

ARCHAEOLOGY, CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND THE PACIFIC: A LOOK AT THE EAST COAST OF TAIWAN

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ABSTRACT

The following article is arranged in three sections to let the reader know the present situation on the east coast of Taiwan by briefly examining (1) the Tulan megalithic site as an example of a proposed park plan; (2) the planning of the National Museum of Prehistory, Taitung, and its on-site cultural park, Peinan; and (3) the current state of the cultural centres, museums, and other institutions which are working on new systems of sharing knowledge in the Pacific region. This will introduce some of the current archaeological activities and cultural resource management trends.

This paper brings attention to the current situation on the east coast of Taiwan in terms of archaeology and heritage management, so that readers will be acquainted with developments there as its place in the region of East Asia becomes more important. The decisions being made reflect the need to have a meaningful eco-cultural view which includes prehistory, with a public generally sharing in that understanding. Taiwan is becoming increasingly central in the electronic media and a partner in commercial "cross-border alliance" (Bleeke and Ernst 1991) for the transfer of information for libraries, universities and museums in the Pacific region.

AN EAST COAST VIEW

On the eastern coast of Taiwan, within easy sight of Green Island, the Tulan site stands on an elevated sea terrace under a cliff in the southern coastal mountain range which extends from Hualien to Taitung (Figure 1). The best-known aspect of the Tulan site is an assortment of megalithic structures designated a national monument

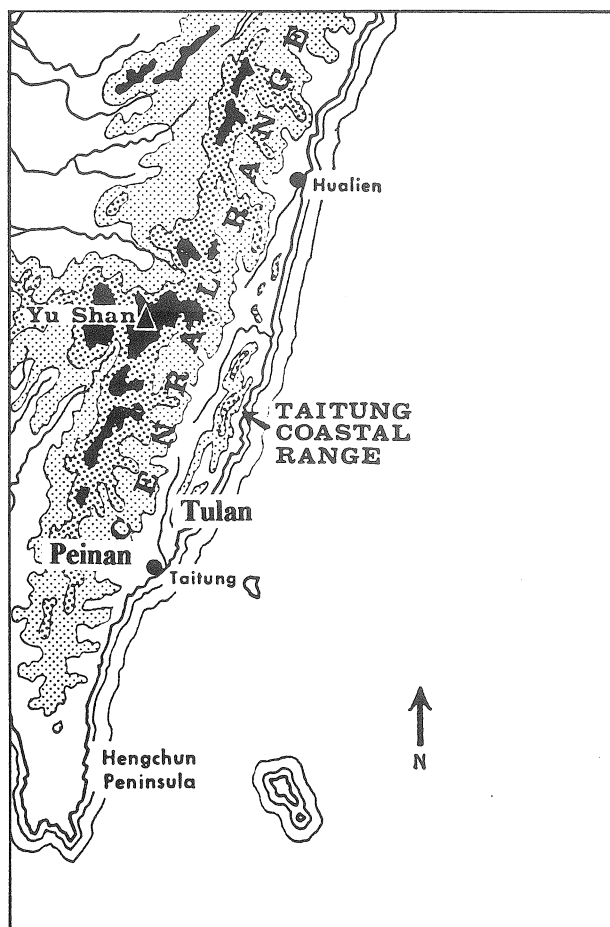


Figure 1: The eastern coast of Taiwan

by the Department of the Interior, ROC. The extent of the site for conservation purposes is still being deter-

