

A New Perspective on the Historical Archaeology of Taiwan*

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I. Historical Archaeology in Taiwan: A Review

It has been ninety years since the first archaeological work was conducted in Taiwan in 1896 (Kanaseki and Kokubu 1950: 1-8; Sung 1954: 91). Reviewing the archaeological work conducted during this period, we may note that the historical archaeology of Taiwan--archaeological study of early historical settlement, especially early Han Chinese settlement --has been almost totally neglected by archaeologists. To my knowledge, only the following few studies of historical archaeology have so far been reported**: Lin Ch'ao-ch'i (1966) discovered a few historical shell mounds on the P'eng-hu Islands in 1952. Sung Wen-hsün (1965) identified additional historical shell mounds on P'eng-hu in 1965. Huang Shih-ch'iang (1981) conducted a trial digging at an historical site on Chung-t'un Island, P'eng-hu in 1981. Recently, Ch'en Chung-yü (1984) indentified the route of a Ch'ing Dynasty mountain path in the Yü-shan National Park area, while conducting environmental assessment research. Obviously, no well-planned and systematic historical archaeological work has ever been conducted in Taiwan. This unfortunate state of affairs is most likely due to the following reasons:

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** Sung Wen-hsün (1961: 3-4) has mentioned that the teachers and students in the Department of History at the former Taihoku Imperial University, excavated a Spanish fortification on Shih-liao Island, Keelung, and, in addition, that a Japanese archaeologist, Kokubu Naoichi, discovered some architectural ruins of the Dutch settlement at An-p'ing, Tainan, during the period of the Japanese occupation. But, none of this work has been reported on except for this brief mention by Sung.

1. The archaeological tradition in Taiwan

There are currently only two major archaeological institutions in Taiwan. One is the Department of Anthropology (formerly Department of Archaeology and Anthropology) of National Taiwan University. This department was founded on the basis of the former Research Laboratory for Folklore and Anthropology at Imperial Taihoku University during the Japanese occupation. Since the major interest of the Japanese archaeologists was in the external and internal relationships of the prehistoric cultures of Taiwan, a large number of prehistoric materials from various localities in Taiwan was collected by this department (Kanaseki and Kokubu 1950; Ruei 1953: 16-22), setting a tradition of prehistoric study which has naturally persisted to the present day.

The other archaeological institution is the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica. The best known work performed by the Archaeology Division of the Institute is the excavation of the Late Shang capital site at An-yang, Honan Province, carried out over the years 1928-1937. This institute, with her large archaeological collection, moved to Taiwan in 1949. Since then and until recently, the major responsibility of the archaeologists in this institute has been limited to the study of the archaeological materials brought from the mainland.

2. Bias in the "time-range" of historical archaeology

In the past, archaeologists in Taiwan generally believed that Taiwan history was too short to merit archaeological study. This is reflected in a paragraph written by Sung Wen-hsün almost thirty-five years ago:

The persons who study Taiwan archaeology call their work "the study of Taiwan's prehistoric period". This is because the history of Taiwan is so short that the so-called "historical archaeology" cannot be applied to it, and the study of material culture in the historical period of Taiwan can only be put into the sphere of *K'ao-hsien-hsüeh* [study of the present] (1951: 4).

Although nowadays archaeologists in Taiwan no longer adhere to such a viewpoint, historical archaeological resources in Taiwan have not yet received the appreciation that they deserve.

One of the serious consequences of such a situation is that in the eyes of governmental agencies and the general public, Taiwan archaeology is the same as Taiwan prehistory. The effect of this is that archaeologists have played almost no role in the many recent historical preservation projects to which archaeological study could have made major contributions (Tsang 1983: 14).

3. Too few professional archaeologists in Taiwan

As mentioned above, there are only two major archaeological institutions in Taiwan. The number of professional archaeologists qualified to conduct field research has never exceeded ten at any one time. No professional archaeologist has ever served in the Historical Research Commission of Taiwan Province or in the many local commissions for historical research, institutions quite suitable for carrying out historical archaeological study.

