JAR BURIALS TRADITION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

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A. Early period

A.I. Southeast Asian Islands :

This period was defined under various terms such as Early Neolithic phase and Late Neolithic phase (Bellwood); Late Neolithic-Jar burial phase (Fox) or Stone tool-jar burial (Solheim II); Agricultural Stage (for Indonesia) (Soejono)...

There were uncovered a number of sites from this period, which located in Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia (Spriggs 1989: Fig.1). Here we can mentioned some of them.

Cave Arku in Northern Luzon (Philippines): It is located in a tributary of the Cagayan Valley, this site produced a burial assemblage dated to between 1500 BC and 0. The artefacts included stone, shell implements and ornaments and pottery. The burials were apparently primary or secondary, and sometimes dusted with orche or placed in jars. One jar burial has been radiocarbon dated to about 500 BC. According to Bellwood (1985) it is clear that this assemblage continued on to overlap with a major Indo-Malaysian jar-burial tradition.

Manunggul Cave-Chamber A assemblage in Palawan (Philippines):

There was yielded a highly sophisticated assemblage of earthenware burial jars, including the now famous Manunggul Jar, dated by associated charcoal (at the University of California at Los Angeles) to 710 B.C and 890 B.C (R.Fox 1979:233).

The earlier jar burials provided a range of grave goods, including jade beads and bracelets and three agate beads, but no objects of metal, glass or carnelian. The pottery vessels display a remarcable expertise including arguably the most impressive example from Southeast Asia, a vessel 66.5cm in height, topped by a soul boat transporting away the dead . In addition to this jar -burial assemblage it was uncovered a red-slipped bowl with ring stand (Solheim II 1966: Pl.Ia). Associated with it were a small stepped daze, a scoop made from the *Melo* shell, small green-stone beads, and a few beads made of the common *Nassarius* shell.

It is seems that Chamber A assemblage provided the evidences for the beginnings of the jar burial tradition at the beginning of the

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first millennium B.C. on the basis of two radiocarbon dates mentioned above. This assemblage contained no metal. The pottery is fine and includes both cord-marking and carved paddle impressions as a significant element of surface treatment. According to Fox, cord and paddle impressed surface treatment was widespread in the extreme southern Philippines but absent or rare in central and northern Philippines.

Bellwood has indicated that in this assemblage there is at least one pottery coffin, and some vessels have red-painted curvilinear designs enclosed by incised lines-a technique well represented in the Early Metal sites in Sabah, and also in the Sa Huynh culture in southern Vietnam. Therefore he feels that the absence of metal is not reliable indicator of a Neolithic date. Like all jar burial caves this one also distributed and the jars smashed, and the carbon dates need not necessarily date the jar burial event (Bellwood 1985:311). However, it is noting that, here is a dated Metal Age assemblage from the adjacent Chamber B of Mannungul. The artefact assemblages of two Chambers, with metal and glass only in B, do support that the Chamber A burial jar assemblage is older. The decorated pottery was therefore sometime between 3000 and 2100 BP (M. Spriggs 1989:606-607).

Burial in large earthen ware jars, either primary or secondary or both, are a diagnostic feature of the terminal phase of the Late Neolithic in the Philippines. These are generally found in limestone caves near the coast; caves the mouths of which overlook the sea. Neolithic jar burials, however, have been found in interior open sites of ***central Luzon***, in ***Nueva Eciji*** province (R.Fox 1979:234-235). The same kind of sites (stone tool-jar burials by Solheim) is also recognized in ***Bato, Sorsogon, Mataas, Misibis, Marinduque***... (W.SolheimII 1980: 3-9).

West Mouth at Niah in Sarawak (Malaysia):

During the Neolithic, an inner portion of the cave was used for burial purposes. There were uncovered about 130 burials, both cremations and burnt secondary burials have been asserted in addition to the other funeral rites.

