



The Ban Chiang

Newsletter for the Friends of Ban Chiang

UpDATE

Preserving a **UNESCO** World Heritage Site Issue #2 Fall/Winter 1995

From the Director . . .

*The Friends of Ban Chiang has much
to celebrate*

It has been an exciting year on several fronts for the Ban Chiang Project. In addition to the many activities connected with the exhibition, "Illuminating the Past: Art and Artists of the Ban Chiang Project," we have made progress in other important areas. Five articles are in the process of publication on topics ranging from rice agriculture to ancient copper production. The National Geographic Society renewed funding for the palaeoenvironmental research directed by Dr. Lisa Kealhofer and myself. We presented preliminary results at the Society for American Archaeology last May. I also worked with Time/Life on a upcoming book in their *Lost Civilization Series* which will include an essay on Ban Chiang.

Dr. Don Glusker spent the year at Oxford University working on the chemical pretreatments of ceramics for AMS dating. Dr. Glusker is a chemist and research associate with the Museum's Applied Science Center for Archaeology (MASCA). He is back from England and we are beginning to get exciting results from this work. When more results are in, we will have another FOBC event to fill you in on the dating program and its significance! This coming year, although I will have a brief field trip to Thailand in December, I plan to focus on writing the final chronology and stratigraphy for Volume 1 in the Ban Chiang monograph series.

Throughout the year we have gained new Friends in the United States and abroad, and have currently raised over \$17,000 from over 90 contributors! These funds have been critical to the dating program and will continue to be essential for the publication program. The Friends of Ban Chiang is also attracting favorable attention and support from other sources at the University, in Philadelphia, and internationally. The 'Friends' demonstrates that the

diverse individuals, not only locally but world wide, are committed to see that this research will go forward and have its full impact on knowledge of our human past. I thank you, Friends, for your support and look forward to seeing you at future events!

◆
Dr. Joyce C. White
Director of the Ban Chiang Project

Exhibit Opens . . .

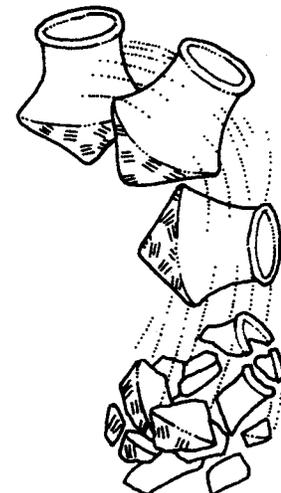
April 13, 1995 (Thai New Year) marked the opening date of the University of Pennsylvania Museum's exhibition "Illuminating the Past: Art and Artists of the Ban Chiang Project." At the stroke of six, nearly two hundred people filled Rainey Auditorium to be welcomed by Dr. Jeremy Sabloff, Director of the Museum, who introduced Dr. Joyce White, Director of the Ban Chiang Project.

Dr. White's remarks about Ban Chiang research and data analysis underlined what UNESCO declared in December 1992, that the site is "without question the most important prehistoric settlement so far discovered in Southeast Asia." With fascinating slides and a narration that was both informative and entertaining, Dr. White kept her audience interested. From the beginning when an unsuspecting young traveler tripped over ancient pot rims in Thailand nearly thirty years ago, to last year's coring project researching early agriculture, the fascinating story behind the Ban Chiang Project was shared by Dr. White with her appreciative audience.

A "bridge" of refreshments from the auditorium to the exhibit in the Sharpe Gallery provided both beverages and nibbles. Included was an authentic Thai sauce marked HOT that White warned her audience about during her talk . . . and HOT IT WAS!! Buttered hors d'oeuvres were passed to ensure everyone's enjoyment.

The exhibit was unique in that it approached its subject from a humanistic as

well as humorous point of view. It showed interdependence between archaeologists and artists, "A marriage made in heaven," according to one review of the show. Technical drawings are still an integral part of documenting archaeological finds in this age of computers and advanced photographic processes. The drawings, many of them done by part-time work-study students in the laboratory, are extremely precise as well as elegantly rendered. They will provide much of the basic documentation on the site and its finds in the forthcoming monograph series.