These circumstances have left the field of historical archaeology open to amateur archaeology scholars and enthusiasts. In the several major journals for Taiwan's historical study, such as *T'ai-wan wen-hsien*, *T'ai-wan feng-wu*, *T'ai-pei wen-wu*, *T'ai-pei wen-hsien*, and *Shih-chi k'an-k'ao*, can be found quite a number of essays dealing with the material remains of Taiwan's historical period. Though most of these are merely descriptions of relics and antiquities, a few represent significant scholarly research.

To my knowledge, the first archaeology enthusiast who urged the necessity of archaeological study of Taiwan's history is Chu-feng (Chuang Sung-lin). In his essays "Tai-nan chin shih-nien lai k'ao-ku kung-tso kai-yao" [A brief introduction to the archaeological work conducted in Tainan during the past ten years] (Chu-feng 1957, 1958a, 1958b), he

emphasized the importance of the new materials (archaeological data) to the study of Taiwan's history, and reported on the historical artifacts and relics that he and others had found in the Tainan area. He also mentioned in his article that he and several others, including Kokubu Naoichi, had dug up a Ming Dynasty tomb in Tainan in order to record its inner structure (1957: 98).

Another notable effort has been made by Lin Heng-tao, a well-known scholar of Taiwan's history. For many years, he has been engaged in locating and recording extant historical structures and significant sites, including old temples and houses, well-known persons' residences and tombs, city walls, castles, forts, localities at which historical events occurred, and so forth. The results of his work have been appearing mainly in a series of reports entitled "Tai-wan ming-sheng ku-chi tiao-ch'a" [Investigations on scenic and historic spots in Taiwan] in *T'ai-wan wen-hsien*, and in the monographic series entitled *T'ai-wan sheng-chi ts'ai-fang ts'e*, edited and published by the Historical Research Commission of Taiwan Province.

In 1973, a research laboratory for the study of Taiwan's historical relics was established in the Department of History at National Ch'eng-kung University. This is mainly a training program to give students the opportunity to study Taiwan's local history from historical relics (Li M. S. 1973: 4-6). In recent years, the students have located and recorded quite a number of historical artifacts and buildings, and have made many stone rubbings from historical monuments in the Tainan area. Most of their findings have been reported in *Shih-chi k'an-k'ao*.

It is clear from the above review that the historical archaeology of Taiwan is still in its infancy. The little work that has been done by both professional archaeologists and amateur archaeology scholars has mainly been restricted to locating and recording historical sites and relics, and to collecting historical artifacts for the purpose of extending local

historical records, or presenting to the public an interpretation of Taiwan history employing substantiated material remains.

One cannot deny, of course, that such work does contribute to the history of Taiwan. Few historical documents provide information on the material context and content of the daily routines of the people who participated in historical events. However, historical archaeology as a discipline should be capable of farther reaching contributions to Taiwan's history.

II. Potential Contribution of Historical Archaeology to Taiwan Historical Study

What can historical archaeology contribute to Taiwan's history? To answer this question one needs to understand the special features of Taiwan's history.

Although a reliable documented history of Taiwan dates back not more than four hundred years, the island has long been occupied by different ethnic groups, including the aborigines (who had already inhabited Taiwan for generations prior to the historical period), the Dutch (1624-1662), the Spanish (1626-1642), the Chinese (1662-1895) and the Japanese (1895-1945).

The Dutch rule in Taiwan marks the real beginning of Taiwan's historical period. They occupied only the southwestern coastal region and came into direct contact with some of the southwestern plain aborigines. The Dutch were interested in Taiwan mainly as a trading center and, in addition, as a place for missionary work. In order to make a profit from this island colony and to convert the aborigines to Christianity, the Dutch regulated the aborigines' land use, restricted their movement, encouraged the Chinese immigrants to cultivate the land, and established schools to teach the Dutch language and religion. As a result, the number of Chinese immigrants increased very rapidly and the life of

the south western plains aborigines underwent substantial change (Ts'ao 1979 a: 61; wang 1. S. 1980: 35-38).

