

EDITORIAL: THE 16TH CONGRESS OF THE INDO-PACIFIC PREHISTORY ASSOCIATION

Peter Bellwood and Doreen Bowdery

The 16th Congress of IPPA was co-organised with the Department of Museums and Antiquities (Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism, Malaysia), the Malaysian Archaeologists Association (Ikatan Ahli Arkeologi Malaysia) and the Melaka Museum Corporation. It was held in the Century Mahkota Hotel, Melaka, from 1st to 7th July 1998. Funding to support the attendance of delegates from developing countries was received from the Malaysian Ministry of Culture Arts and Tourism, the Wenner-Gren Foundation, the Asian Cultural Council, the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation, the Japan Foundation (Kuala Lumpur) and Unesco (Asia Pacific Region). The within-Malaysia organisation was headed by IPPA Vice-President Adi Taha, assisted by his many colleagues in the above-mentioned co-organising Malaysian institutions.

Approximately 225 papers were presented at the conference, in 24 separate sessions, running concurrently three at a time in separate lecture rooms. The speakers represented 35 countries.

The major session titles, with their original convenors, were as follows:

1. Current Research in Malaysian Archaeology (Zuraina Majid)
2. Pleistocene Archaeology in East Asia (Susan Keates)
3. The Hoabinhian and its Contemporaries (Adi Taha)
4. Environmental Change and Early Agriculture in Southeast Asia (Charles Higham and Bernard Maloney)
5. Early Farming Cultures of South Asia (Vasant Shinde)
6. Recent Advances in the Archaeology of Southern China (Magnus Fiskesjö)
7. Recent Advances in Taiwan Prehistory (Peter Bellwood)
8. Foragers and Farmers in the Japanese Islands (Mark Hudson)
9. Pottery in Archaeological Contexts: Origins and Distributions, Interpretation and Classification (Brian Vincent)
10. The Emergence of the Early Historic States of SE Asia (Ian Glover)
11. Later Prehistoric Cultures of Island and Mainland Southeast Asia (David Bulbeck)
12. Current Approaches to Sociopolitical Complexity in Asia (Lis Bacus)
13. Ethnoarchaeology in Theory and Practice in the Interpretation of Indo-Pacific Prehistory (Richard Engelhardt and Pamela Rogers)
14. Gender in Asian/Pacific Archaeology (Sarah Nelson)
15. Geoarchaeological Studies of Landscape Change and Human Settlement During the Past 2500 years (Jane Allen)
16. Ceramics and Obsidian in Island Southeast Asia and Oceania (Richard Shutler)
17. Settlement, Oral History and Archaeology in Micronesia (Felicia Beardsley and David Welch)
18. Biological Anthropology in Southeast Asia and Oceania (Kazumichi Katayama and Nancy Tayles)
19. Landscapes and Human Interaction in Oceania (Thegn Ladefoged)
20. Linguistic Correlations with Archaeological Units in the Indo-Pacific Region (Roger Green and Matthew Spriggs)
21. Cultural Resource Management and Historical Archaeology in Southeast Asia (Douglas Comer)
22. Recent Advances in Bornean Archaeology (Ipoi Datan and John Krigbaum)
23. The Biocultural History of the Orang Asli (Dee Baer)
24. Archeological Site Management and Heritage Conservation in the Context of the Rapid Urbanization of Southeast Asia (Richard Engelhardt)

SESSIONS PUBLISHED IN THIS ISSUE

Linguistic Correlations with Archaeological Units in the Indo-Pacific Region

This session, number 20 in the sequence of sessions at Melaka, was originally chaired by Roger Green and Matthew Spriggs and was finally prepared for publication by Roger Green and Ian Lilley. The papers relate to a research area which is perhaps the most central one within the concept of archaeolinguistics, this being the relationship between the archaeological record and the comparative linguistic history of major language families and their component subgroups. In the Indo-Pacific region, this kind of research has had a long and illustrious history, especially with respect to the Austronesian languages of Oceania.

The first author is Roger Green, one very deeply involved in the history of archaeolinguistic research in the Pacific, who extols the value of such research in Remote

Oceania, stressing the value of a network-breaking as opposed to a "clean split" family tree type of model. Matthew Spriggs then discusses the current state of absolute dating within Island Southeast Asian and Oceanic prehistory, with particular respect to the history of the major Austronesian subgroups. Ian Lilley presents an intriguing archaeolinguistic hypothesis to explain the spread of pottery making along the north coast of New Guinea, a hypothesis focusing in part on the ways in which communities choose to interact with their neighbours. The final Austronesian paper in this volume takes us to an area only rarely visited by Southeast Asian and Oceanic specialists, this being the remarkable island of Madagascar. Vérin and Wright discuss the evidence for the first human settlement of Madagascar, the arrival of Indonesians some time in the first millennium AD, and the presumed contemporary arrival of Bantu-speaking peoples from Africa.