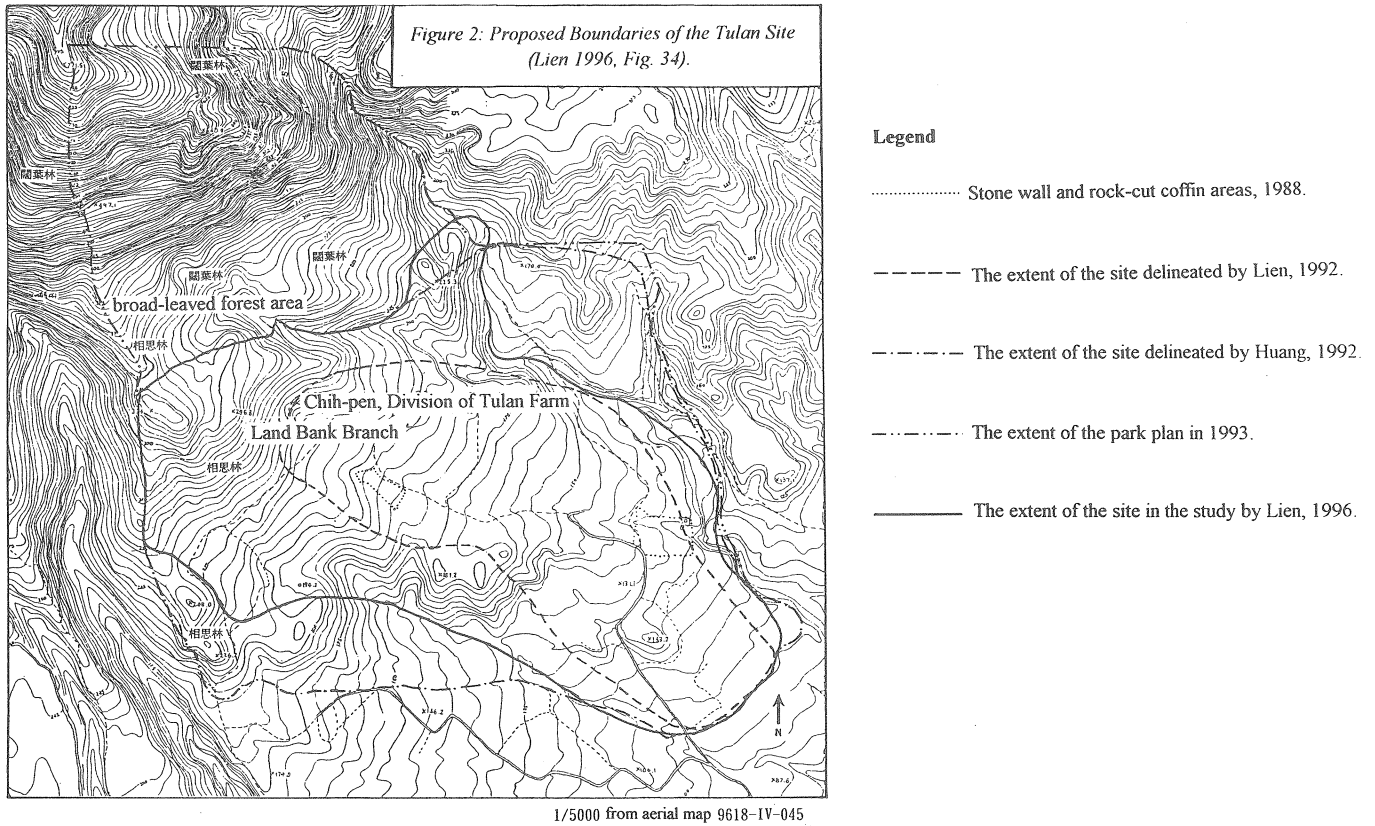


Figure 2: The environs of the Tulan site and its proposed boundaries.

mined (Figure 2). Archaeological materials from this location belong to the Ta-pen-keng, Peinan and Chi-lin cultures (Figure 3), dating mainly from the Neolithic (Lien 1991), and to the Ami/Ching-pu culture (Lui *et al.* 1993) from 2000 BP onwards. The site has been termed megalithic simply because of the sizes of the carved stones (see Sung 1976). Some rock structures measure over two metres in height and more than a metre in width, and include stone walls, rock-cut coffins (Figure 4), slab-graves of slate and rock columns (Kano 1930). Other artifacts include circular rock “wheels”, chipped stone axes, pestles, stone projectile points and pottery.

Recently, the megalithic structures have been fenced in the fields where they stand. They are standing in their original position for the most part, but some have been moved to Taitung and Taipei, or to other places in the Tulan region. Some relocated megaliths were discovered recently in the area of Tulan locally known as Anamo (Lien 1996:57, plates 8-10).