The Spanish, who arrived in Taiwan in 1626, settled only on the northern coast, building a castle and a fort, respectively, in present day Keelung and Tamsui. During their occupation they did very little to develop northern Taiwan, their only achievement being missionary work. Spanish priests established churches at several aboriginal settlements and converted as many as four thousand people (Fang 1954: 467). In 1642, the Spanish were defeated by Dutch attacks from the south.

In 1662, Cheng Ch'eng-kung (Koxinga) and his troops attacked Taiwan from P'eng-hu, drove out the Dutch, and began the period of Chinese rule. The Cheng family ruled for only 21 years, from 1662 to 1683. Thereafter until 1895, Taiwan was under the rule of the Ch'ing Dynasty.

The most important feature of the period of Ch'ing Dynasty rule was the large number of Chinese immigrants who sailed to Taiwan, establishing settlements which spread very rapidly from the southwest to other parts of the island. By the mid-nineteenth century, Chinese settlements had already appeared everywhere on the island except for the central mountain region (Yang 1954: 86).

This was also a period in which significant changes took place in the nature of Han Chinese communities. The transformation from frontier settlements to colonial societies was reflected in many sociocultural and economic aspects, such as social structure and organization, settlement pattern, land use, religious practice, and so forth (Ch'en C. N. 1984: 335-366).

Another important feature during the period of Ch'ing Dynasty rule was contact and conflict between the Chinese settlers and the aborigines. Following the rapid expansion of the Chinese settlements, most of the aborigines who inhabited the coastal plains and hilly regions became sinicized after long-term contact with the Chinese. However, the mountain

aborigines strongly resisted Chinese intrusions, as seen in their many uprisings during the Ch'ing Dynasty (Wang I. S. 1980: 38-44).

Taiwan was ceded to Japan after the Sino-Japanese War of 1894. Because the Japanese carried out a long-range plan and exercised efficient management, their colonization of Taiwan during a period of fifty years was much more penetrating than that of the Dutch. Hence much more of their cultural influence remained in Taiwan even after the island was returned to the Chinese in 1945 with the defeat of Japan in World War II (Wang S. L. 1980: 330-358).

This brief sketch of Taiwan's history has been presented to bear out the fact that it is by no means too short to merit archaeological study. In fact, in terms of the variety of ethnic influences and the complexity of the colonization process, the history of Taiwan provides excellent research opportunities for archaeologists, especially those who are anthropologically oriented.

It may be noted that one of the most significant features involved in the history of Taiwan pertains to the changes associated with the process of colonization. These changes occurred temporally and spatially in various social, cultural, and economic spheres. For example, cultural change resulted from contacts among different sets of cultures of various natures, changes in settlement patterns, changes in social structure, and so forth. They should be reflected not only in the written records of the immigrants and settlers in Taiwan during the early historical period, but in the material remains they left behind as well. Since each of these sources reflects a separate part of the past reality that generated it and requires exploration by different methodologies (Lewis 1984: 3), a significant contribution which historical archaeology can make to the history of Taiwan would lie in the use of the archaeological evidence to detect these changes, and to test and verify the related statements and hypotheses developed from written records. Take the changes in settlement

patterns as an example. It has been noted by geographers and others that two contrasting types of Chinese rural settlements can nowadays be seen in Taiwan--the dispersed and the nucleated. The former is found in the northern part of the island and the latter in the southern (Ch'en C. S. 1959: 256). Scholars have hypothesized that such factors as defense against the aborigines, water sources, natural landscape, the military camp system designed by Cheng Ch'eng-kung, and land tenure practices may have led to the formation of these two very different types of settlements (see Ch'en C. S. 1959: 257-260; Hsieh 1964: 159-160; Lin H. T. 1971: 39).

However, the validity of this hypothesis has not yet been tested against sufficient evidence. As Knapp has noted, "not only has no comprehensive island-wide study of existing settlement patterns been carried out but there has been only limited examination of the origins and alternations of any one particular pattern." (1980: 55). It is obvious that historical archaeology, which is capable of revealing the expansion of the colonial settlements through time and the concomitant changes in settlement patterns by using evidence derived from both archaeological and documentary records, can provide a valuable independent data base for testing and verifying this hypothesis.

