

Penny Van Esterik

## Designs on Pots

### *Ban Chiang and the Politics of Heritage in Thailand*

The prehistoric site of Ban Chiang in northeast Thailand challenges the narrative of Thai origins, while at the same time appealing to the public's vision of Thailand as an early centre of civilization. Ban Chiang demonstrates the complexity of constructing national heritage in modern Thailand, where the Thai national narrative begins and ends with Buddhism and the monarchy.

*Designs on Pots. Ban Chiang and the Politics of Heritage in Thailand* contributes to the literature on cultural preservation, repatriation, fake antiquities as souvenirs, and the ethics of collecting and demonstrates how heritage tourism intersects with the antiquities market in Asia. Ban Chiang itself is important for rethinking the model of indigenous development in Southeast Asian prehistory and provides informed speculation about the borders between prehistory, proto-history, and history in the region, challenging current and past models of Indianization that shape the Thai state's heritage narrative.

## BIOGRAPHY

Penny Van Esterik is Professor Emerita of Anthropology, recently retired from York University, Toronto. She is currently Adjunct Professor at the University of Guelph. Her fieldwork was primarily in Southeast Asia. She consulted with UNICEF, FAO, and IDRC on topics related to food security and infant feeding and has broad interests in the cultural history of Southeast Asia.



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface
Acknowledgements
Chapter 1 The Personal Past: Designs on Pots
Chapter 2 The Excavated Past: Grounded Evidence
Chapter 3 The Artistic Past: Aesthetic Preferences
Chapter 4 The Looted Past: On Stealing Pots
Chapter 5 The Fake Past: Forgeries and Souvenirs
Chapter 6 The Packaged Past: Implications for Thai Heritage
Illustrations
Appendix
Index

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