The Tulan site is of particular interest to me because of my participation as a consultant for park planning under the administration of the East Coast National Scenic Area (ECNSA). The East Coast National Scenic Area administration wishes to preserve the cultural remains for the public, based on mutual respect for the region’s current agricultural regime. It also wishes to provide for public education and recreation. Actual development planning will look at land use, resource preservation and coastal environmental impact (Ong *et al.* 1994: 205-283). The park plan envisions the preservation of megaliths, not merely as heritage items, but also as structures which might relate archaeologically to other megalithic structures in Southeast Asia generally (Blundell 1984; Huang 1989) and the Pacific region (Bellwood 1978; Chang 1989).

In terms of a park plan for the site, Professor Huang Shih-chiang of National Taiwan University, Department of Anthropology, has laid out an archaeological site boundary which follows a natural ecosystem boundary

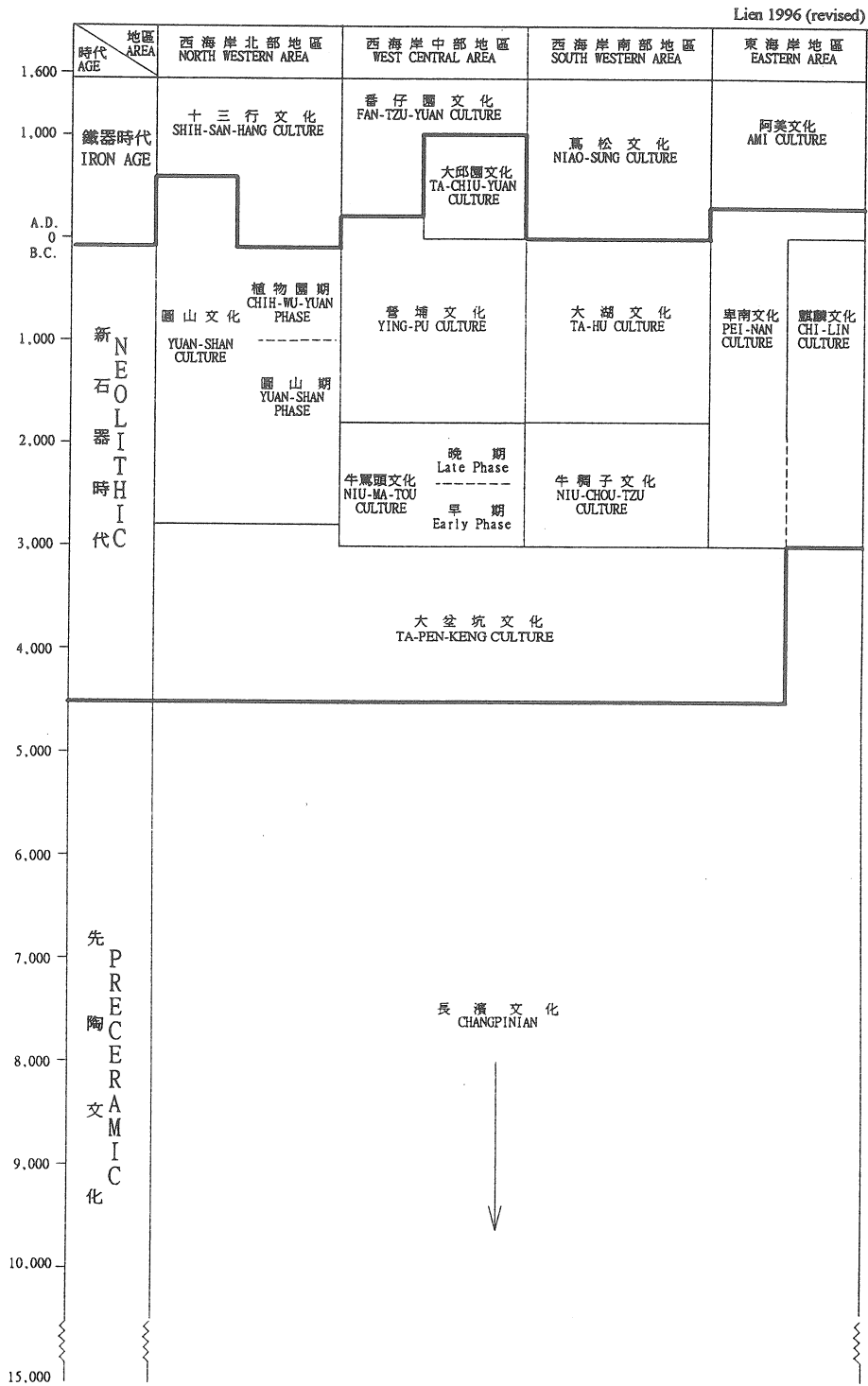


Figure 3: Prehistoric phases and cultures of Taiwan (chart supplied by Lien Chao-mei)



Figure 4: Megalithic monuments at Tulan, drawn by Dai Rai-chuen from photographs by Sung Wen-hsun. Left: rock-cut coffin. Right: stone wall with two protuberances and a lower swelling on one side.

within which the remains lie (Huang 1992). Taiwan archaeologists have brought attention to the importance of the site as part of a natural heritage laboratory (Li 1989; Blundell 1992). The beauty of this wild, green, wind-swept landscape is striking and demands a park; but attention must be given to the artifacts and their relation to the region generally (Pearson 1970, Huang 1989, Lien 1989, Huang *et al.* 1993). This is to keep in line with the requirements demanded by the originators of the park plan in terms of preserving the cultural remains, opening the area to the public and maintaining harmony with the landscape (Cosgrove 1984; Lu 1993). Professor Lien Chao-mei has worked with her associates (1996) to complete an overall report delineating the boundary of the ecological and archaeological area. Yet, such a report and the importance of the site are not enough to make this proposed park plan successful, as there are contending forces based on the interests of commercialisation, local farming and politics which will require recognition at the county, province and national levels.

I have suggested that the park plan should be sensitive to the natural environment and the cultural domain as accomplished at Plitvice National Park in Croatia.

