

Typological Investigation of Neolithic Evidences from Halin

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Abstract

Halin is located within Wetlet Township, Shwebo district, Sagaing region and it is situated within Mu river valley. Mu River is a main river in Upper Myanmar and Mu river valley is valuable for habitation of human races. The resources that are important for living of people, the water and salt, might attract the ancient people to settle at this valley. The remains of ancient people had been found near Halingyi village and they included the remains from Stone Age, Bronze Age, Iron age and then the protohistoric and historical remains. These remains had been excavated and studied by the scholars from the Colony period to the present time. From these excavated remains and surface findings, the stone tools had been mainly discussed by using typological investigation method in this paper.

Key words: Stone Age, Bronze Age, Iron age, river valley, Colony period.

Introduction

Neolithic sites and artifacts have been discovered all over the country, from Shan state to the east to Thantwe to the west and from Myitkyina to the north to Myeik to the south. Among them, most of the archaeological sites have been found in Upper Myanmar. In Upper Myanmar, they could be divided into the main groups according to their location of river valleys. There are five river valleys in Upper Myanmar: Ayeyarwady, Chindwin, Samon, Myintnge, and Mu river valleys. In Ayeyarwady river valley, there were found Letpanchebaw neolithic site and other Paleolithic sites called Anyathar Culture. In Chindwin valley, there were discovered Htaukmagon, Moegyobin, Nyaunggan, Monhtoo etc. In Samon, Kokkokhahla, Myar-yawai, Htantapin, Htonbo, U-Mhin etc had been uncovered. In Myitnge, there are many archaeological sites: Taunghaman, Shwesaryan, Taunggaing sites. And in Mu river valley, Archaeological sites from Halin could be concentrately discovered.

Environmental and Archaeological Settings of Halin Area

Ancient ancestors had chosen their habitation places depending on the environmental setting, especially near water resources for living, hunting, cultivation and domestication and then navigation. Water is essentially wanted for living of human beings and other animals. All of the beings depend on water for their lives, especially animals. When animals used to come to the stream and creek or lake to drink water, the people hunted them. Like this hunting, the people waited the animals or games near the stream and then the hunters choose to settle near the stream or lake for easily work the hunting. When this place settled for a long time, the hunters throw the seeds remains around this place. These seeds would grew as the plants after a long time. By this way, the ancient people may find the cultivation methods. So, the environmental setting is important in studying the settlement of the ancient human beings.

Environmental Setting of Halin Area

In studying the environmental setting of Halin area, Halin is located near Halingyi village in Wetlat Township, Shwebo district within Sagaing region. According to GPS (Global Positioning System) measurement, it is located at North latitude 22°28' and East Longitude 95° 45' and is situated about 350 to 400 ft above sea level. This area is included within the dry zone that attained about 30 in rainfall. As it is a place in dry zone, there were found the tropical plants, trees, bushes.

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The location of Halin area lies between Ayeyarwady and Chindwin River. It is far about 9.5 miles (5.29 km) from Ayeyarwady River and 17.8 miles (8.61 km) from Mu river. Ayeyarwady forms the eastern boundary of the Shwebo district for 72 miles and flows from near the Male village of Kanbalu township and flows southwards to the eastern part of Paukkan village in Wetlet Township. Mu River takes its resource at a place one mile north of Mayatha village of Kyunhla Township and flows across Shwebo district up near to Thamayo village which is in Wetlet Township. The maximum temperature of this region is 96 F and the minimum temperature is 63 F. The average rainfall of the Shwebo district is 36.61 inches and the average rainfall of Wetlet Township is 31.39 inches. And Halingyi village possess the hot-springs and can be found the sources of salt. The villagers also live with the producing of salt. The basic two facts for living of people are the water resources and salt. As the completing of these two facts, the site was occupied by the ancient people from the earliest times.

