After a series of archaeological excavations in the 1960s by the Fine Arts Department of Thailand and the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Ban Chiang, a small village in Nong Han district, Udon Thani province, became famous, known in every corner of the world as a prehistoric community with agriculture, animal domestication, metallurgical expertise, and unique painted pottery, the producers of the Ban Chiang Style' cultural tradition that spread throughout the upper northeastern region of Thailand during the past 1,500 to 5,000 years.

Archaeological work at Ban Chiang did not end during that important series of excavations but expanded its scope of exploration to other sites in the Northeast and throughout Thailand. There was development both in data collecting techniques in the field, in forming hypotheses, and in conception and theories that inspired continued development in the academic field of Thai prehistoric archaeology to the present.
However, while Ban Chiang is somewhat representative of a prehistoric Thai community in the eyes of the world, digging and destruction of archaeological sites for antiqued to sell went on as archaeologists continued their excavations so much so that the underground cultural heritage of Ban Chiang experienced an inestimable loss.

In 1992 Ban Chiang was granted World Cultural Heritage status according to a criterion that the World Heritage Committee deemed fitting of Ban Chiang’s qualities—the third—that it should show a culture or civilisation that was once flourishing and had been lost. Therefore, it is quite ironic that Ban Chiang is as if it is once again ‘lost’ through the threat of uncaring people of today.
Surviving illegal digging and damage, this skeleton of a prehistoric human was found in the dig at Wat Pho Si Nai.

**Historical-Archaeological**

It was almost 200 years ago that a group of people in a village of Chiang Kwang, now is a district in the People Democratic Republic of Laos, moved out of their homeland as a result of the political upheaval occurred during that time. These folks later went across the Mae Khong River, to the area now belongs to the northeastern part of Thailand. After crossing the river, they went further south until they arrived at a forestry
area called Dong Phaeng There was a track of land that was quite attractive to these people. This was a low mound located near the conjoining of 2 natural streams and surrounded by large lowlying plain. Realizing that they would certainly be saved from the annually rainy season flood if they lived on the mound and that the soil near the conjoining of 2 natural streams are normally very suitable for rice growing, these people decided to clear the Forest on the mound and settled there. The newly founded small village is name Ben Chiang and has been occupied since then up to the present day.

**The Village and Its Excavation**

In 1784, when King Rama I had reigned in Bangkok for two years, far away on a large plateau in the upper northeast region the long-abandoned village of Ban Dong Phaeng was resettled by a group of Puan Lao who had arrived from Chiang Kwang in northern Laos. These new settlers called Ban Dong Phaeng 'Ban Chiang'.

The area around Ban Chiang was lowland, making it conducive to rice farming, raising animals and foraging in the forest for subsistence. Although the ground surface and below it contained both broken and unbroken painted pottery, no one very much cared.

Before 1966 Ban Chiang was still merely a small village in Nong Han district, Udon Thani province. But then, in that year, an American student named Stephen Young came to explore Ban Chiang. One day he tripped on a tree root and noticed the rim of an earthenware pot exposed above ground. He gave that pot fragment to the Fine Arts Department of Thailand and a British archaeologist who sent it to be dated and discovered that it was believed to be over 6,500 years old.

Students and volunteers collected data and analysed artifacts from Ban Chiang.
News of this painted pot discovery led to the birth of a joint archaeological project to excavate in the area, and work began the following year. The result was the discovery of 14 prehistoric skeletons buried with bronze tools and a large number of red painted pottery items believed to be aged around 7,000 years, similar to the first find. This made a new generation of American archaeologist begin to consider the theory that the oldest development of bronze in the world may have had its origins right here in northeastern Thailand.

The excavation by the Fine Arts Department began again in 1972 and grew into a large joint project with the University of Pennsylvania Museum in 1974 and 1975. An American archaeologist by the name of Chester F.Gorman of Pennsylvania University Worked with Pisit Charoenwongsa, a member of the Faculty of Archaeology at Silpakorn University, and volunteer interns consisting of hundreds of both American and Thai students and countless local workers. They found upwards of 2,000 bags of artifacts, over 5,000 bags of pottery sherds and 126 human skeletons.

