



Travel back to the Prehistorical Past and Journey into the Historic Kingdom of Dvaravati

Saturday, 26 to Sunday, 27 March 2022

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In 1943, Hendrik Robert van Heekeren, an appointed Dutch Prehistorian for the Archeological Survey of the Netherlands East Indies, came upon dozens of Palaeolithic artifacts in the area of Ban Kao Village of Kanchanaburi Province. Incredibly, his discovery came while he was a prisoner of war working on the railroad from Bangkok to Moulmein during World War II. Thus, Ban Kao became an important site for the study of Prehistory in Thailand archaeology. Archaeological work was later conducted by the Thai Fine Arts Department, in collaboration with many different institutions from different countries, which led to the establishment of Archaeological Division of the FAD. Recently, new evidence showing a continuation of Neolithic Culture from Ban Kao Prehistory into the Metal Age was discovered at Ban Tha Po, in Ban Kao, and in Nong Ratchawat, Suphan Buri Province. The study of these important artifacts led to new chronological dating of the Thai Prehistoric sites. From Prehistory, we will journey on to Proto-History and enter into the Early Historical Period of the Dvaravati Kingdom, whose glory can be witnessed in many areas of Central Thailand, namely Nakhon Pathom and Suphan Buri. Newly discovered archaeological artifacts and recent research work have recently been added to the presentations at National Museums in Nakhon Pathom and Suphan Buri.

Phra Pathom Chedi National Museum. This National Museum in Nakhon Pathom is located in the same compound as the Grand Stupa, or the Phra Pathom Chedi. The exhibition is housed in a renovated, spectacular small building of the museum that includes the new research information and a newly excavated stone inscription found at Wat Phra Ngam of Nakhon Pathom city. The neatly written and well-preserved inscription is considered one of the most beautiful Pallava scripts found in Southeast Asia. The Pallava is a Brahmic script, named after the Pallava dynasty of South India, dating from



the 4th century AD. In this inscription, the phrase “The Great Man of Dvaravati” was mentioned, and therefore is important evidence confirming that “Dvaravati” was the name of an existing city/state at that early time.

U-Thong National Museum. The newly renovated exhibition adds another layer of excitement to the visit of this museum. Many pieces of excavated artifacts have just been revealed and shown here after a long period of conservation. One of the most interesting exhibits is a Dvaravati pottery which contained votive tablets in excellent condition inside; it was excavated from Phu Hang Nak archaeological site. It is good proof that the religious belief of offering votive tablets to be enshrined in a stupa existed in Central Thailand, in a society existing 1200-1400 years ago.

Ban Kao National Museum. The original museum building was built to house the excavated artifacts discovered during the period when Thai-Danish Prehistoric Expedition took place in Ban Kao site during 1960-1962. It was remodelled many times but on a small scale due to the expansion of many other prehistoric sites in the country. In the last decade, archaeologists of the Fine Arts Department returned to the Ban Kao area for further archaeological work in the area of Kwa Noi, Kwa Yai and Tha Chin River Basins and the artifacts they found gave much more evidence leading to a more precise dating. Thus, the older Ban Kao National Museum was rebuilt using a new design inspired by an actual prehistoric archaeological excavation pit. The plan was carefully prepared for a coherent approach, integrating the landscape, building design, exhibition layout and providing a route for a guided tour.

Ban Tha Po Archaeological Site. The site is located near the Ban Kao National Museum. Archaeologists excavated this Ban Tha Po site from 2016 to 2021. Here, important evidence of a Bronze Age society was found for the first time, a community that is believed to have continued from the earlier discovered Ban Kao Neolithic society. Scientific dating has proved that they are 2,700 years old, earlier than had been dated before. The site has been kept in good condition in preparation for becoming a site museum in the near future. One most striking characteristic is that it was a burial site for children only.

Nong Ratchawat Archaeological Site. This archaeological site belongs to the Tha Chin River Basin area in Suphan Buri. More than 200 excavation pits of Neolithic community burials were found. Artifacts buried as offerings in the pits are similar to those in Ban Kao culture, such as tripods and pedestal pottery. However, special characteristics of the Nong Ratchawat artifacts that appear here are those of the breast pottery and pottery with horns, etc. The excavation is still ongoing and artifacts producing surprising new evidence are still being found.

The tentative programme will be as follows:

Day 1: Saturday, 26 March: Bangkok – Kanchanaburi

- Arrive at The Siam Society, 131 Asoke Montri Road, Sukhumvit 21.
- 07:30 Depart The Siam Society for Nakhon Pathom by bus.
- 09:00 Visit Phra Pathom Chedi National Museum and Wat Phra Ngam.
- Noon: Lunch at a local restaurant in Ban Pong district.
- 13:00 Proceed to Kanchanaburi and Ban Kao National Museum in Muang district, Kanchanaburi province.
- 14:30 Visit Ban Kao National Museum and Ban Tha Po Archaeological Site.
- 18:00 Check in at hotel in Kanchanaburi.
- Evening: Dinner and overnight at the hotel.



Day 2: Sunday, 27 March: Kanchanaburi – Suphanburi - Bangkok

07:00	Breakfast at the hotel.
08:30	Depart the hotel for U-Thong district, Suphanburi province.
10:00	Visit U-Thong National Museum and the historical site no.14
Noon:	Lunch at a local restaurant in U-Thong district.
13:00	Proceed to Nong Ya Sai district.
14:00	Visit Nong Ratchawat Archaeological Site.
16:00	Depart Nong Ratchawat for Bangkok.
18:30	Arrive at The Siam Society.

The Siam Society reserves the right to change the programme as necessary.

Important note:

- The Society requires all study trip participants to be fully vaccinated. We kindly ask that you attach appropriate proof(s) along with your registration.
- To comply with the measures set forth by the government in regards to the COVID-19 pandemic and in order to protect yourself and others around you, the Society kindly asks our participants to follow the appropriate safety and precautionary measures as stipulated by the government and health organisations.

The contribution of THB 11,000 (THB 12,000 for non-members), single room surcharge THB 1,250. will cover transportation, accommodation for 1 night (two persons per room), meals as mentioned in the programme, gratuities and other costs incurred to make this trip possible. In addition, basic travel insurance is included. There is a 4% surcharge for credit/debit card payment to cover bank charges. Please pay by cash or cheque payable to “The Siam Society”. Alternatively, you can transfer the money to The Siam Society travel account at TMBThanachart Bank (ttb), saving account no. 053-2-18000-7. Please fax or e-mail the deposit or transfer docket to us.

For further information and bookings please contact Khun Prasert at Tel. 02-661-6470-3 ext. 504 or Khun Supanut Tel. 02-661-6470-3 ext. 506, Fax 02-258-3491 or email: supanut@thesiamsociety.org. The Society office is open from 09:00 to 17:00, Tuesday to Saturday.

The Siam Society uses any financial revenue arising from its study trips to support the activities of the Society in its library, museum and publications programmes.

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