Obviously, in addition to being designed as a source to expand the documentation of local history, historical archaeology in Taiwan can potentially play an even more positive role in the study of Taiwan's history.

III. A Summary of Recent Historical Archaeological Research on the P'eng-hu Islands

From February 1983 to January 1985, I conducted archaeological research on the P'eng-hu Islands which was financed by funds from the National Science Council of the Republic of China. The major goal of

this research was to gain an understanding of the processes involved in the colonization of the P'eng-hu Islands during the prehistoric and early historical periods. Although limitations of time and funding allowed only a small portion of this work to be completed, it is my hope that it may serve as the beginning of systematic historical archaeological study in Taiwan.

P'eng-hu lies in the midst of the Taiwan Straits and consists of 64 islands and islets with a total area of about 127 square kms. Although some natural environmental constraints, such as strong wind, sparse rainfall, and barren land, make agriculture in the archipelago almost impossible, P'eng-hu has long been known as a militarily strategic point and as stepping stones for the colonization of Taiwan by the Chinese from the southeastern coast of the Chinese mainland.

The earliest known written document in which Chinese settlers in P'eng-hu were mentioned is in *Kung K'uei Chi*, written and edited by Lo Yao of the Southern Sung period (Ch'en C. S. 1955: 1, Ts'ao 1979: 91). It was reported in this record that a group of people referred to as the P'i-sheh-yeh attacked Chinese settlers in P'eng-hu in 1171, confiscated all their crops, and captured settlers to use as guides for plundering the coast of Ch'üan-chou in Fukien. Although this document consists of only a few sentences, it is recognized as the earliest reliable documentary evidence showing that the Chinese may have already settled in P'eng-hu by the Southern Sung period.

Archaeological evidence pertaining to the colonization of P'eng-hu consists of only a few historical sites found by Sung and Lin, as mentioned earlier in this paper, but none of them has yet been carefully studied and reported.

Relying primarily on documentary evidence, Ts'ao Yung-ho, a well-known expert in the early history of Taiwan, has made the following statement about the earliest phase of the Chinese colonization of P'eng-

hu: "some Southern Fukienese fishermen were lured by the abundance of fish around the islands, started to take advantage of the P'eng-hu Islands as a temporary fishing base during the Northern Sung period (A. D. 960-1126), and eventually settled there no later than the Southern Sung period (1127-1279) while they gradually acquainted themselves with the environments of this archipelago" (Ts'ao 1979: 107).

In order to test this statement and to provide more substantive evidence for understanding the process of the earliest phase of the Chinese colonization of P'eng-hu, my archaeological research in P'eng-hu involved both survey and excavation. My hope was to gather at least three types of information, including site form information (location, size, and thickness of cultural deposit), site content information (artifact, structural feature, and ecofact), and chronological information (radiocarbon dating materials, other dateable objects, and stratigraphical evidence), which could be used to test the presence of, and the evolution of, the two types of early historical settlements--temporary fishing camps and permanent settlements as hypothesized by Ts'ao.

Upon the completion of my field work, 32 islands and islets had been surveyed and 39 localities associated with early historical cultural remains were found. Among these localities, 19 have been primarily identified, on the basis of ceramic styles, Chinese coins, and a series of radiocarbon-14 datings, as settlement sites dating from around the time of the Sung Dynasty (10th-13th century). All of these sites were situated near the shoreline and contained shell midden deposits which varied in size and thickness. Some were small and thin with only a few sherds of Chinese pottery and porcelains; others were large and thick with an abundance of cultural remains, such as ceramic sherds, bricks and tiles, clay net sinkers, fragments of iron artifacts, coins, and so forth.

In attempting to further explore the nature of these early historical sites and to gain more accurate chronological information, I conducted test

diggings at the sites of Shui-an A on Wang-an Island and Nei-an C on Yu-weng Island, as well as a larger scale excavation at the site of Shih-pan-t'ou-shan A on Pai-sha Island.