Thousands of bags of artifacts from the Ban Chiang site were sent to be examined and analysed at the laboratory of the University of Pennsylvania Museum.

Study results from the joint excavation project enabled American archaeologists to construct a general idea of 'Ban Chiang Culture'. They believed there had been six phases of settlement at Ban Chiang from the earliest period, thought to have been about 5,600 years ago to the last, believed to have been around 1,800 years ago. The team found with amazement that Ban Chiang dwellers in the first phase were already experts in bronzeworking. They believed that by around 3,600 years ago the people of Ban Chiang
knew how to melt and pour iron. Archaeologists went so far as to speculate that Ban Chiang may have been one of the first village communities in the world to begin using bronze. There was also evidence of rice cultivation and stock raising earlier than other regions of the world – even before China, which was previously believed to be first agricultural society.

It cannot be denied that this group of American archaeologists created an important visual set of knowledge on Ban Chiang (though later debates and discoveries have led to changes in some of their conclusions), information from their field records, a large number of artifacts, and challenging hypotheses that changed the face of prehistoric archaeology in the upper northeast region of Thailand and turned it into a hot topic of interest in the academic world for at least the next twenty years.
Illustration of the Earth Strata

(Above) The representative layers of earth from the early, middle and late periods. Archaeologists dig from the top layer down and find older culture in deeper levels since previous evidence would be covered under later evidence. The lowest level is therefore the earliest, and the topmost is of the latest culture.

(Above right) **The Late Period** (2,300-1,800 years ago) is the last phase for the community, which had lived in the area for over 4,000 years. People began moving out towards the end of that period. Red painted pottery on buff background is characteristic of this period.

(Middle right) **The middle period** (3,000-2,300 years ago) People in this period used iron tools, and expanded settlements to surrounding areas to plant, and began contract with other communities further away for trade.

(Bottom right) **The Early Period** (5,600-3,000 years ago) was the first period, when Ban Chiang villagers moved in to settle. In this age they knew how to work bronze, weave, plant rice, raise animals and make tools. Hunting was still an important means of subsistence.
Archaeological Significance of Ban Chiang

Until 1960 Southeast Asia during prehistoric times was described by most of the leading archaeologist in the world as a cultural and technological backward area. The major advanced technology including agriculture and metallurgy were believed area to appear in this region quite late. Bronze and iron technologies were believed to be appeared simultaneously in this region not earlier than 500 B.C. and were considered as the advancements that the local inhabitants obtained from other superior cultures especially that centered in Nuclear China. However, the results from archaeological excavations undertaken at Ben Chiang and its related sites in Thailand have now already corrected this misunderstanding.

Archaeologists have found that the initial settlers of Ban Chiang, which appeared here around the late fourth millennium B.C., were already rice agriculturalists. They also had domesticated animals, at least cattle and pig. Later, during the late third millennium B.C., these prehistoric sedentary villagers gained a new knowledge on bronze metallurgy. Bronze implements such as socket axes and spearpoints, and ornaments, including at least bracelets and anklet, were locally cast here. Since the area around Ban Chiang are devoice of copper and tin, the main ingredients for bronze, it is quite convincing that the prehistoric inhabitants of the village were involved in extra-community exchanges. Some times around the early half of the first millennium B.C. iron metallurgy appeared here. The Iron Age community of Ban Chiang was occupied until the first few century of the Christian era, when this prehistoric village was abandoned.
It is quite clear from archaeological evidence that the prehistoric culture and society at Ban Chiang existed continuously for a few thousands years. During such the long spanning of times certain technological as well as other aspects of cultural developments had been brought about.