According to Bellwood (1985:257) there were recognized three main periods of funeral practices at Niah:

1. Preceramic extended burials in coffins or bambo caskets, and continuing flexed burials (4000-2000 BC).

2. 2000 BC (or later ?) extending to an uncertain point, perhaps late in the first millennium BC, characterised by continuing extended burials, newly appearing cremations, jar burials, and pottery (including the double-spouted form).

3. Comes the Early Metal phase, which probably postdates AD 1 at Niah, associated with the same continuing burial forms, copper, and perhaps textiles.

The collagen dates for these burials range between about 2100 and 700 BC. Two burial jars dated to about 1500 BC (burial 69, and from burnt wood with burial 159) and another

burial jar dated to about 750BC (burial 67) (Bellwood 1985: 256-257; Fig 8.7). But as Spriggs (1989) has shown, the chronological framework there is unaccetable. All radiocarbon dates are only referenced to absolute depth, radiocarbon ages for the site were rarely properly reported. For instance the date 4070+/-70BP for a level supposedly sealing in the Neolithic deposits at Niah Cave first reported by Harrisson in 1959 and quoted by every commentator on the site since that time. There is in fact no such date from Niah (M.Spriggs 1989:603). The other problem is the mixing-up of the depths and places of the taking samples (M.Spriggs 1989: 603).

Glover (1979 :177-178) has shown that it is difficult to discover from the many preliminary publications on the Niah Cave excavations exactly when pottery first appears in the archaeological sequence there, and its subsequent development. For instance, on one hand Golson concluded that the earliest pottery, at the 24 in. level, might appear as long as 8.000 years ago. On the other hand, it is clear from Barbara Harrisson's analysis that the earliest of the 'neolithic' burials in the cemetery area, which includes most of the pottery, must be dated to 500 B.C or after; and at least two of these burials contain bronze or copper tools. In addition to pottery data here I want to emphasize this among the potery assemblage two distinctive types (both form and decoration) were recognized. These included double-spouted vessel and thre-colour ware vessel. It is said that the potshards of double-spouted vessels were found with jar burials (Bellwood 1985: 257; fig 8.5;8.6).

The most that can be inferred from the early excavations is that there was probably a Neolithic cenetery there incorporating jar burial, a tradiion which became widespread during the Bronze Age, and which might date back into the econd millennium BC (Higham 1996: 301).

A.II. Early period-Central and South Vietnam:

It includs over 20 sites, which were ranged from about 3500 BP to 2700/2600 BP at the same spa of time as the Chamber A of Mannungul Cave-Palawan and Neolithic Cemetery at Niah Cave-Sarawak. These were occupation-sits or occupation-burial sites.

Metal and glass artifacts have not yet been found. The urn burials (except the infant pot-burial) were of various kinds of jar or pot with the lids in form of the other pot or pedestal vessel, in some cases, there were uncovered the spherical lids covered the egg-shaped jars. Some jar burials contained nothing, but in the others there were provided the grave goods, which include the stone implements, ornaments and pottery vessels. The occupation sites are located on the sand dune or slow mound or hill nearby the water sources, the jar burials always have been found within the settlements. There were found the occupation-burial site from this period on the Island Cu Lao Cham, Quang Nam province and Island Ly Son, Quang Ngai province.

While comparing two assemblages of Central Vietnam and Southeast Islands we can see very clearly that their common traits were the funeral rites, espesially the using pottery vessel as the coffins, some similar ways of pottery surface treatment and it is possible that stone implements also shared some similarities. But between them there were not single difference, particularly in the pottery forms and stone tools and ornaments. Infact, there are not much oppotunities to observe the data from Southeast Islands jar-burials sites, but these ones we could see of the publications led us to the opinions that in two areas there were established and developed the distinct cultural traditions with own characteristics in each and their similarties might be the results of exchanges and multiform relationships than the people's movements.

