

# BOOK REVIEWS



*Archaeological Heritage in the Tainan Science Park of Taiwan.* Cheng-hwa Tsang and Kuang-ti Li. Translated by David Cohen. Tainan Science Park (TSP) Archaeological Discoveries Series 3. Taidong: National Museum of Prehistory, 2015. 359 pp. NT\$300. ISBN 978-9-86047413-8.

*Reviewed by* Richard PEARSON, *University of British Columbia*

Volume 3 in the Tainan Science Park (TSP) Archaeological Discoveries book series, this visually attractive book summarizes the results of more than ten years of rescue archaeology, beginning in 1996 and directed by Professor Tsang Cheng-hwa at the Tainan Science Park in Southern Taiwan, a complex of over 150 high tech factories employing approximately 60,000 workers. A local branch of the National Museum of Prehistory was included in the plan. At least one excavation team had over 100 workers and over 50 sites covering an area of 1043 ha have been excavated.

The park lies on Holocene sediments deposited in the Tsengwen (Zengwen) River. Many of the sites are covered by around 2 m of alluvium, making their discovery by traditional style surface survey methods very difficult. Entire villages consisting of residential areas, refuse areas, and cemeteries have been uncovered. Whole or reconstructable pottery vessels from graves show vessel shapes and uneroded surfaces rarely found in hillside deposits, such as the Dabengkeng Site. Village areas and house arrangements can be compared, and substantial samples for all kinds of scientific analyses are being processed and published. Color photos, drawings, and maps are featured on almost every page of the readable text, and drawings of ethnographic reconstructions are abundant. The book is aimed at a general audience: although a nine-page bibliography is provided, there are no citations in the text and no measurements of artifacts are included in the text.

The authors present a sequence for the Tainan area of southern Taiwan spanning 5000 years and six cultures, including: Dabengkeng (5000–4200 B.P.), Niuchuozi (4200–3300 B.P.), Dahu (3300–1800 B.P.), Niaosong (1800–500 B.P.), Siraya (500–300 B.P.), and Ming–Qing Han Chinese (300–150 B.P.). Some of these cultures can be divided into phases based on distinctive artifacts. A time period based on stratigraphy and carbon dating is provided for each phase. Briefly, the authors propose that initial Holocene occupation occurred with the Dabengkeng, which evolved locally into the Niuchuozi, not in isolation but with interaction with southeastern coastal China. Judging from changes in pottery, the Dahu culture represents “newly arriving people” (p. 175) to southwestern Taiwan, who mixed with the local population. Trade iron was used in the Niaosong Culture. Ming and Qing trade goods found in sites of the last two cultures show the arrival of Han Chinese traders and settlers and their interactions with lowland aboriginal inhabitants.

Holocene geomorphology is key to understanding Taiwan archaeology, since prehistoric settlements were clustered in basins and estuaries that changed dynamically through eustatic, isostatic, and tectonic change. There was an incursion of the sea in the Tainan area around 6000 B.P.; it continued from 5000 to 3000 B.P. as the coastline moved back and forth between the east and west sides of what is now the TSP. Part of the park consisted of an ancient lagoon and marsh area at the time the earliest site, Nanguanli, was occupied. In the Tainan area and throughout southwest

Taiwan, there was substantial tectonic uplift as well as alluviation. Subsequently there was some dune formation and river flooding.

This project makes a number of extremely important contributions to our knowledge of Taiwan archaeology and provides an overview for the many specialized reports on each site, which are already beginning to appear. (For example, a separate volume in Chinese, *Xian Min Li Ji* [Footprints of our Ancestors] by Tsang Cheng-hwa, Li Kuang-tī, and Chu Cheng-I, published by Tainan County in 2006, covers a smaller number of sites than the present volume, summarizing data from 11 individual sites.) *Archaeological Heritage in the Tainan Science Park of Taiwan* exponentially expands our knowledge of Dabengkeng Culture. It fills in the sequence following the earliest Neolithic cultures. It includes information on the geomorphology of the Tainan Plain. It also provides abundant new insights on the Dahu Culture and the cultures of the last millennium leading up the period of intensive Chinese contact in the eighteenth century. To coordinate complex rescue archaeology in a situation in which time is money, to integrate the investigation of the past into a project centered on technology of the future, and to come up with attractive publications and an on-site museum are enormous feats.