The obvious implications of this evidence are that the prehistoric population of Southeast Asia had the ability to either developed or adopted new technologies as early as other cultures, and that any indigenous technological and cultural developments could be occurred in every society of any region of the world.

Another important aspect of prehistoric culture of Ban Chiang is about the consequence of bronze using.

The use of bronze in the prehistoric period of old world has always been equated with the appearance of marked socio-political transformations. Highly social differentiation is believed to be an important characteristic of Bronze Age societies. Evidence indicating the existence of raiding, warfare and ruling elites were found in many Bronze Age archaeological sites in many areas of the world but seems to be
absent at Ban Chiang.

Thus, the adoption of bronze using did not interfere so much that it caused an abrupt transformation of the original socio-cultural system of the early Ban Chiang populations. This might also mean that the technology had been properly adjusted before it was nearly integrated into the slightly differentiated local cultural and society. This suggests to the possibility that the pattern of cultural development in different parts of the world is not necessary the same.

The Prehistoric Culture and Society at Ban Chiang

People and Life at Ban Chiang

Burial traditions of the prehistoric Ban Chiang people, which meant putting the entire body in the grave, made demographic archaeology easier than in periods where cremation had begun, such as Dvaravati, Sukhothai or Ayutthaya.
Decorated insignia could be pattern makers for fabric or personal seals showing the status of the owner.

Therefore, even without written evidence, we have much better knowledge of those Ban Chiang people than we do of Ayutthayan people of the Ayutthayan period.

Demographic archaeologists believe that Ban Chiang inhabitants moved in from somewhere in the upper northeastern region to the Ban Chiang mound some time around 5,000 years ago. Evidence found at other sites confirms that there were several similar contemporary settlements, among them Ban Na Di in Udon Thani province and Non Nok Tha in Khon Kaen province. These people tended to choose a mound near a creek, under 30 rai (12 acres) of land. They had a population of around 300 and were hunters who farmed and raised pigs and cows, and buffaloes for food and for labour.

Ban Chiang ancestors ate both raised and hunted animals. Aside from pigs, cows and buffaloes they ate fish, shell, turtles, chickens, civets, and even dogs of which evidence shows they were raised in the household, as part of their daily menu.

It is strange that prehistoric Ban Chiang people were on average taller than the modern Thai population. Men were between 162-172 centimetres in height and women 147-155. Archaeological study reveal that the early-age mortality rate of Ban Chiang infants was 17.3 percent of the entire population, which was very small compared to other prehistoric communities. Even in adolescence (10-15 years) the rate of death was still lower than at other sites. This shows the health and the adaptiveness of people appropriate to their environment.
Puberty among Ban Chiang youth was at 14-15 years, which reflects excellent health. At 17-18 years of age young Ban Chiang women were already mothers.

Nevertheless, the lifespan of a Ban Chiang person was 35-45 years. The most common diseases were tooth infections and thalassemia. Some had brain cancer. Very few people lived beyond 50 years of age.

Some believe that this curved woven square pattern comes from a kind of fish trap used in Ban Chiang several thousand years ago.

The polished stone ax was a popular tool before the iron age. Though later there were bronze axes. The making of stone ones for personal use seems to have been more economical than trading for a bronze one that was more expensive.
Buffalo toe bones are found to be different from those of the wild buffalo. This shows that they were domesticated and continually used for hard labour (perhaps for ploughing), resulting in changed bone quality.

This bronze ladle with designs on the handle was probably a high-quality kitchen utensil used by a well-to-do family.

Domestic dog bone. It is believed that dogs were probably trained to hunt small animals for human food, and probably themselves became human food in hard times.
What made Ban Chiang a comfortable and well-off village community was its knowledge and expertise in metalworking. Metal was more efficiently shaped than wood, bone, pottery or even stone into kitchen utensils, farm equipment or even weapons.

Village smiths were able to utilise bronze over 4,000 years ago and less than 1,000 years later were able to smelt and make high-quality metal utensils.