This has been designed with wooden walkways and observation posts according to the contours of the landscape, which includes forested mountains with sixteen blue-green lakes cascading one to the next. In this Croatian park, trails have been laid out and maintained so as not to disturb the natural water eco-system and prehistoric remains. Therefore I wrote a letter, which was included in the Tulan park plan report (see Chung 1993: 194), to state that ecological considerations should be observed in the definition of boundaries and to enhance the aesthetic content of the place (Tuan 1974, Ley 1985). The Tulan site should be delineated as the heart of a wider area encompassing the cliffs of the Coastal Range together with broad-leaved forest and a natural drainage system (Figure 2). Future research should include a look at the possibility of ancient ceremonial orientations of the site. There should be a buffer zone of forest and farmland to protect the park, with a way to keep a traditional mode of life for the local people. The East Coast National Scenic Area of Taiwan already includes such aspects at other visitor centres since there has been emphasis on environmental and culturally sensitive management (Warren 1973, Weisbrod 1982, Harper 1993, Lu 1993).

Other eastern coast prehistoric sites extend from the tableland of Hualien, where there are several prehistoric sites set in the confines of an ECNSA park. Publications, mostly written in Chinese, are appearing with fine graphics to illustrate these sites. The Pa-hsien cave complex is one such place just north of Chang-pin. It represents Palaeolithic culture and is a first-class national monument (Liu *et al.* 1993: 69-84). The Peinan site, also designated as a first class monument, is located in Taitung prefecture. It is associated with the excavated remains of a large Neolithic village which will serve as background for a national museum, to be discussed in the next section.

Basically, human cultures in eastern Taiwan date from at least 15,000 years BP (Figure 3). The Neolithic cultures continue on after 2000 BP to connect with the prehistoric Ami culture and onwards to the ethnological Amis (Li *et al.* 1992) and other peoples of the Austronesian language family. Archaeological sites in this area are under the management of the East Coast National Scenic Area which promotes tourism for cultural awareness (see Huang 1991: 203-220), with such newly created facilities as the Amis Folk Centre at Tuli (Cheng-kung township) between Hualien and Taitung.

