

## Myanma Palaeolithic Culture

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Geologists are assuming that last 600 million to be Palaeozoic Era and Myanmar landscape was began in the Cambrian period. In the Miocene and the Pleiocene ages, there developed anthropoids and somewhere during these ages there appeared the unknown ancestor of Man<sup>1</sup>. We can know that the Palaeolithic culture by access and look for the instrument of labour that the ancient men were used. Men were first lived in group as the life of common labour<sup>2</sup>. The Palaeolithic men are used stone artifacts and so called Stone Age. It can be divided into three main classical periods. They are: Palaeolithic age, Mesolithic age and Neolithic age.

We can see Palaeolithic age and Neolithic age documents in the whole country, especially in the Ayeyarwady river bank. We could not find any Palaeolithic age human skeletons but also see their artifacts mostly in the river valleys. And also found animal remains.

The most recent and interesting work on the Ayeyarwaddy a terrace was done by Mr. T. O. Morris in 1932 and 1935. Recently, on the basis of fresh data, Mr. T. O. Morris has suggested that the implements were derived from the surface and redeposit in association with Pliocene beds, a statement with which we are in full agreement. However, Mr. Morris' attribution of the material to the Upper Palaeolithic Period is not supported by the evidence from the localities investigated by the American Southeast Asiatic Expedition during the 1937-38 seasons. The first stone implements to be recorded from Myanmar were discovered near Yenangyaung during 1894-97 by Dr. F. Noetling of the Geological Survey of India. He claimed that these were found in situ in an Upper Miocene or Early Pliocene deposit, associated with *Hippotherium antelopinum* and *Acerotherium perimense*. By the found of Palaeolithic artifacts in the river valleys, river territories and foot-hills, it can be say that the men lived in that time were chosen their place for easy to made hunter and good for water

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1. Hodgkinson Lack; Lieut.col, Palaeolithic Man in Burma, JVRS XXI,II, 1931. (Hereafter cited as Hodgkinson, Palaeolithic Man, JBRS XXI,II)

2. A-chai-pya Myanmar Naing-Nagnye-Thamin-Part1, MSP, 1970, Yangon. P.69.

supply and can unproblematic to search the raw materials for their artifacts. In the central Myanmar, we can see Anyathian culture, around the regions of Sale and Chauk.

Last one million to 10,000 years ago, Anyathian culture was take very rains in Myanmar land and its being to found five terraces of ancient Ayeyarwady River between Sale and Chauk regions. They are-

- Terrace 5: This is the lowest; at Singu it is about 40 feet above river level. Its sediments, known as "Singu Silt", consist of sand and silt, and the resemble the recent Ayeyarwady sediments very closely. The absence of coarse material and of red coloring matter is typical. The terrace deposit is found banked up against a steep slope below the next highest level. Accordingly, it represents a stage of stream aggrsdation.

- Terrace 4: More frequently preserved than T5, this level is 55-65 feet high, and it is underlain by a red gravel of medium size (generally walnut-size) and red sand. Both of these layers are covered by a fine pinkish or yellowish silt of eolian origin. The latter is called "Bagan Silt", and it is also occurs on the next higher level of Limonite and hematite are found associated with a cient lateritic soils in the T4 gravels. The total thickness does not exceed 30 feet. Implements of Upper Palaeolithic age were discovered in the gravels of T4.

- Terrace 3: T3 is the widest and most conspicuous of all levels. This surface, 90-110 feet above stream level is deeply dissected. Its erosional or degradational origin is apparent from the varying thickness of the deposits found underlying it. Boulder-bearing gravel at the base, overlain by red to pink-colored fluvial silt and locally covered by Bagan Silt, is the chief geological characteristics. Rolled fossil bones of Upper Ayeyarwady affinities are frequently encountered in their basal gravel, as are Lower Palaeolithic implements.

- Terrace 2: Generally this is preserved only in the form of wide and rather isolated benches some 90 to 140 feet above T3. Nevertheless it is recognizable by thick eluvial soils of purplish color which will be referred to hereunder as "Nyaung-U Red Earth". Its composition is a mixture of coarse soil creep material containing silt and clay, which gives rise to miniature badland topography. These soils are underlain by river sand and gravel, apparently of the same type as those underlying the third terrace. Hence, it may be inferred that this second level marks a stage of very thick alleviation and soil formation.