The question has often been asked: Is it true that Ban Chiang used bronze before China and the Middle East? Even today, no one can answer this question. What archaeometallurgists notice is that the concept of shape and usage of Ban Chiang bronze was definitely different from that of China.

At first bronze was used to make both jewellery, such as bracelets, rings and animal figurines, and weapons like spearheads, socketed axes and fishhooks, all the way to arrowheads.

Bronze is a tin and copper alloy (with perhaps some lead and other elements). Archaeometallurgists have analysed and found that when Ban Chiang people added an amount of tin, lead etc to the copper the effect upon the resulting bronze properties was significant. For instance, if there was a large amount of tin (over twenty per cent) the bronze had a light gold colour, was hard but brittle, and good for making jewellery. If there was a small amount of tin (less than ten per cent) the bronze had a gold colour,
was hard and most hardy, and was often used for making weapons.

Moreover, time, temperature and method in cooling the bronze were also important. Archaeometallurgists found that one of the oldest bronze spearheads of Ban Chiang had an amazingly complex production method. It was only three percent tin, was moulded with a bivalve mould, and when cooled was reworked by hand and reheated until red, then slowly cooled to lessen the brittleness that might result from handworking. This shows the high skill of the bronzeworkers of Ban Chiang even at its early stage.

Another development in the bronzemaking process occurred around 2,500 BC. Bronzeworkers would add more than twenty per cent tin. The resulting bronze was very hard but very brittle, which was “remedied” by adapting from ironworking methods. The bronze was heated until red and then beaten to from details. When well-shaped it was reheated until red once more and immediately cooled in water. This complicated process created bronze with beautiful colour, endurance and hardiness, that was not brittle or prone to breaking, and that was the highest development in bronze.

Earthen crucible for melting and pouring liquid metal into a mould, found throughout Ban Chiang and ancient Metal Age communities in the central and northeastern regions of Thailand.
Bronze bell with curved shell-like pattern.

Ban Chiang smiths knew how to smelt, melt and mould bronze as well as beating it into utensils, 4,000 years ago. The bronze ax was a more efficient weapon than a polished stone one from the Stone Age. Bronze arrowheads and fishhooks were also better tools than those made of wood or animal bone.
Iron tools were considered the highest technological development of the Ban Chiang smiths. They were variously shaped, ranging from rice leaf spears to scythes to various types of axes.

When Ban Chiang smiths were able to smelt iron by 2,700-2,500 years ago, which was the greatest technological advancement of those smiths, bronze was used mainly for jewellery. Tin addition helped make the alloy more flexible when melted and more intricately moulded with complex moulds into astonishing patterns.

Archaeometallurgists believe that part of the copper used by Ban Chiang smiths was either imported from a copper mine near Phu Lon in Sangkhom district, Nong Khai province or from somewhere in Laos while tin probably had a large source in the high mountains west of the Chao Phraya River basin around Ratchaburi and Kanchanaburi provinces.

The advancement of late prehistoric metalwork made Ban Chiang and several communities in the Ban Chiang cultural group a large member of the network of metal jewellery and utensil producers of the region, resulting in economic, social and cultural changes that made it one of the most prominent village communities of the upper northeast region at that time.
After Van Chiang smiths were able to smelt and make iron tools, bronze, which was less hardy, was used more frequently to make jewellery. However, some weapons were bimetal such as spears with an iron head and bronze haft.

Rituals and Beliefs

A drawing of a burial ceremony in the Ban Chiang cultural tradition. Evidence from the skeleton of a large man and items buried with him show that there was a clear direction for burials. It is believed that a shaman performed these spirit-sending ceremonies to help the dead into the next world.
A pedestalled vessel, buff in colour, decorated with cordmarked designs and incisions, used for child burials.

When viewing Ban Chiang artifacts in museums it may be noticed that some painted pots were smashed to tiny pieces. Archaeologists have reconstructed these meticulously, like a jigsaw puzzle.