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF PREHISTORY

The recent studies of archaeologists have generated some public awareness for the support of archaeological institutions. Although discovery of the Peinan site by Japanese archaeologists took place in 1914, the first excavation here took place only in 1945, from which the results were published in 1957 (Sung 1995). The full extent of this culture was not very well researched until the early 1980s. Then, due to the accidental uncovering of hundreds of graves while leveling the land for railroad sidings, suddenly there was great attention given to the site by the public press. This, in turn, caused a long-term series of excavations by archaeologists of National Taiwan University. These excavations were conducted and documented by Sung Wen-hsun and Lien Chao-mei (1987, 1988; Lien 1991). Based on the importance of this and other Taiwan sites the government has established a national heritage institution for prehistory. A proposition was made to start a national museum system to include the various sites and to sponsor research. A planning bureau for museum development was established within the Ministry of Education, ROC, on February 1st 1989 (Chen 1989). The museum should be completed in the late 1990s or by 2000.

Ralph Appelbaum Associates Inc., New York, and Met Studio, London, were awarded design responsibility

for the interior galleries, with Appelbaum doing the overall master planning. There was a separate competition for the exterior architectural plan, which was won by the architect Michael Graves in 1995. The on-site Peinan park with a visitor centre designed by Kuo Chung-tun of the Laboratory for Environment and Form (LEF), is now under construction on the land adjoining the area of the Peinan excavations from 1980 to 1988.

The national museum and its park will serve as a research centre for prehistory in the Pacific generally, including China and Southeast Asia. The design of the galleries is being planned as "an experience for all museum visitors, regardless of their cultural background, that is more like a conversation than a lecture" (Appelbaum 1995: 254), resulting from "a collaborative process involving the curators, the architects, ourselves, the surrounding community, and the descendants of the cultures whose treasures form the collections" (*ibid.* 258). The displays are in the stage of being researched so that when they are produced in material form, the viewer will be guided through "...a real experience... and to share in a communal activity...[with]...lasting images..." (Met Studio 1992: 1).

The National Museum of Prehistory was conceived for the public to learn about the archaeological record, indigenous cultures and natural history of Taiwan, with the Pacific region and the China mainland. With this region in mind, this institution will give emphasis to research, collections, exhibitions and education. It has been designated to fulfil five major purposes:

- Conservation and research of important archaeological sites and excavated materials.
- Investigation and interpretation of prehistory and current ethnology.
- Promoting public education by having exhibitions and initiating out-reach educational programs.
- Developing research in and assessment of prehistory at the level of international academic exchange.
- Featuring the contextual heritage development of the Taiwan area and developing tourism in eastern Taiwan.

The museum is to be located south of the Kang-le Railway Station in the city of Taitung. The major facilities will include a museum main building, an academic centre and an open-air archaeological theme exhibition area. Exhibition sectors and projects of the museum will fall into two groups. The first will include the arrival of people, nature and culture, archaeology in science, natural history of Taiwan, Austronesian speaking people in Taiwan, prehistory of Taiwan, Peinan culture and the archaeological site at Peinan. The second will include

human behavioural development, Chinese prehistory, other special and temporary exhibitions, and in particular an open-air exhibition of world archaeological sites (Lu 1996a).

Archaeology Park

The rationale for an archaeology park is to interpret the Peinan Neolithic settlement, which dates from about 5000 to 2000 years BP. Along with agrarian activities, the inhabitants hunted and gathered natural resources and were skilled in crafting tools and ornaments of nephrite and slate. They also made pottery (Sung and Lien 1987, 1988; Lien 1991, 1993, 1995). The archaeological findings will be displayed in a visitor centre which will include a Taiwan natural history exhibit area, an archaeological facility, and an exhibition of a reconstruction of the ancient village.

Acquisition and Research

The museum's collections and research will concentrate on prehistory and investigate related academic fields. With the archaeological materials of the Peinan site as a foundation, it will be the task of the museum to strengthen collections and research programs. Interdisciplinary research will be a general orientation. Scientific equipment will be available to support archaeological surveys, excavations, other research and technical skills (*Introduction to the National Museum of Prehistory* 1993).