Here we want to give supplementary materials gathered from the hight plateau in Southern part of Vietnam-the *"Tay Nguyen area"*. In this area there were recognized 48 sites, which belong to the Late Neolithic-Early Metal Age. According to researchrs from Hanoi Institute of Archaeology, these site could be devided into two sub-phases. The earlier is characterized by the presence of shouldered and quadrangular axes and adzes with small or average measures, cord-marked, incised coarse pottery. In some cases we can see and aplique or punctuated decoration. The stone hoes rarely occurred and all of them are small. The jar burials also have been uncovered. The coffin vessels are globular pots, the jars are joined mouth to mouth and placed vertically in the ground. The latter one, beside these features, there were yielded the large stone hoes, big jar burials, moulds for bronze casting. We wish to emphasize that High Plateau in Southern part of Vietnam is the homeland of number of minor ethnic groups which belong both to Austroasiatic and Austronesian language families. The using of jar as a burial coffin is common phenomenon in this period for the large area which extended from mountain to coastal regions in Central and part of Southern Vietnam.

B. Late period:

B.I.. Southeast Asian Islands:

This period also was termed differently among the archaeolgists such as Early Metal

Phase (Bellwood); Early Metal Age and Developed Metal Age (Fox), Craftsmahship Stage (for Indonesia) (Soejono)...

Sites of this period are far more numerous than the earlier Neolithic sites. It is worthy to note that jar burial is only one of several funeral structures or containers, which were recognized on the Islands belonging to the last millennium B.C

Indonesia:

Urn burials are knonw at Anyar in west Java; Ngrambe in east Java; Tebingtinggi in south Sumatra; Niah in Sarawak (now Eastern Malaya); Gilimanuk and Cekik in west Bali; Sa'bang in central Sulawesi; Salayar Island; and Melolo in Sumba; Plawangan in north-central Java...The distribution is already quite wide but urn-fields are confined to coastal districts (Glover 1979:180). The practice of jar burial was predominant mainly in the more easterly parts of Indonesia, but in many of the southern Indonesian sites the jar burials occur toghether with extended burials, as noted in section VI B for the sites of Plawangan in Java (Bellwood 1985:304) and Gilimanuk in Bali (P. Soejono 1979:186-198).

Philippines:

Jar burials are uncovered at Kalanay, Makabog, Batungan in Masbate; San Narciso in Tayabas, Manunggul Cave (Chamber B), west-central coast of Palawan; Maitum in Mindanao...

Bellwood argue that the jar burial tradition is seen at its most elaborate in the islands around the Celebes and Sulu Seas (Northern Borneo, Talaud, Central and Southern Philippines), and here it involved the placing of previously-exposed secondary burials in large jars or bone-boxes provided with lids. The jars were placed either on the floors or fairly remote caves or in pits dud into open sites.

The sites around the Celebes and Sulu Seas-the Tabon Caves, the "Kalanay" sites, and the sites of eastern Sabah and Talaud-do share very closely related pottery assemblages with iron and copper/bronze during the first milllennium AD. Jar burial is the predominant rite in this region, and another common characterisics is small pottery bone box (Bellwood 1985:314).

Manungul Cave site- Chamber B (Palawan):

Jar burial sites have been excavated in the Early Metal Age in Philippines which include in the assemblage of artefacts both socketed bronze adzes, small trapezoidal or quadranglar stone adzes and possibly iron. Charcoal from Manunggul Cave (Chamber B), associated with thirty fragments of iron objects, yielded a C 14 determination of 2140+/-100 B.P or 190 B.C. However Fox gave the 500 B.C date for the early metals-bronze and copper-found in the Palawan caves (Fox1979:238).

This assemblage produced iron, glass bracelets, glass and carnelian beads, and also five acid-etched agate beads similar to those from Buidane. Copper or bronze items occur in other jar burial caves in the area, and include

socketed axes and spearheads, a tanged and barbed arrowhead, and a possible barbed harpoon. Axe casting moulds, gold beads, and jade lingling-o earrings have also been found. After analysis Bellwood has suggested that the Tabon (i.e. Manungul) jar burial sequence will resemble the sequence from the Sabah sites and belong mainly in the first millennium AD (Bellwood 1985: 312).