Some very large pots often have the identifying label “child body container”. Some spearheads look like they were bent out of shape. Every pottery doll found appears to be smashed in the head. What do these items indicate?

Evidence from excavation indicates that prehistoric Ban Chiang people had several everyday rituals but what archaeologists have been able to find out about most concerns mortuary practices.

Over one hundred burials showed bodies covered or shrouded with cloth and buried with painted pots, some smashed to bits and scattered over the body. The personal belongings of the deceased, such as axes, spearheads and bracelets were bent out of shape, and necklaces, rings, waist hoops or charms were worn on different parts of the body.

A body of a large hunter, taller than 180 centimetres was decorated with a hairpin and a spearheads made of intricately worked bone. Next to his body were dirt bullets and a tiger fang pendant. All of these were perhaps for him to use in the next world where he would travel after death.

The bodies of babies were put in a wide-mouth jar with incised designs and a cover. This is the convention for burying infant corpses throughout northeast Thailand as well as Indochina in general.

Rice leaf spearhead and hairpin made of animal bone, tiger fang and deer horn. These were buried with the body of Nimrod, or of Chetabutra – the large man archaeologists speculate was the Ban Chiang hunter.
Ban Chiang people did not yet know Buddhism, so their beliefs were in spirits, both good and bad, that are above nature, and in the next world. Evidence of this can be seen in the artifacts found in the burials mentioned.

A bronze spearhead bent out of shape was one of the items buried with the bodies of Ban Chiang people. It was probably made to “die” along with its owner so that he or she might take it with them to the next world.

Earthen animal figurines may have been both toys for children and symbols used fertility ceremonies.

Earthen ladles with painted bowls, like this one, were probably not an everyday household item but specifically made for a dead person, just like the painted pots.
Tiny polished axes, found in large quantities, often show no signs of use. These were likely to have been ceremonial as well.

A blackware water vessel, patterned with incisions and shaped to look like the body of a duck, was probably used for special occasions.

This painted pot has a curved design like a snake or a phallus. It is believed to have had a ritualistic meaning.
Undeniably, what people, Thai or foreign, recognise as a Ban Chiang item is the painted pot of Ban Chiang. The wide range of shapes, the painted red designs of puzzling abstract symbols, and the enormous estimates value of these pots make them seem like the only important thing about Ban Chiang. Even worse, most people know of only the painted pot.

However, in the 2,500 years from the beginnings of Ban Chiang civilisation to the time it declined, its people most likely used containers made from a variety of materials, such as cups made of banana leaf or other leaves, bamboo strips or woven bamboo baskets. The most sophisticated of these was the pottery that involved a complex process, which increased along with advancement in technology and usage in each period.

Early pottery had simple shapes. Formed by hand, its walls made thick or thin as required by using a flat piece of wood to hit it against a du stone. Occasionally, the outside surface was polished black.

Later Ban Chiang potters began to shape the clay on a rotating stand, which made the shape more regular, and they began painting simple designs on the rim and shoulder of the pots.
The painted pots that are famously known around the world are from about 2,000 years ago. What people usually do not know is that no painted pots were ever actually used in cooking. They were made so meticulously in order to be used specially for burials.

Painted pots were shaped on a rotating stand, then lined up and fired at 800 degrees celsius. When cooled, they were painted with brushes made with animal hair or tree bark that had been beaten so that their ends were soft bristles. The red paint, made from mixing red-ochre soil with some kind of tree sap, produced designs on the outer surface with intricate motifs, each one unique. Archaeologists group the Ban Chiang pots into four periods according to the development of their production method.

Pottery that prehistoric Ban Chiang people actually used in everyday life included bowls, cups and pots that were simply made, sometimes with incised or cordmarked patterns to make handling easier and better for gripping.
Early period

Early period: roughly made with blackened surface, cordmarked or incised patterns. Only some are painted in red.