Of course, this institution is a "dream of the reality" (Hudson 1992: 27) to be attuned with the needs of contemporary society, yet offering a long term view enriched with a voice from the past (Lu 1996b). As pointed out by Li Kuang-chou (1989), Taiwan is a natural archaeological laboratory that requires systematic surveys (Redman 1974; Blundell 1989) utilising the most sophisticated tools available. Such surveys will not only attract students to carry out research under the guidance of senior archaeologists, but will also give the discipline contemporary relevance. This is in line with the worldwide trend of cross-cultural sharing (Gentler 1992) based on electronic communication with digital imagery (Tucker 1993), which will open increased opportunities for heritage development (Matsuzawa 1995).

THE PACIFIC AS MUSEUM NETWORK

Several years ago, after the National Museum of Prehistory research tour to the Peabody Museum, Harvard University and the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History and Anthropology I went to see Professor Lewis Lancaster at UC Berkeley. He introduced me to Curtis Hardyck

of Pacific Neighborhood Consortium, who was working on the capabilities of electronic systems developed to communicate and display items of culture and collections through the Internet. At that time, the National Library in Taipei was a candidate to join the Neighborhood Consortium along with other institutions in Taiwan. The UC Berkeley initiative for digital image collections to serve the Pacific region is an example of a "virtual library", using collections management software to give readily available and relevant information in an understandable format for public access and decision makers (Coupland 1994). The system can be customised to present an audiovisual database of sound, archival film and video, photos and texts for the needs of the receiver (*ibid.*:33).

As the world is becoming a close-knit society, we as scholars should continue to utilise sophisticated communication and storage tools to stay abreast of the society in which we live, and offer the public domain advanced and readable education (Comer 1994). Such facilities should include electronic services for research with aesthetic and sensible capabilities to preserve cultural and natural materials with a sense of humanism. There are different organisations trying to get off the ground in the Indo-Pacific region, such as the Austro-Tai Studies Institute, which aims to create awareness of the world's ecological conditions from the Pacific oceanic experience in prehistory, vis-à-vis other researched regions of the world. The Shung Ye Museum of Formosan Aborigines was opened in 1994 to display Taiwan Austronesian native dress and articles of daily life, with analyses bearing on original context and environmental utilisation. Currently, UC Berkeley is working on projects for Austronesian research with the Shung Ye Museum. There are also local museums such as the Taiwan Folk Art Museum in Peitou, Taipei, and other institutions which interact with the public. The National Traditional Arts Center, including a research institute to open in several years' time, is planned for the estuary plain of I-lan county to the east of Taipei. These institutions could connect as an Internet "virtual museum of the Pacific" (Wasley 1995) in the near future.

UC Berkeley proposes to coordinate a communications system with centres of learning in the Pacific area for the efficient management of information accessible on digital imagery computers, on-line for sharing collections of maps, slides, paintings, photographs, rare manuscripts, museum artifacts, botanical specimens and other visual materials (*Berkeley Image Database Project* 1991, see current web site <http://www.mip.berkeley.edu>). The IBM Digital Library is working on large-scale internet services for museums and libraries with archives from

India to Japan for the comparative studies of societies and cultures (Chiu 1996). The National Digital Library Federation is working on preserving and interchanging intellectual and cultural heritage in such places as China (PRC), Japan, Korea and Singapore.

The ethos we have created in the past 35 to 45 years for sustaining of life includes philosophical concerns for management skills which are efficient, friendly to the environment and humanistic in an evolving technical and commercial system which requires awareness and action for the planet's salvation. As we live on this "vulnerable planet" (Heyerdahl 1975: 12), how do we expect to survive except by understanding what we have done as humanity from prehistory to the present? Since people have always depended on the shores of the world's oceans, it will be those oceans which will continue to provide resources in the future. The goals of the Indo-Pacific region should be looked at carefully in terms of sustaining the environment with its heritage. In a coming Indo-Pacific century, there should be social and political responsibility by individuals and institutions to work on common goals to advance management with a consciousness for prehistory and ethnology.

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