Most of jar burials sites in Eastern Malaysia, Eastern Indonesia, Talau Islands, Sabah, Central and Southern Philippines, Southern Indonesia and Sulawesi such as Leang Buidane, Agop Atas, Pususamang, Bukit Tengkorak, Magsuhot, Melolo...were dated mainly in the first millennium A.D. (Bellwood 1985: 301-316).

Maitum, Saranggani Province in Mindanao:

In 1991, anthropomorphic secondary burial jars were discovered in Ayub Cave, Pinol, Maitum. The site had been dated to 830+/-60 B.P. (calibrated date of A.D.70 to 370) and 1920+/-50 B.P. (cal.date of 5 B.C. to A.D.225). The radiocarbon dates were obtained from the soot samples taken from the small earthenware vessel found inside one of the anthropomorphic burial jar. These burial jars are made of earthenware designed and formed like human figures with complete facial characteristics . These were associated with metal implements; glass beads and bracelets; shell spoon, scoop, bracelets and pendants; earthenware potteries with incised designs and cut-out foot-rings; nonanthropomorphic burial jars (Archaeology).

Gilimanuk, north-western Bali:

Excavations at Gilimanuk in 1963, 1964 and more recently in 1973, produced evidence of coastal settlement during late prehistoric times (R.P.Soejono 1979:185). Selective excavation carried out in 1963 on three sectorsproduced encouraging results. Beside remnants of pottery and shell a number of burials, among them a double urn burial, were recovered almost intact. Jar burial is one of the four main systems recognized at the site. Urn burials (fouth system) occurred only twice at the Gilimanuk site, but are unique because of the use of double jars as a funeral medium. According to Soejono (1979:195-196), thecustom of using double jars did not exist anywhere in Indonesia, except at Gilimanuk. The double jar burials at Gilimanuk were described as follow:

The jars are joined mouth to mouth and placed vertically in the ground. The lower jar, which is bigger than one on top, contained a secondary burial of a single pearson. Skeletons in the jars of Gilimanuk were not furnished with gifts. Very interesting was the discovery of evident human sacrifice in connection with jar burial here. A skeleton in prostrate position was found below a double jar. The skull squeezed backwards, the elbows pulled towards the back, and the legs folded backwards, seemed to indicate intentional killing. The placing of skeletons in jars seems to have been carried out in a few cases of deceased persons of prominent status. The sacrificed person was presumably intended to

accompany the eminent deceased on his journey to the hereafter (Soejono 1979:196-197).

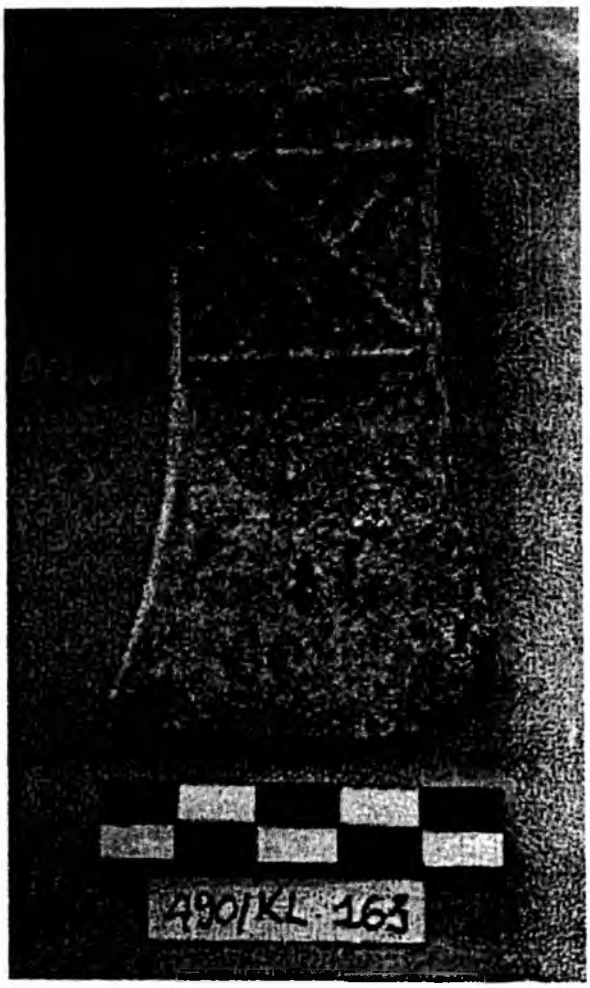
Except these, among the potshards, uncovered at the site there were sherds of more than usual thickness and recognized as the fragments of jars. Several broken specimens of this kind of pottery contained disintegrated human skeletons. This indicates that jars had a supplementary function as burial jars (Soejono1979: 192).

