore, may be easily reached in the dry season by road. However, some stray finds which came to the attention of the Bennington-Cornell survey should be reported.

Like the Maesalong, the Hwei Mak is a tributary of the Maekham River; it joins that stream from the south and west at Hintaek, a full day's march north and west from Phale village. South of the mid-course of the Hwei Mak, surrounded by notoriously fertile *rai* at an elevation of 950 meters above sea level, stands the Sino-Yao village of Hwei Mak. Here, from the surface of their adjacent fields, Yao villagers have collected two polished stone adzes in the expected proportions of one shouldered adze with rectangular cross section and one oval shaped adze or axe with lenticular cross section. Pottery or pottery fragments were not observed by or reported to members of the survey group when they spent a night in this village some weeks before the find of adzes was reported to them. (Map, site number 3.)

In response to inquiries made in the village of Pa Kwang, Tambon Baw, Amphoe Muang, Changwat Nan, where the Nan River is crossed by the main road leading north from Nan to Thung Chang, a villager produced a shouldered adze of fine workmanship. She said this had been "dug up" in forest land at the confluence of the Hwei Tin and the River Nan and that three other similar specimens had been found near by and were in the possession of villagers, being preserved as "thunderstones". We were unable to see or recover any of these latter three; nor were we able to inspect the location where it was claimed these polished stone implements had been found.

Finally, it should be recorded that an unspecified number of socketed bronze celts was reported by informants at Pa Kwang to have been found, apparently as a horde, south of Thung Chang, Amphoe Lae. Only one example of these could be collected; and the spot from which they came could not be more exactly located ("under a tree struck by lightning, which made the axes"). These bronze celts are mentioned here because the temporal boundaries between neolithic and metal industries in Southeast Asia are still vague.

Protohistoric or Historic

Throughout the wide valleys and plains of Changwat Chiang-mai, Chiangrai and Nan there still remain the evidences of early historic or protohistoric settlements. Most of these remains—brick walls and terraces, earthworks and moats, Buddhist monuments and collections of pottery, Buddha images, and the like—are well known to the authorities or to local inhabitants. A considerable local folklore has grown up concerning many of these sites which might well bear sifting and comparison with the places themselves and with early annals of these regions.

Much of the archaeological material is in the process of disappearing, and with it will disappear the recollections and tradi-

tions of local people which are sometimes most helpful to the archaeologist. Certain types of remains are more resistant to the wear and tear of time than are others. There seems little need to rush the investigation of the earthworks which run around the slopes below the Akha village on Doi Sa Ngo west of Chiengsaen; or of the similar earthworks on part of which is built the present road from Maechan eastward toward Nong Waen, a village where old pottery fragments have been uncovered and which is reported to lie on an important ancient route from the north to the vicinity of Chiengrai. Perhaps that old road led to the area eight kilometers east of Chiengrai, where the remains of an extensive settlement are now almost obliterated by the operations of the cooperative mission "Farm", as the area is now called, established there in 1948. At that time, when the authors first visited the site, many architectural features still stood above ground which in the interim have been levelled. According to local reports, the place was known as "Muang Khanu" and until the second world war was still marked by a standing arch called "Pratu Khong". From stupas and other monuments here, the bricks of which now line the walls of modern wells, have come stone and bronze Buddha images of Chiengsaen iconography. Some of these have been deposited in the office of the Governor in Chiengrai, together with a legible but still unread inscription in what is said to be a Lao character. While these few preserved artifacts doubtless warrant study, it is probably now too late to carry out useful archaeological work at the site itself.