. . . and Closes

In late August FOBC had a closing celebration for the exhibition. Dr. White filled us in on the current status of the ongoing redating project announcing preliminary results from the new AMS technique. Attendees got a last look at the show as well as a delightful bite to eat. A surprise for Ardeth Anderson, head artist for the Project, was the unveiling of the Museum's latest issue of *Expedition* magazine. Not only did it feature an excerpt from the exhibition, but Ardeth's color "Splatt Theory" was featured as the cover illustration. This was the culmination of several months of favorable publicity generated by the exhibition, including one review that focused on the "inherent fascination" of the show. ◆

Sallyann Yeager
Project Volunteer

F.O.B.C.

University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 33rd & Spruce Streets,
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6324, (215)898-4028

Philadelphia, PA 19104-6324
 33rd & Spruce Streets
 FRIENDS OF BAN CHIANG



The Ban Chiang Gang -- A Continuation

In the last issue of *The Ban Chiang UpDATE*, some members of the 'gang' were introduced. The 'gang' is a research team of specialists, volunteers and work-study students led by Dr. Joyce White. She supervises all that goes on in "the lab." For those members of FOBC who have not had an opportunity to visit the area, a cordial invitation is offered. Do not expect a sterile atmosphere, however.

The Ban Chiang lab consists of three interconnected rooms. The first room is small and is shared with John Hastings, the museum's resident computer genius and an outstanding member of the gang. John has set up our programs and is always on call for assistance. His desk and computer equipment, manuals, and spare parts fill half of the room. The remainder of the space is taken up by desks, two terminals, a laser printer, and assorted boxes, books and bindings that have been stacked under a desk since an overhead shelf collapsed (actually on the very day of the exhibit opening).

The middle room is the largest and most brightly lit. It contains large tables covered with artists' work-in-progress. Everyone tacitly understands that nothing is placed on the artists' surfaces. Another table, pushed up against the wall holds a number of pots in need of repair. Sherds are laid out to be worked on, and supplies to repair the pots are on hand. Supplies include exotic materials such as Duco cement, nail

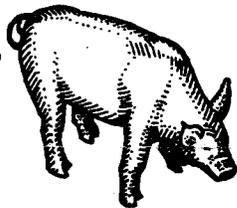
polish remover (for correcting mistakes), old toothbrushes, as well as spring-type clothespins used to hold sherds together until the glue dries.

Shelves line one side of the room. The open shelves contain folders, bags of sherds, and completed artwork along with evidence of proprietary feelings among the artists: a sign that reads, "Please do not place anything on this shelf" and another warning, "Handle under pain of sudden death," signed by Ernest.

Boxes of pots in need of repair and/or photographs hide behind a door. Shelves with drawers reach nearly to the ceiling, and contain assorted treasures such as charcoal samples, rollers, other "small finds," and at one time, many bones that had to be individually packed for mailing to Hawaii.

The last room is Dr. White's office. It has to be seen to be fully appreciated. A written description cannot do it justice. One wall is floor-to-ceiling book shelves, filled to capacity with small piles of books on the floor awaiting their turn for shelf space. Filing cabinets take up part of two other walls. They, too, are filled to capacity. A large light table is pushed into one corner next to a wall filled with boxes of slides and holders. These boxes have overflowed their territory also, and some have found space on the floor. Dr. White's desk and a computer fill the remainder of the space. Out of loyalty to Dr. White, this reporter declines to describe her desk. The staff is aware that when one cannot walk into her office without tripping over something, Dr. White is "cooking." The Ban Chiang laboratory is truly chaotic creativity, and a happy place in which to work. ♦

Sallyann Yeager



Spread the word, renew
 your support -- every con-
 tribution is gratefully
 received!

-Levels of Giving

\$25-99	Stone Carver
\$100-499	Iron Smith
\$500-1000	Pottery Painter
over \$1000	Bronze Caster

-Send to: Friends of Ban Chiang
 University of Pennsylvania Museum
 of Archaeology and Anthropology
 33rd and Spruce Streets
 Philadelphia, PA 19104-6324

Become a Friend of Ban Chiang!

Enclosed is my contribution of \$_____ to support the Ban Chiang Project.

- Make Checks to: Trustees of
 The University of Pennsylvania

I would like to renew my contribution of \$_____ to support the Ban Chiang Project.

I would like more information about FOBC and the Ban Chiang Project.

I have changed my address. The following is my new address.