The assemblages of grave goods of burials from Gilimanuk have shown the pottery apparently like that from Buni. Other grave-goods include socketed bronze axes of a localised heart-shaped form, a tanged iron spearhead, an iron dagger with a bronze handle (like Mainland Southeast Asia bimetallic forms from Ban Chiang, Shizhaishan, Go Ma Voi, Dong Son, Cuong Ha), beads og gold, glass and carnelian, and a range of other items of which gold eye covers like those of the Buni complex are the most striking. No stone tools were found with the burials, and as a whole the assemblage may belong to the early or mil-first millennium AD (Bellwood 1985:301).

B.I. Central and Southern Vietnam:

It includes over 70 sites, which were ranged from about 2600 BP to I AD. Almost are jar burial sites, located on the san dune or slow hill and mound along the coastal and river or the old flow or river. There were also uncovered the jar burials on the islands.

The iron and bronze artifacts were common among the grave goods. There were revealed the evidences of local iron and glass making. A great number of bronze implements, shown the closed relationships with Dong Son culture to the North. In the final stage (I, II. BC



to I. AD), the Han China influences were strong, these might be came by the political way, at this juncture, northern and central parts of Central Vietnam were Han District "*Nhat Nam*".

Since 1975 a further 1000 burials of the Sa Huynh culture, dating from the period of 600 BC-100 AD have been recorded and excavated. New regions with numerous sites that can be recognised as local groups or settlement cores have become known through this research. The areas in Can Gio district, Southeast of Sai Gon and Hoi An (Lam Thi My Dzung 1998) and in

Que Loc and Duy Xuyen districts in Quang Nam province (Reinecke, Nguyen Chieu and Lam Thi My Dzung 2002), are of particular importantce.

Beside the jar burials (which was certainly the most popular funeral rite in Sa Huynh culture) there were recognized and extended burials in several cemeteries, for instance in Hau Xa I, Binh Chau, Go Ma Voi , Bau Tram-Trang Dong Du...This practice also is familiar with some burials sites on islands.

There was and practice of using two jars

as the outer and inner cofins . At Go Dua site (Duy Xuyen district, Quang Nam province) we have uncovered a group of five burials of this kind. In the other sites the double jar coffins also have been provided but as a single occasion

The using of resin to join the cover-rim and jar-mouth was abundant. In the case of extended burial at Go Ma Voi site, the grave goods were laid on the resin platform. The primilary analyses of resin from Hau Xa II cemetery have shown that the residue are similar in composition to modern Dipterocarp resin. The similar results also have provided of the samples from Spirit Cave and Noen U- loke (Thailand).

It is difficult to compare the jar burials from Southeast Asian Island and those from Central and Southern Vietnam due to chronologial order. Those from Islands mostly belong to first millennium AD, while the Sa Huynh culture jar burials were dated from 600 BC to I AD. We have not uncovered yet the jar burials which belong to period after II AD. The similarities in pottery and ornaments in two assemblages were subjects of much studies of Solheim, Bellwood, Higham... The reasons of their similary also were explained by the movements of people or exchange network... We want only to psesent as detailed as possible the data from two regions two show that each of them evolved differently. Every region had it's own features, while sharing several common characteristics.