4. *Maekham*. Perhaps it is also too late to make systematic investigations of extensive sites lying just east and west of the market town of Maekham located half way between Chiengrai and Maesai on the main road connecting these two cities (Map, site number 4). To the east, outside the village of Ban Kluei, fields have recently been cleared of bamboo overgrowth and put back into cultivation, exposing still extant brick walls, a mound of brick which may have been the base of a monument, ditches, and several deep pits. From this site was recovered a hewn stone mortar found *in situ* at a depth of two and a half meters in one of the pits; and fragments of pottery, more of them unglazed than glazed, are still un-

covered in quantity from the surface. The farmers report that whole vessels used to be encountered but that in the last two years none has been found. Again, fields around the village of Poen, west of Maekham, are littered with pottery fragments of various types, and from them farmers have recovered many whole vessels some of which have been preserved in nearby *wats* or monasteries. In local tradition, these sites are linked with the still extant remains of a settlement lying just west of Poen called Vieng Să which was once a member of a league of five cities made up of Vieng Kao or Chiengsaen, Vieng Sri Thong south of Maesai, Muang Tum west of Maesai in Burma (site number 10, below), and Muang Kwaan north of Muang Tum.

Of more interest to the Bennington-Cornell survey than these early settlements on the Chiengrai-Chiengsaen plain were a number of sites located in the western hill tracts of Amphoe Maechan and Amphoe Muang, Changwat Chiengrai, which suggest that these areas, now occupied only by non-Buddhist, mainly tribal peoples, may once have carried at least a small population of Buddhists—presumably Thai, Shan, or Burman—in touch with some of the urban centers of their time, whenever that may have been. In most cases these sites consist simply of overgrown mounds of brick or tile or in rare instances worked stones representing the remains of collapsed monuments or *cetiya*. They are called “old *wat*” by local tribesmen who speak northern Thai; but since no inscriptions or decorative elements were found associated with them, it can only be inferred that they were Buddhist from the plausible statements by tribesmen that northern Thai have removed Buddha images from them and from the negative argument that it is unlikely they were anything else. Certainly they were not built by any of the tribal peoples now living in these areas—Akha, Karen, Lahu, Lisu, or Yao, who indeed, rather generally fear and avoid them. None of the sites is dated; but in one case (Chanaw, site number 11) the presence of very large bricks may indicate a date later than the fifteenth century A.D.

5. *Chalaw Kao*. Twenty minutes and over two hundred meters directly below and southwest of the Akha village of Chalaw Kao, which is situated at an altitude of 970 meters, is a very large

mound consisting of two terraces. The lower terrace is at least 20 meters long, half as wide, and about 3 meters high, while the set-back upper terrace is about 2 meters high. Several old trees growing from the lower terrace are much larger than trees immediately surrounding the mound. Quantities of brick and tile are in evidence. There are "pot holes" in the mound, which according to Akha informants has been dug over in the past three or four years by visiting northern Thai. This site is located in a deep valley, on a terrace above the stream, Mae Pung, and away from any known main trails, although this valley may have provided an old connection between the Maekham River and Burma.

6. *Payang Kao*. Some 500 meters north of the Akha village of Payang Kao on the trail leading to Pasaeng and Chalaw is a site consisting only of scattered brick and tile. These are concentrated within a limited range, but there is no mound. Local Akha say their village was located adjacent to this site six or seven years ago; and that Buddha images were found there then but that the Akha, who were afraid of these images, told northern Thai about them, who came and removed the images and dug over the site, destroying it. The site is located on a high ridge trail at an elevation slightly lower than the 1930 meters of Payang Kao. (This village, which was burned down in a Lahu raid from Burma in March, 1964, may very likely be moved.)

7. *Pasaeng-Payang Kao*. A half hour's walk, perhaps 3 kilometers, northeast of Payang Kao and half way along the trail to the Akha village of Pasaeng is a large, rather amorphous but apparently terraced mound of brick and tile. It is heavily overgrown and supports some very large old trees. A small building could easily have rested on this platform. The site has been dug over "by northern Thai", but not excessively. The situation is on a high ridge trail which leads into Burma.

