

# THAILAND

## Ban Chiang Archaeological Site

### II.1 Introduction

Year of Inscription 1992

#### Organisation Responsible for the Report

- Ban Chiang National Museum  
Fine Arts Department  
Nhonghan District  
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### II.2 Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria C iii

#### Statement of Significance

- Proposed as follows:  
"The Ban Chiang Archaeological Site is an evidence of prehistoric settlement and culture while the artefacts found show a prosperous ancient civilization with advanced technology which has evolved for 5,000 years. (...) The prosperity of the Ban Chiang culture also spread to more than a hundred archaeological sites in the Northeast of Thailand. As a result, Ban Chiang is a significant archaeological site for the study of Southeast Asian and World Prehistory."

#### Status of Site Boundaries

- No information supplied.

### II.3 Statement of Authenticity/Integrity

#### Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- At present, the status of authenticity of the WH property is satisfying, except for the following physical changes: (i) expansion of nearby communities; (ii) infrastructure development; and (iii) mixing of local and foreign cultures.
- The integrity of the site is preserved through the particular situation of Ban Chiang. Indeed, most of its cultural heritage is buried and strong measures have been taken to maintain and preserve the buried heritage.



### II.4 Management

#### Administrative and Management Arrangements

- Management of the property is governed within the framework of three national laws: (i) 'Act on Ancient Monuments, Antiques, Objects of Art and Nations Museums' B.E. 2504 (1961), amended in B.E. 2535 (1992); (ii) Land Digging and Land Filling Act B.E. 2543; (iii) Announcement No. 189 of the Revolutionary Group prohibiting illegal excavation in the area of Udon Thani, Sakon Nakorn, Khon Kaen, and Mukdaharn

#### Present State of Conservation

- "Ban Chiang is different from other WH sites as its heritage is mostly buried. The artefacts excavated and exhibited are only a small part. Therefore, there has to be a strong measure to maintain and preserve the buried heritage. Other contemporary sites in nearby areas should also be managed following the correct conservation methods."
- Ban Chiang being part of the OECF plan to promote tourism in Indochina, the following works have been undertaken for the preservation of the site: (i) refurbishment of the Princess Mother building; (ii) refurbishment of the Lottery building; (iii) improvement of the Wat Pho Sri Nai excavation pit; (iv) improvement of the Ban Thai Puan excavation pit; (v) improvement of landscape and facilities in the Ban Chiang Museum and within the Ban Chiang community; (vi) construction of a museum storage.
- The establishment of phase 1 (2002-2006) of the 'Plan on the Preservation and Development of Arts and Culture' will assess future conservation needs pertaining to the different site zones (nuclear zone, buffer zone, protective zone).

#### Staffing and Training Needs

- "The Fine Arts Dept. has conducted a project to raise awareness in preservation and to build a cultural network among the locals."
- The following education programmes have already been conducted: (i) training and establishment of local volunteers for the preservation of cultural heritage; (ii) training of monks on the preservation of cultural heritage; and (iii) lectures to local agencies

and academic institutions on archaeology and preservation needs.

## Financial Situation

- Thanks to funding from the OECF and international partners such as University of Pennsylvania in the USA and Sumimoto Bank in Japan, projects on the preservation of Ban Chiang's cultural and historical heritage have been implemented.
- "The Ban Chiang Archaeological site still needs international assistance in terms of academic affairs, finance, and conservation." No figures supplied.
- \* International Assistance from WHF: none.

## Access to IT

- No information provided.

## Visitor Management

- Between 1995 and 2002, the total number of visitors was 1.11 million, with a peak in 1996 and 1997. Since then, annual visits to the site decreased from 261,430 in 1997 to 64,956 in 2002.
- In order to develop tourism in the area of the site, three exhibition halls have been constructed, as well as a road leading from the Ban Chiang National Museum to Wat Pho Sri Nai pit and Ban Thai Puan pit.
- "The Ban Chiang National Museum has provided sufficient facilities to serve visitors and academic activities including electricity, tap water, and transportation."

*"Ban Chiang is different from other WH properties as its heritage is mostly buried. The artefacts excavated and exhibited are only a small part. Therefore, there has to be a strong measure to maintain and preserve the buried heritage."*

## II.5 Factors Affecting the Property

### Threats and Risks

- Expansion of local communities resulting in invasion of the protected archaeological areas due to growing land needs for farming and living.
- "Illegal excavation of archaeological sites to find pottery, beads, bronze tools, etc. conducted by the locals and antique dealers from other places."
- Illegal excavation in order to attract tourists.

### Counteractive Plans

- "To prevent the negative impact on the conservation and restoration of the Ban Chiang archaeological site, two plans have been set up to handle the above problems within the timeframe of three years (2003-2006)": (i) Plan to conserve and develop the Ban Chiang archaeological site; (ii) Strategic plan to develop the Ban Chiang community.
- The aim of these plans is to incorporate civil society development into the preservation and restoration efforts undertaken by the Ban Chiang National Museum in order to avoid conflicting interests.

## II.6 Monitoring

### Monitoring Arrangements

- "The Fine Arts Dept. is in the process of improving the standard of the monitoring system in the historical parks and archaeological sites."

### Monitoring Indicators

- No information provided

## II.7 Conclusions and Recommended Actions

### Conclusions and Proposed Actions

- "The artefacts excavated and exhibited are only a small part of the heritage, and the buried heritage also needs to be preserved and maintained following the correct conservation methods."

- Local and national cultural government agencies are working together to include an area surrounding the Ban Chiang Archaeological Site into the Master Plan to further conserve and develop the site.

- "Following the Constitution B.E. 2540, the Fine Arts Dept. has prepared a long-term plan to transfer some duties on the preservation of cultural heritage to local administrative agencies which is the Plan on the Conservation and

Development of Arts and Culture phase 9 (2003-2006)." This plan includes: (i) training on arts and culture for the public; (ii) collaboration within the community to benefit the preservation of arts and culture; (iii) local museums initiative; (iv) pilot project on the participatory approach to the conservation and management of cultural property; and (v) community training programme to transfer preservation responsibilities to local communities and agencies.

### \* No State of Conservation Reports