On the other hand, it is worthy to indicated that the jar burials were the funeral phenomenon which appeared in some hudge areas in Europe and Asia at the aproximately same period over 3000 BP (H.Fokkens

1997:360). The genesis of this phenonmenon in Europe was related to migration (Child 1958: 178); social change or economic processes or crices. Fokkens (1997) has seen the changes in burial rites, settlement structure and hoarding practices in the Lower Rhine Basin as the results of a transformation of ideology, consistent with the dissolution of a society into smaller, more autonomous social units through the expansion of the exchange network (ibit. 360).

C. East Asia:

In the Far East, jar burials were already known in China's Yangshao Culture and in Japan during the middle-late Jomon period, but, in both cases, this funerary custom seems to be practiced not on a large scale but limited to the inhumation of children in jars of ordinary use (Riotto 1995:40). However, in the Korea of the Iron Age-Proto Three Kingdoms periods and in Japan during the Yayoi period, jar burials become so frequently used . In both countries, jar burials were distributed in limited areas. In Korea, jar burials in combination with shell mounds have been presented the one of two traditions, which were recognized in Iron Age. This traditions was characterized for southern coastal area and cultural artifacts and customs may have been traveled along the coastal route (Choi Sung-rak 1996: 35). Riotto (1995) recognized that jar burials are found in Korea in a quite precise geographical context which was probably a territory inhabited by a particular group, whose culture differed from other groups. His opinion is, the use of jar burials is to be seen as the expression of a "*category*" of people united by and identity of though, beliefs, dayly activities and ethnicity (ibit. 41). This opinion is also valid in the case of Southeast Asian Islands and Central Vietnam jar-burials tradition.

Though the conventional view is that the the dispersal of jar burilas was the major contribution of Austronesian speaking people movements (Bellwood 1985, Higham 1996,2001...) we have to indicate that these peoples were habitated Central Vietnam in the period as early as in Southeast Asian Islands. The proposal date is about 3500 BP. These groups of Austronesian peoples together with the local peoples who were distributed in Central Vietnam from Neolithic time have created the new cultures , which partly were defined as Pre-Sa Huynhian. The Sa Huynh culture from 600 BC was a result of a combination of a native culture and the new technology from the outside. There are many features and remains, the origin of which can be found locally from the internal pre- Sa Huynhian development. For example, there are jar-coffin burials as well as cord marked, incised and painted pottery existing in the Pre-Sa Huynh cultures. Some of decorative items are provided from their prototypes from earlier period. While accepting the role of people's movements at certain level, We believe that most of the people who were responsible for Sa Huynh culture also had lived the from the Pre-Sa Huynhian period. Of course we can not ignore the impacts of the mutual and multitude exchanges between Sa Huynh and Southeast Asian Islands, Northern Vietnam-Dong Son

culture, Southern Vietnam-Dong Nai culture, Chinese Han (later period), India (final period), Southeast mainland (Thailand and Laos)...

The jar burials in Sa Huynh culture were originated in pre-Sa Huynhian jar burials. Between them we can see a lot of common features in funeral rites, pottery forms and decorations... But for the establishment of Sa Huynh culture characteristics there were certainly the impacts of external factors. Despite the numerous newly discovered burial finds, a lot of unanswered questions still remain. However, the jigsaw puzzle of the Sa Huynh culture has undoubtedly been enriched by many exciting new aspects.

According to us the internal cultural evolution in Coastal Central Vietnam might be developed in some stages as follow:

Pre-Sahuynhian jar burials stage (stone tools, pottery). The jar coffins varied from spherical body to egg-shaped bogy. 3500 BP-600 BC.

Extented burials associated with bronze artefacts. The strong acculturations with Dong Son culture. 600 -500 BC (?).

Sa Huynh jar burials stage (iron tools, glass). 400 BC- 1 AD.

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