Over the past three decades, Taiwan archaeology has been transformed in terms of the historical narrative and the place of public archaeology in modern life. The Shisanhang Site near Taipei, dating around 1500–1000 B.P., has provided insight into the lives of people in northern Taiwan (Tsang 2001). The Beinan project elucidated early cultures of the southeast coast from about 3500 to 2800 B.P. (Lien 2003). The study of sites on the Penghu Islands, including an important adze quarry on Qimei Island that provided stone material for coastal mainland and southern Taiwan, led to an improved understanding of early migrations to southern Taiwan (Tsang 1992; Tsang and Hung 2001). The finding of ancient trade routes for ornaments and precious materials, including Taiwan jade, linked southeastern Taiwan to Vietnam, the Malay Peninsula, and Island Southeast Asia

from about 2400 to 1500 B.P. (Hung and Chao 2016; Hung et al. 2017). The finding of a Pleistocene archaic *Homo* fossil from the sea bottom of the Taiwan Strait (Chang et al. 2015) and the re-dating of the Tso-chen fossils to 3,000 years ago by Chiu Hung-lin (National Tsing Hua University 2017) are also of great interest!

In summary, this well-illustrated, readable volume is a particularly significant contribution to East Asian archaeology and cultural heritage management. This publication, or its revised successor (said to be in preparation), is useful to a wide audience and should be a treasured addition to any major library collection. While I found the section on the Early Neolithic particularly informative, all parts of the book are groundbreaking.

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*The People Between the Rivers: The Rise and Fall of a Bronze Drum Culture, 200–750 CE.* Catherine Churchman. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016. xvii + 266 pp. Hardcover, US \$85. ISBN 978-1-4422-5860-0.

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*The People Between the Rivers* is a masterful historical account of an important region, its peoples and chieftains, and the various Chinese administrative empires with which they constantly interacted. It provides a focused, interdisciplinary analysis of cultural interactions involving a neglected group of peoples over a large expanse of time, approximately 550 years. The author's main sources are texts, mostly histories and other treatises written during the period under examination, but Churchman also brings broad insights and critical approaches from linguistics, archaeology, and anthropology to bear on the study; the result is nothing short of spectacular. This study provides a crucial missing link in the chain of our understanding of premodern China–Southeast Asia relations. It is one of the finest histories concerning first millennium C.E. East Asia or Southeast Asia that I have seen in years.

Churchman's work on what she calls "the people between the rivers" (i.e., the Red River and Pearl River) concerns groups referred to as the Li and Lao in Chinese language sources of the period. This book adds considerably to a growing body of scholarship on the history of the southern reaches of the East Asian mainland, sometimes referred to as China's southern frontier.<sup>1</sup> *The People Between the Rivers* fills an important lacuna in our understanding of this frontier by

providing a convincing account of the political structures, trade networks, and cross-cultural contacts of peoples in the Two Rivers Region, one that helps explain the eventual formation of Vietic states to the southwest. To date, there has been very little work on these ancient peoples in Western scholarship. Churchman is one of the first Euro-American scholars to take this region as an integral unit that might be discussed on its own as a vital crossroads among peoples of incredible diversity and difference and as a crucial node for understanding basic problems in the history of Chinese empires and frontiers.

Churchman is sophisticated in her use of social science theories and methods and provides a critical reading of her sources. Although this region has been understood to be part of "China" for the last thousand years, Churchman shows that it can be fruitful to view it as the "northernmost extension of a Southeast Asian cultural world" (p. 12), at least during the first millennium C.E. Approaches garnered over recent decades in the study of Southeast Asia can be employed to study this region as well. Churchman also makes use of a wide variety of languages and scribal systems beyond her primary sources in classical Chinese to greatly enrich the account. Secondary sources in Mandarin, Vietnamese (written in Chử Nôm), Japanese,