Previous Studies and Archaeological Setting of Halin Area

The first exploration of Halin area was done by Mr.Taw Sein Cho, Chief of Myanmar Branch of Archaeological Survey in India, in 1905. After 58 years, the first excavation was made by U Myint Aung during 1963-1966. In this period, U Sein Maung Oo excavated the Monunds named Hl. 1 to Hl.11 about eleven sites. And then, the next excavations were carried out by U Myint Aung from 1965-67. In this period, U Myint Aung uncovered from Hl.12 to 19 about 8 sites. And, Hl.20 was excavated by Yangon University. Besides, the other excavation of four sites; HL.21 to Hl.24 was excavated by U Paing Soe in 1998. U Kyaw Kyaw made the excavation to the mounds of HL.25 and HL.26 in 2005. And in 2008-2009, U Myat Swe excavated the mounds of four places named Hl. 27, Hl.28, Hl.29 and Hl.30. U Nyein Lwin carried out the excavation in two sites of Hl.31 and Hl.32 in 2010. HL.33 was excavated by U Myint Soe Aung in 2011. Among these sites, the prehistoric sites are Hl.25, 26, 28, 29, and 30. Among these prehistory sites, the sites which found the Neolithic evidences are Hl.26 and 30.

Neolithic Evidences form Halin Area

Archaeological evidences of the Neolithic age in Halin area had been found not only from the excavation of sites but also from the exploration works. Some evidences from the excavation had been saved at the site in situ by site museum but other surface findings found by villagers had been collected at a Monastery called Nyaungkobin monastery or Bonaga kyaung. So, the archaeological evidences can be divided into two groups: stone tools from the excavation and stone tools from Bonaga monastery.

Stone Tools form the Excavated Sites

There are many archaeological sites in Halin but the stone implements were uncovered from the prehistoric sites such as Hl.25, Hl.26, Hl.30. Hl.25 is located near south of city, nearby south of Shwe-gu-gyi pagoda, inside of farmland owned by U Maung Naing. This site were excavated by U Kyaw Kyaw in 2005. From the excavation had uncovered 11 human skeletons including semi-fossilize skeleton remains, earthen potteries, beads, stone tools and iron weapons.

Hl. 26 is located at South of City, Nearby Shwe-gu-gyi Pagoda. It was excavated by U Kyaw Kyaw in 2005. In this site, the excavator dug up to the depth of 20 ft and there was three layers of the soil. The first layer is the mixture of dust and the decays of leaves and wood (from outer layer to 8 ft depth) and the second layer is the mixture of yellow sand mud and red layer (from 8 to 12 ft)and the third layer is the mixture of lime stone and rough sand(from 12 to 17 ft). From the excavation, there were uncovered human skeletons, animal remains, pieces of stone, carnelian beads, brass bells, potteries and there were found the

human skeletons, potteries, earthen beads, carnelian beads, animal bones, shellfish and sand pits. Among three layers, the third layer was uncovered to be semi-fossilized skeleton and a polished stone axe. According to the finding of polished stone axe and semi-fossilized skeleton, some scholars deduced that the third layer of HL.26 site would represent the Neolithic time. But, the Neolithic tool found from this site is only one thing. This fact is considerable because of very few of stone tool.

Another site which found the Neolithic evidences is HL.30. It is located in southern part of city wall between HL-29 and HL-28. According to Global Positioning System (G P S), it is situated at 22° 27' 31" North Latitude and 95° 48' 3" East Longitude. It was excavated by U Myat Swe and his colleagues in 2009. The excavator group dug about 16 pits and 5 composed layers to a depth of about 12 feet. From the excavation of this site, human skeletons, earthen wares, iron implements, Neolithic stone tools, stone beads, bone rings, seashells, antler and gold plate were unearthed. Neolithic stone tools included stone axes at an average length of 2 in. The stone rings are crude and in circular shape and the hole wider than other rings.

Stone Tools from Nyaungkoebin Monastery

Nyaungkoebin Monastery called Boe Naga Kyaung is located

The stone implements from Nyaungkoebin monastery can be divided into 8 groups as follows;

- (1) Stone axe with rounded butt
- (2) Stone axe with broad cutting edge
- (3) Stone adze with rounded butt
- (4) Stone adze with broad cutting edge
- (5) Faceted tool
- (6) Shoulder tool
- (7) Chisel
- (8) Stone ring

The total stone implements from Nyaungkoebin monastery are 32. They are: Type (1) Stone axe with rounded butt is two objects, Type (2) Stone axe with broad cutting edge is four objects. Type (3) Stone adze with rounded butt is four objects, Type (4) Stone adze with broad cutting edge is two objects, Type (5) Faceted tool is eight objects , Type (6) Shoulder tool Type is one object, (7) Chisel Type is one object (8) Stone ring is ten objects. Among these stone implements, stone rings are mostly found and faceted tool came second.