Test diggings at Sui-an A and Nei-an C showed that both of these sites had been disturbed to some extent. The Sui-an A site was small (about 400 square meters) with only one thin layer of shell midden deposit. A radiocarbon-14 dating of 1095 ± 115 years B. P. (A. D. 885 ± 120 , dendrochronologically calibrated) has been obtained from the lowest level of this site. The Nei-an C site included what appear to be two or three intermittent layers of midden deposits. A sample of shells gathered from the lowest layer of shell midden here has been radiocarbon dated to 1165 ± 90 years B. P. (A. D. 810 ± 96 , dendrochronologically calibrated).

The most valuable information came from the excavation at the Shih-pan-t'ou-shan A site. In addition to two prehistoric cultural layers, this site included two historical cultural layers. The lower layer of deposit was thinner (about 5 to 10 cm) and yielded only a few sherds of Chinese ceramic bowls and jars, and clay net sinkers. A dendrochronologically calibrated radiocarbon-14 date associated with this layer was 1050 ± 87 years B. P. (A. D. 900 ± 87). Separated from the lower layer by a thin layer of sterile brownish soil, the deposits of the thicker upper layer (15-30 cm) yielded a large number of sherds of Chinese pottery and porcelain household utensils, fragments of iron artifacts, tiles and bricks, clay net sinkers, Chinese coins, and so forth. A rock-paved house floor was unearthed from this layer as well. A charcoal sample gathered near the floor has been radiocarbon-14 dated to 715 ± 120 years B. P. (A. D. 1240 ± 120 , dendrochronologically calibrated). Judging from the contents and artifact patterns in these two historical cultural layers, I would suggest that they most likely represent the remains of two different types of settlement--temporary and permanent.

On the basis of the evidence from the Shih-pan-t'ou-shan A site and

from other historical sites found in P'eng-hu, I conclude that the Chinese from the southeastern coast of the mainland may have started to visit and use P'eng-hu occasionally as a fishing base around the ninth or tenth century, but that they may not have settled and colonized the islands until two or three centuries later. This conclusion is in basic agreement with Ts'ao Yung-ho's assertion, although it pushes back the date of the first Chinese visit to P'eng-hu to a slightly earlier time.

IV. Concluding Remarks

In summarizing the above discussion of historical archaeology in Taiwan, one point is clear: the emphasis on prehistoric archaeological research and a concurrent mistreatment of historical archaeological resources have seriously retarded the development of historical archaeology in Taiwan. In fact, in terms of the special features of Taiwan's history, Taiwan is a laboratory not only for prehistoric archaeology, as pointed out by some scholars (Chang 1969: 10; Li K. C. 1984: 141), but for historical archaeology as well. The present historical archaeological study in P'eng-hu helps demonstrate the developmental potential of this discipline in Taiwan. It is my hope that there will be a growing interest in this discipline and an increasing realization of its potential.

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臺灣歷史考古學的一個新展望

(摘要)

臧振華

在臺灣考古學以往的研究中，主要都偏重於史前時代而忽略了歷史時代，以致使臺灣歷史考古學的發展受到了嚴重的阻滯。

其實，從臺灣史的特質來看，臺灣不只是史前考古學，而且也是歷史考古學的良好實驗室。因為，臺灣的歷史，基本上是包括了不同文化族羣的拓殖史，以及伴隨這些拓殖過程所產生的社會文化的變遷史。這些拓殖的過程和社會文化的變遷，除了可能在歷史文獻中找到一些記載，也可能由當時的物質遺存中反映出來。對於這兩種性質截然不同的史料，自然須要以不同的方法來加以研究。

基於此一觀點，臺灣的歷史時代，決不因爲其時間的晚近而不需要考古學的研究。相反的，臺灣的歷史考古學——以物質遺存爲主要證據，並結合文獻的資料，去研究臺灣歷史時代，特別是早期漢人的聚落——不僅可以補充文獻記載的不足，而且也可以提供獨立而客觀的史料基礎去驗證一些得自文字史料的假說或推論。