8. *Upper Maekham River*. Asai Yang, the headman of the large Lisu village of Ban Pang Nun, one of the westernmost villages on the far northern Thai-Burma border, reported the presence of many "old wat" sites along the course of the Upper Maekham River

far below to the south. This word-of-mouth evidence seemed to be verified by later finds on tributaries of the Maekham near the main stream (Chanaw, site number 11). It was also supported when a Lisu villager brought in the next day a 4.5 cm long celadon glazed elephant figurine of typical Sawankhalok style which he said he "had just found in an old *wat* site on the Maekham below Ban Pang Nun". Lisu villagers also spoke of an old "road" now only a "trail", running along the Maekham valley which was much used "in very old times" by traffic moving into and out of Burma. The situation of these sites would be on a low valley trail.

9. *Maekham River Sources*. Some ten kilometers north west of Ban Pang Nun, on the Burma side of the border, the Lisu headman, Asai Yang, reported the existence of a very large "old *wat*" site. At this site, he said, there was found a few years ago an old Buddha image about 45 or 50 cms. high which was subsequently sold to a Thai "for two thousand five hundred baht". Another villager at Ban Pang Nun owned a very fine celadon bowl without painted design and in mint condition which was said to come from this same site near the upper sources of the Maekham. The situation would seem to be on a high ridge trail.

10. *Muang Tum*. A second ancient site in Burma, according to the same Lisu headman of Ban Pang Nun, is situated on the trail between his village and the old settlement of Muang Tum, and nearer the latter than the former. Here, he claimed, was found an old Buddha image over 50 cms. high which a Thai had unsuccessfully sought to purchase "for thirty thousand baht". This site also seems to be situated on a high ridge trail.

11. *Chanaw*. Following a downward trail southeastward from the Akha village of Chanaw, which is situated at an altitude of 1050 meters, one comes in about thirty minutes at a distance of perhaps three kilometers to a narrow triangular peninsula formed by the confluence of the Hwei Yuak and a smaller stream entering it from the north. This point was estimated to be about two kilometers up the Hwei Yuak from the Maekham River to the northeast. On an elevation at the tip of this triangle stands an overgrown

circular mound of brick and large stones or boulders. The mound rises to almost three meters in height while its round base is only about five meters in diameter, giving it very much the appearance of a delapidated *cetiya*. At the base of the mound lay a shaped rectangular stone measuring about 75 cms. in length, 50 cms. in width and 12 to 15 cms. in thickness. From its long edge extended what appeared to be a tenon about five centimeters long, its end worn round as though it might have fitted into a socket as a door hinge. The red bricks at this site were of two sizes, the "normal" and a much larger size of somewhat flatter shape. The mound showed some signs of past digging. Its situation was on a narrow valley trail. Akha later reported that downstream on the Hwei Yuak northeast near the Maekham River stands another mound very similar to the one just described.

12. *Lao Ta Song Mia*. This Yao village, also known as Thung Hiang, stands under hills at the southern edge of a flat plain or meadow which is over a square kilometer in extent and which itself stands at 650 meters altitude on the southern bank of the Upper Maechan River. In the middle of this meadow is a low circular mound about eight meters in diameter from which a clump of bamboo grows. The mound is made up of brick and some shaped flat rectangular stones measuring 45 to 60 cms. none of which bore inscriptions. A large pit had been sunk in the center of the mound under the bamboo, an operation attributed by the Yao to northern Thai from the plains who pass through Lao Ta Song Mia en route to Fang or other western localities. Remains of pottery fragments were not observed in the area, but Yao reported that old smoking pipes had been dug up or found on the surface. The large meadow in which the mound stands is now covered with secondary growth but must have been cleared originally to permit a *cetiya* or any other structure to be visible. The area could well have been used for wet-rice cultivation for it has a good stream, now used by the village, flowing along its western border. The situation of this site is a high plain on an important east-west trail now much used for foot and pack-horse traffic.

13. *Chake*. On the Hwei Sak Khong near and below the Lahu Nyi village of Chake at an altitude of about 900 meters stand the remains of an old ruined "wat", according to Lahu informants. This site could not be visited, but apparently is situated on a secondary valley trail.