Middle period

Middle period: smooth-surface pottery emerges, buff-coloured, and with incised patterns. A characteristic feature was the red-painted rim.
Late period

Late period: best known because of their beautiful shape. The surface was painted with red swirly line designs and various symbols. Sometimes these were figures of people, sometimes of animals or things that were reminiscent of the cave wall paintings in the Northeast. This style of pottery was also found in other locations such as Ban Than Prasat, Non Soong district, Nakhon Ratchasima province and Ban Don Thong Chai, Sawang Daen Din district, Sakon Nakhon province, but the painted designs are distinct from Ban Chiang ware.

Late-late period

Late – late period: occurring in the very last period of Ban Chiang Culture, this is a pot glazed with red clay water before firing. There are no painted designs but the surface is polished to a sheen.
Jewellery

Some find it difficult to believe that prehistoric people cared just as much about their looks as people do nowadays. They also collected as many types of body ornament as people do today.

Both men and women wore earrings, neck rings, and small bangles and “sleeve” bracelets that came up to their elbows, and some had small bronze bells attached all around creating tinkly sounds. There were also leg sleeves made from good quality bronze, delicately worked to extreme thinness and beautifully patterned.

Early bracelets at Ban Chiang look like those found in contemporary Vietnam and Cambodia, that is, all were inspired by the stone and shell bracelets of an earlier age. Some bracelets were ivory, while others were made from seashells like the giant clam shell, which indicates contact and trading with coastal communities located several hundred kilometres away.

Large stone bracelets like this one were not found often. It was perhaps imported from somewhere.

Ivory bracelets were not common. These three were on the arm of a skeleton in a grave.

Later period bracelets were amazingly more complex, partly because bronzesmiths had developed a copper-tin-lead ratio whose quality was more suitable for making jewellery.

Some animal bones with pleasing shapes would be made into pendants, like the tiger fang that seemed also to have protective charm powers.

Beads were made from variously coloured and sized glass, oval-shapes terracotta, and valuable stone like carnelian, which was obtained from elsewhere, perhaps from the Chao Praya River basin in the central region, or from China or India.

It is often asked whether Ban Chiang people actually used such jewellery in their daily life or only for burials. Archaeologists give two reasons as evidence of regular wearing of such jewellery. The first makes use of photographs of some tribes in Laos who still foraged and hunted for subsistence until the last century.
Every kind of jewellery that those Kamu wore every day was like that Ban Chiang. The second is that aside from being discovered in graves, archaeologists found well-made and beautiful jewellery in the regular earth strata for living, including in the garbage pits.

Glass beads strung into necklaces came in many lengths and colours in Ban Chiang. An especially beautiful kind of bead was rectangular-shaped and another kind was round and deep blue.

Bright orange carnelian beads imported from another realm, perhaps from India via the Chao Phraya River basin.

A small stone bangle found throughout Stone Age communities in Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia was later the inspiration for early bronze bangles before more complex designs were developed.
Bronze jewellery was a luxury item that Ban Chiang smiths were able to produce from 4,000 years ago. Bronze bracelets came in a variety of designs and sizes. Some had tiny bells that even today jingle prettily.

Bronzeware shines like gold when cleaned and polished. So it is not difficult to imagine how beautiful these sleeve bracelets will look when restored.

Tiny bells found in large quantities in the underground Ban Chiang pit.

A bronze neck ring with no surface design. Its size and weight suggests it belonged to a man who preferred a simple and strong style.

This bronze sleeve anklet was so carefully worked that it was razor thin. The edges have a shallow design.
Summary

Excavations at Ban Chiang have established it as the premier prehistoric site in Southeast Asia. It has the longest cultural sequence, nearly 4,000 years, and is the earliest known site with indigenous bronze and iron manufacture. It presents the earliest evidence for the domestication of plants and animals in Southeast Asia. Its rich assemblage of ceramics includes the fine black burnished and incised ware and the internationally famous red-on-buff painted pottery. The styles of the early Ban Chiang metallic jewelry confirm an indigenous development of the technology and later trends have affinities with the widespread Dong Son Culture form northern Vietnam. The large number and wide variety of jewelry styles have become the basic reference for Southeast Asian prehistoric and protohistoric jewelry collections.

