

Ban Chiang, a Prehistoric Village Site in Northeast Thailand



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The inaugural volume in the Thai Archaeology Monograph Series describes in detail

the human skeletal remains from Ban Chiang in northeast Thailand. The skeletal material spans a period from 2100 B.C. to A.D. 200 and includes premetal, Bronze Age, and Iron Age deposits from a series of prehistoric societies. The history of Homo sapiens in Asia has long been a topic of interest among scholars investigating human biology. This study, which is based on one of the larger, comprehensively analyzed skeletal series ever excavated in the region, makes fundamental contributions to understanding human settlement in eastern Asia. The volume includes detailed summaries of metric and nonmetric variation recorded in teeth, skulls, and the rest of the skeleton, and evidence of disease of the Ban Chiang people. These data are used to examine a number of questions: Where did the people of Ban Chiang come from? Did more intensified agriculture influence the health of the people? How do the people of Ban Chiang compare to the inhabitants of other ancient sites in Thailand and to the modern peoples of Thailand and neighboring regions? Contrary to other groups experiencing similar transitions elsewhere in the world, no clear evidence for a decline in health over time is noted in the Ban Chiang skeletal series, suggesting continuity in a broad-based subsistence strategy even in the face of intensifying agriculture. The skeletal evidence further suggests a rigorous physical lifestyle with little evidence for infectious disease or interpersonal violence. Thai Archaeology Monograph Series Joyce C. White, Series Editor

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