Two papers end this session on a more concentrated linguistic note. George van Driem discusses the history of the languages most commonly known as Sino-Tibetan, but here renamed Tibeto-Burman in line with the claim that the Sinitic languages represent rather a late and peripheral separation. The final paper, by Roger Blench, reviews current opinion on the large-scale relationships of the various language families and isolates of the Indo-Pacific region.

BIPPA readers with an interest in archaeolinguistics will no doubt look forward to reading the forthcoming book on the reconstruction of Ancestral Polynesian Culture by Pat Kirch and Roger Green (for details see Green's list of references).

Recent Advances in the Archaeology of Southern China

This session (number 6) was organised and edited by Magnus Fiskesjö and contains eight papers on a region of China which has been emerging in recent decades as a key player in the early history of agriculture and urban society.

Tracey Lu opens the session with a discussion of the earliest Neolithic sites in the Yellow and Yangzi river valleys and raises some important issues about the domestication of rice and foxtail millet. Chen Xingcan then offers a detailed analysis of the archaeological records from five extremely important excavations; Xianrendong, Diaotonghuan, Bashidang, Yuchanyan and Jiahu. Cao Bingwu presents a short note on problems of interpreting the northern Chinese Neolithic. Zhang Chi continues with further discussion of the Xianrendong and Diaotonghuan sequences, and He Jiejun discusses the recently-excavated walled town of Chengtoushan with its Neolithic rice fields belonging to the Daxi culture.

Attention then turns further to the south, with Yang Yaolin discussing the material culture from the Neolithic site of Xiantou Ling near Shenzhen, with Jiang Zhilong who discusses the new research at the bronze Age site of Shizhaishan in Yunnan, and with Bill Meacham who takes

us through some important issues in the later prehistory of Hong Kong. Archaeologists who work in Southeast Asia will be intrigued by some of the material culture illustrated in Yang Yaolin's article, including barkcloth beaters and finely decorated and red-slipped pottery, all evidently being dated in this context to about 4500 BC. We can also wonder who built the Han Dynasty brick tomb at Lei Cheng Uk in Hong Kong and fuel our imagination with scenes of head-hunting around the shores of Lake Dian.

Funding for the Chinese archaeologists to come to Melaka was provided by the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation in Taipei, by the Japan Foundation in Kuala Lumpur and by the Wenner-Gren Foundation in New York. We wish to thank these institutions, also Magnus Fiskesjö who did a sterling job of editing a series of papers, some of which posed considerable editorial difficulties.

Environmental Change and Early Agriculture in Southeast Asia

This session (number 4) was convened by Charles Higham and Bernard Maloney, and edited for publication by Maloney and Doreen Bowdery. The first paper, by Bernard Maloney, discusses analysis of a pollen core from southern Thailand with a variety of signals pertinent to discussions of human impact and environmental change during the Holocene. Dan Penny then presents a palynological analysis from north-eastern Thailand in which evidence for human impact in the form of forest disturbance and burning increases at about 6500 BP. Victor Paz continues with a discussion of his search for evidence for tuber cultivation, especially yams, from charred tuber remains in archaeological deposits in Island Southeast Asia. Doreen Bowdery completes this session with a discussion of phytolith research in locations in Southeast Asia and Papua New Guinea, using a quick scan technique to locate information on the presences of culturally useful plants.

These are all data-in-process papers, as are the two papers chosen to complete this volume. These are by Boyd, McGrath and Higham on the Iron Age "moated sites" of northeastern Thailand, here suggested to have begun their careers as old river channels, and by Michael Dega on the possibly-Neolithic circular earthwork enclosures of the Mekong Basin in Cambodia.

Due to current TNT surface mail postage arrangements it is not possible for IPPA Bulletins to exceed 190 pages; the postage goes through the roof if they do. So the good news is that BIPPA 19 is hot on the trail of BIPPA 18 and should be on its way to members early in 2000.

It remains to thank again all those who were involved in the organisation of the Melaka Congress, plus of course all the funding agencies listed at the beginning of this editorial. It is also necessary to thank the Business Manager's Section of the Faculties Administration at ANU and staff of the National Museum of Malaysia for handling the financial affairs of IPPA and the Melaka Congress.