Typological Studies from Stone Evidences

The stone tools from Halin are stone axe, adze, faceted tool, chisel, Shouldered tool and stone rings. Among them, the stone rings are the mostly found not only in excavation site but also Nyaungkobin monastery. There are four types of stone rings; circular, oval, massive and rectangular shapes. Rings in circular shape were found at HL.29 and HL.30, and Nyaungkobin monastery. The oval shapes of rings were found at HL.29 and Nyaungkobin monastery. The triangle shapes of rings were found at HL.29 and Nyaungkobin monastery. Rings in rectangular shape were found at HL.26 and HL.29, and Nyaungkobin monastery. Among the excavation, the shapes of rings are different in HL.26 and HL.30. These two sites were assumed as the Neolithic site and early Bronze Age sites because a little Bronze Age things were found in HL.26 and any Bronze Age things weren't found in HL.30. HL.29 is a developed site in Bronze Age. This fact was supported by the finding of bronze implements. And then, the stone rings were found various shapes in this site. According to these facts, Stone rings have been begun to use in Neolithic time but the making technique of stone ring may have developed at the Bronze Age.

Stone adze is most finding thing in Neolithic sites in Myanmar. Stone adze was found with rounded butt and broad cutting edge. Halin stone adze was mostly found in Nyaungkobin monastery.

Stone axe is a rare finding in Myanmar archaeological site. Some scholar assumed that stone axe culture was not well developed in Myanmar but stone axe was found in Halin excavation. Stone axe was found at Hl.26 and Hl.30. Hl.26 found only one object while Hl.30 found 3 things. The finding of stone axe is rare while stone adze was mainly found at other sites. The ancient people from Halin used stone axe. This fact assumed stone-axe was useful in their daily life as stone adze.

Facetted tool is one of the mainly findings among Halin stone implements. All faceted tool was found as surface findings in Nyaungkobin monastery. This type is thirdly found thing in Halin.

Scraper is a useful thing found in Neolithic site. In Halin, this thing wasn't found from the excavation but it was found as surface findings. Nevertheless, the finding of scraper shows that the ancient ancestors may be working butchery. Scraper may be used to separate the meat from bone or leather of the animals.

Awl is one of rare things because it was not found in every burial sites. It pointed to the cultivation of the Neolithic time. It might be used to cultivate the plants.

Shoulder tool is also a rare thing. It was mainly found in Neolithic site. The shoulder tool was not known the finding place. It was kept at the Nyaungkobin monastery. The shoulder was made to easy when it used. The invention of the technique of shoulder tool may change the cultural status of ancient human society. So, it may represent to the most developed time in Neolithic period.

Conclusion

In Upper Myanmar, there are five mainly rivers: Ayeyarwady, Chindwin, Samon, Myitnge (Douttawady) and Mu. These rivers created the river valleys and the ancient people depended on the river for water resources, cultivation on fertile soil, and salt. Ayeyarwady river valley developed paleolithic culture namely Anyathian culture, Chindwin river valley developed Neolithic culture and Bronze age culture, Samon river valley appeared Neolithic, Bronze and Iron age cultures and Myitnge river valley found the traces of Neolithic and Iron age cultures. Similarly, Mu river valley were found Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age, protohistoric time, historic time and till the present day. Among these cultural age, the Neolithic cultural findings were associated found with the bronze artifacts and iron artifacts. But, Neolithic, bronze and iron artifacts was not associated found in Halin. Nevertheless, Neolithic artifacts which represented to the Neolithic age show that Halin is a place that occupied by early human races since Neolithic age.