A number of artifacts excavated at Ban Chiang are exotic to the region. These include such status symbols as stone bangles and native metals which enable prehistoric trade and exchange networks to be traced. Later in the site’s occupation, trade items such as glass and semiprecious stone beads from India were popular. The imported metals were utilized at the site for both jewelry and tools. The techniques employed include the casting of bronze in stone moulds, the lost wax technique and the forging of high-tin bronze and iron.

The rich array of animal bones at Ban Chiang illuminates the nature of the environment during the prehistoric period. There were permanent streams and lakes which no longer exist, forests with clearings for rice cultivation, and grassland of herbivorous mammals such as deer. There was also an abundant population of forest fauna and flora. The prehistoric residents of Ban Chiang cultivated rice and kept domesticated cattle, pigs, dogs and chickens.

Since the discovery of Ban Chiang, many other sites of the same cultural tradition have been discovered and some of them excavated. Ban Chiang, however, is the hallmark of the culture having the longest sequence and the richest variety of social and cultural material. The knowledge gained from Ban Chiang excavations to date had helped to rewrite the pages of Southeast Asian prehistory and has given the area its deserved place in the annals of world prehistory.
The Conservation of Ban Chiang Archaeological Site

In actuality, Ban Chiang is not the only archaeological site that yields informations about the prehistoric culture and society of Northeast Thailand. More than 100 villages in this area have been known to contain archaeological materials comparable in style and dating to Ban Chiang. Regrettably, however, most of these known sites had been heavily looted since almost 30 years ago. As an attempt to preserve the important ancient cultural heritage, the Thai Government in 1972 passed a decree prohibiting the illegal antique digging in a vast area of Northeast Thailand in which Ban Chiang and other archaeological sites related to the ancient Ban Chiang culture were located.

The Thai government also realizes the important of the knowledges the publics can gain from the archaeological site of Ban Chiang. Budgets and other supports were, therefore, provided to the establishment of Ban Chiang National Museum and Wat Pho Si Nai Archaeological Site Museum at the village.

Ban Chiang National Museum.

This famous museum of Thailand houses exclusively the exhibitions on prehistory down to recent history of Northeast Thailand. There is also a permanent exhibition about the history of Ban Chiang excavations and the interpretation of the archaeological evidence excavated here. Visiting the museum therefore, ones can obtain a better understanding on the history of culture in Northeast Thailand.

Wat Pho Si Nai Archaeological Site Museum

Wat Pho Si Nai is the village temple located at the northern edge of the Ban Chiang mound. Archaeological conducted here in 1972 found numerous human burials with richly grave offerings. The excavated areas have since then been developed into a site museum displaying archaeological evidence, mainly human inhumation burials and its associated grave offerings, found here that has been left in its original locations.
World Heritage Values

Ban Chiang Archaeological Site is the most splendid example of the prehistoric period in Southeast Asia. It represents an important stage in the cultural, social and technological evolution that flourished over 5000 years ago. As such, it was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1992 in accordance with:

| Criteria III: | bears a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared. |

Site Management

The site is protected under the Act on Monuments, Ancient Objects, Art Objects and National Museums 1961. The Fine Arts Department, Ministry of Education is directly responsible for the organization and management of the site. The National Museum, Ban Chiang was established in order to conserve and exhibit the archaeological artifacts excavated from the site during 1974-1975. Many archaeological artifacts are still in situ, giving a complete picture of the original culture and helping to promote understanding among people so that they realize the importance of the preservation of the cultural heritage as a legacy for the future generations.
ที่มาของข้อมูล : วิชีติมรดกไทย มรดกโลก บริษัท ปตท.สำรวจและผลิตปิโตรเลียม จำกัด (มหาชน)