14. *Hwei Mak Liam*. This site also could not be visited, but its existence was reported by a variety of informants, including Khon Muang or northern valley Thai. This "old wat" is located up the Hwei Mak Liam, a southern tributary of the Maekok River, about two kilometers south of the point where the smaller stream enters the river at Suk Pong.

15. *Vieng Dong*. This site (not on Map) lies at an altitude of about 800 meters on the southeastern slopes of Doi Sam Sao in Tambon Intakin, Amphoe Maetaeng, Changwat Chiangmai, and is midway between and fifteen minutes from the village of Ban Vieng Dong and from the Public Welfare Department's Hill Tribes Nikhom of Chiangdao some sixty kilometers north of the city of Chiangmai. It is situated on a small promontory above a perennial stream and looks out to the distant Maetaeng plain. An old trail over the mountain from Chiangdao to Maetaeng passes the site and this is used today by cattle caravans carrying pickled tea down from the tea gardens to market.

Two years ago the site was levelled by bulldozer for the construction of a Nikhom school, the operation removing nowhere more than a meter of top soil. The surface of this site, in area about 100 square meters, is dotted with fragments of baked clay tiles and is almost littered with pottery fragments, both glazed and unglazed wares being represented. Of the former, a sufficient number of larger fragments has been recovered to permit their identification as Sukhodaya, Kalong, San Kam Paeng, and Ming wares.² How did such elegant ceramic wares reach this isolated mountain site?

The northern Thai villagers of Ban Vieng Dong, seventeen families all engaged in the pickled tea industry, say that their an-

2. These identifications were verified in December 1963 by Nai Kraisi Nimmanahaeminda who has discovered several apparently similar "mountain-top" sites in northern Thailand. (1960, 27)

cestors settled the village four or five generations ago. While there is no *wat* in the village now, there is a tradition that there once was. And they report that a number of images have been found in the area which have since been disposed of, so that their character could not be determined. The villagers assume that the remains found on the school ground are associated with the *wat* of their tradition

Above Ban Vieng Dong and the Nikhom, at the head of the stream which flows past the Vieng Dong site, is another tea village of nineteen northern Thai families, Ban Iak. They believe that their village was settled three or four generations ago. The name of their village, they say, may be derived from a kind of betel palm (*iak*) which still grows around the village. Or it may come from the many small but exceptionally heavy black glistening rocks (*hiak*) which their children often play with, finding them in the neighborhood on the surface or digging them up from eight or ten centimeters under the surface. Nai Sirin Nimmanahaeminda, the member of the survey staff who gathered this information in Ban Iak, fortunately recalled that *hiak* is an old *kham muang* or northern Thai word for "tin", and he questioned the villagers further. The villagers themselves did not associate the black stones with tin, but simply called them *hiak* because their forefathers had done so before them, and assumed that their profusion in the vicinity, together with the loss of the aspirate, had given rise to the name of their village. The presence of these stones is not limited to the area of Ban Iak, for they are found in great numbers on the surface in other high localities of the Nikhom territory, and particularly around the Blue Miao village of Pha Phu Chom. Samples of these stones have been analyzed through the courtesy of Mr. Dean Frasché who reports that they are the slag of smelted ore with a content of 7.18% tin.

The evidence of old tin smelting activities, extensive if not intensive in character, combined with the nature of the remains found in the neighboring site of Vieng Dong, suggests that this

3. Personal verbal communication, Mr. Dean Frasché, 21 April 1964.

mountain-top settlement may have been established by Chinese pursuing their centuries-long search for tin while indulging in their centuries—old taste for fine ceramics. But this is pure conjecture. Only a careful excavation of the Vieng Dong site, and before the Nikhom school is built on it, could possibly provide an answer to the questions that arise: Who were the early occupants and what were their relations with the tin smelters? And at what period did these people play their roles in the great theater that was early northern Thailand?

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