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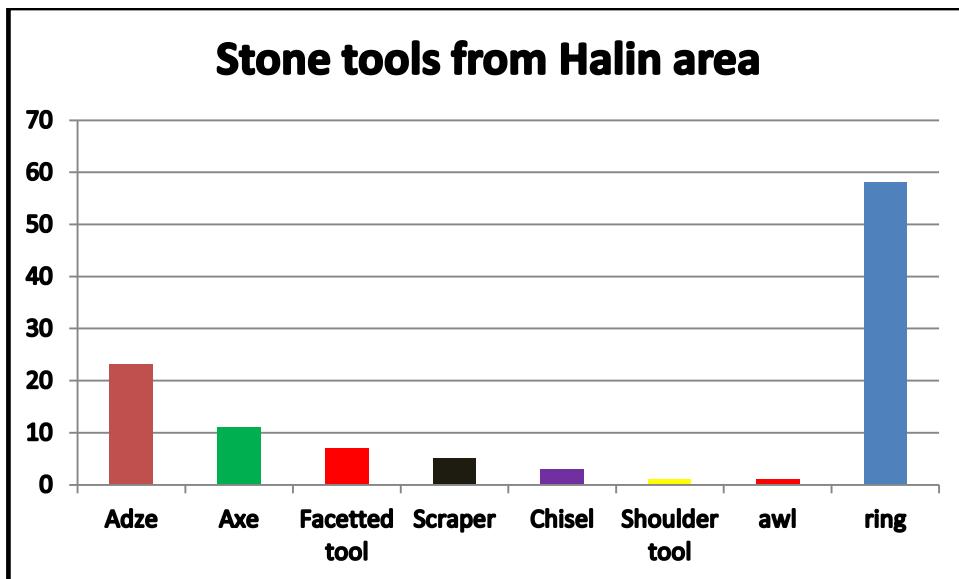
Secondary Sources

Table-1 The Stone Implement Findings from Halim

No	Tool Name	Excavation	U Myint Aung Collection	Nyaungkobin Monastery	Number	Remark
1	Adze	2	7	14	23	
2	Axe	4	2	5	11	
3	Facetted tool			7	7	
4	Scraper		1	4	5	
5	Chisel	1	1	1	3	
6	Shoulder tool			1	1	
7	awl		1		1	
8	ring	37	5	16	58	
Total Implements					109	

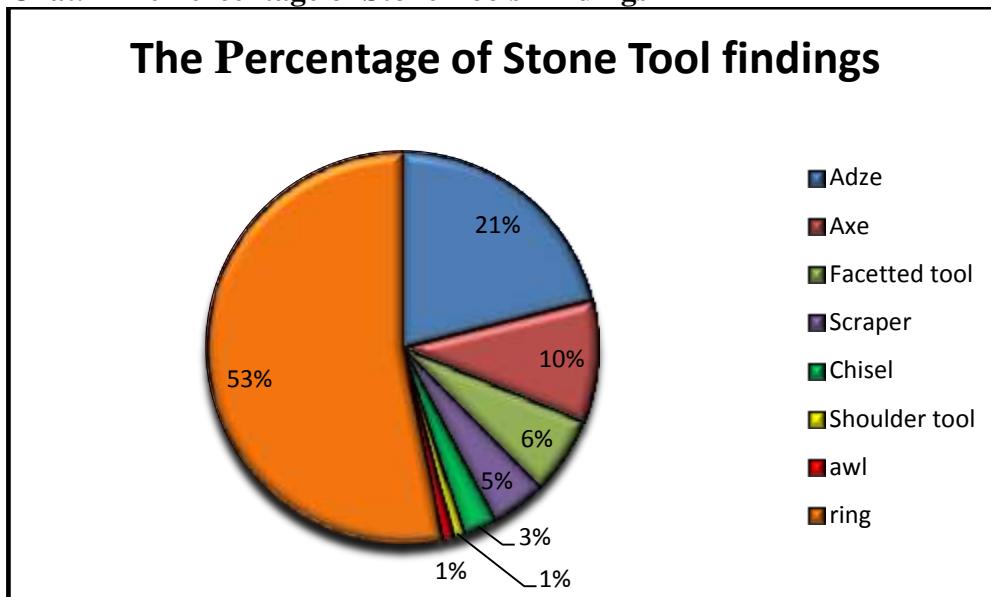
(Source from Myint Aung, 2009, Khine Mee Mee Kyaw, 2012 and Swe Zin Myint, 2013)

Chat.1 Stone Tools from Halin Area



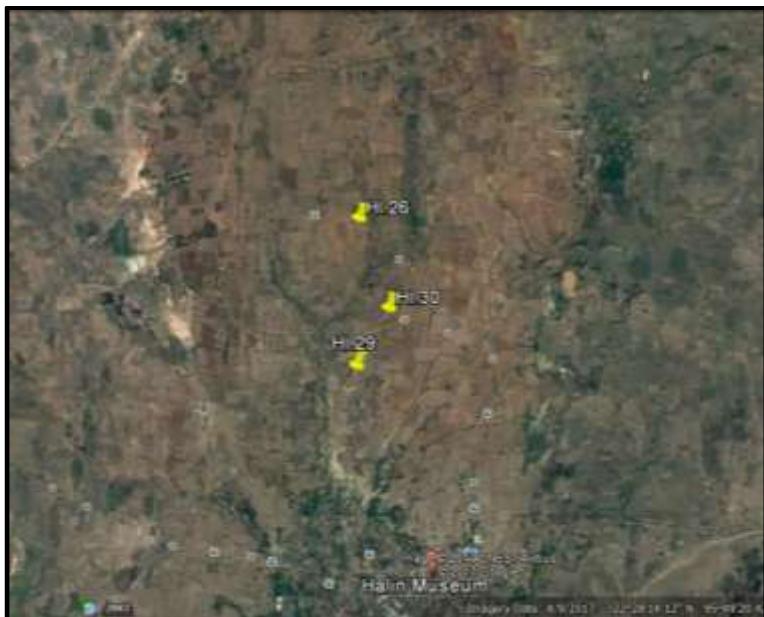
(Source from Myint Aung,2009, Khine Mee Mee Kyaw, 2012 and Swe Zin Myint, 2013)

Chat.2 The Percentage of Stone Tools Findings



(Source from Myint Aung,2009, Khine Mee Mee Kyaw, 2012 and Swe Zin Myint, 2013)

Map.1 Location of Neolithic sites from Halin



(Source from Google Map)



Fig.1 Stone axe with rounded butt
(Source from Swe Zin Myint)



Fig. 2 Stone axe with broad cutting edge
(Source from Khine Mee Mee Kyaw)



Fig.3 Stone Adze with Rounded Butt
(Source from Swe Zin Myint)



Fig.4 Stone Adze with Broad Cutting Edge
(Source from Khine Mee Mee Kyaw)



Fig.5 Shoulder Tool from Bo Naga Monastery

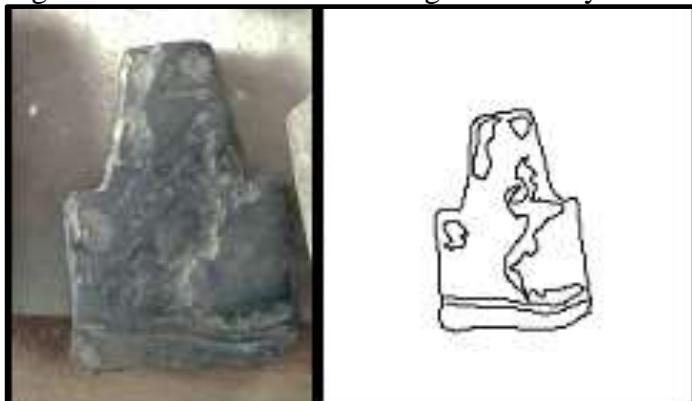


Fig.6 Shoulder Tool from Bo Naga Monastery

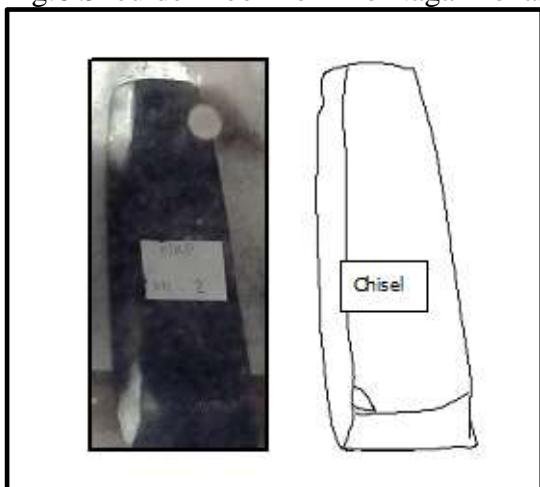


Fig.7 Stone Chisel from Bo Naga Monastery
(Source from Swe Zin Myint)



Fig.8 Stone Adze with Rounded Butt



Fig.9 Stone Rings from Bo Naga Monastery Fig. 10 Square Stone Ring from Hl.26