- Terrace 1: This is a somewhat problematical surface, isolated remnants of which either appears in the form of flat hilltops, or in the conformity of hills and ridges surmounting the former terrace by 100 or 200 feet. It is associated with very coarse red gravel, which differs in certain respects from those encountered at the lower

levels. They are held to represent what at other places has been called the Uru Bouldered Conglomerate” of post-Upper Ayeyarwadian age. Quite possibly this highest level was tilted prior to its dissection.

We can find the Palaeolithic stone artifacts on the Terrace1 to Terrace5. On the terrace 5 can only find the Neolithic remains. Terrace 1 is a somewhat problematical surface, isolated remnants of which either appear in the form of flat hilltops, or in the conformity of hills and ridges surmounting the former terrace by 100 or 200 feet. It is associated with very coarse red gravel, which differs in certain respects from those encountered at the lower levels<sup>3</sup>.

The Ayeyarwady Terrace1 (T1) is the layer of the first Palaeolithic men lived there and we can see hand adzes, choppers and some chopping tools. This layer is the most important for prehistory of Myanmar. This layer can be seen along the Magwe, Chauk and Sale regions<sup>4</sup>. Mr. E. J. Bradshaw, Government Geologist of Yenangyaung suggested the name of Anyathian culture.

We can assume that the early Anyathian culture being between lower and middle Palaeolithic and appeared in first to the third Pluvial Period (750,000-275,000 years ago). The man of that time is Homoerect man and its dating is about 400,000 years ago. In the Ayeyarwady Valley, there is no stage of development corresponding to the Middle Palaeolithic of other regions; in fact, as will be presently demonstrated the typology of the Anyathian is remarkably uniform throughout the entire Old Stone Age sequence of Myanmar.

It is similar with the Java man (500,000 years ago) and Peking man (400,000 years ago). They are low forehead, big jaw with very little of chin showing. The early Anyathian implements are similar with the Fing Noi, in Thailand and The Phuloi in Laos. But in this region are found together with human skeletons remains. They are the origin of Southeast Asia's human beings<sup>5</sup>.

It is also the same as the Stone Age culture in Java, Malay islands, south and east Africa. The chopping tools of the early Anyathian are so related with the chopping tools of *Sinanthropus Pekinensis* which was found in Choukoutien Caves, locality 1.26 miles south west of Beijing.

The Early Anyathian can divide in to three phases as Early Anyathian 1, Early Anyathian2, and Early Anyathian 3. Early Anyathian 1 is always very heavily rolled and is found in situ in the Lateritic Gravel at Magwe, as well as in the T1 remnants of the same

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3.H. De Terra and Hallam L. Movius: “The Pleistocene of Burma” Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, the American Philosophical Society. Vol.XXXII,iii, 1943 , p.292. (Hereafter cited as TAPS, Vol.XXXII,iii)

4.“The stone age of Burma”, TAPS, Vol. XXXII, iii, 1943, p.352)

5.G.Coedes: The making of Southeast Asia, London, Routeledge & Kegan paul, 1966, p.11)

deposit at Chauk: Hill of Chinaungma, and east of Sale. They are the oldest human artifacts from the Ayeyarwady Valley. Thus the Early Anyathian1 dates from the pluvial period at the beginning of the Middle Pleistocene in Myanmar. Early Anyathian2 artifacts found associated with the basal ferruginous crust (ironstone hardpan) exposed under T3 at Nyaung-U. Early Anyathian3 is demonstrated by a large series from the gravels of T2 age and are also present exposed on T3 at Magwe, Minbu, Yenangyaung, Chauk, Bagan and Pakokku. All the Early Anyathian3 implements are very heavily rolled and are probably contemporary with the deposition of the gravels of early Upper Pleistocene.

On the Terrace 4 (T4), we can found the late Anyathian culture. It can also call Upper Palaeolithic and it was taken in the Third Interpluvial and the Fourth Pluvial Period (27,500-25,000 years ago). It can divide into the Late Anyathian 1 (Late1) and The Late Anyathian 2 (Late2). Late1 is the same or closes to the early Anyathian culture and it can found in the Ayeyarwady's Terrace of Magwe, Yenangyaung and Chauk which differs in certain typological respects from the Early Anyathian. Late 2 is represents the final development of the Myanmar Palaeolithic and it occurs on the Ayeyarwady's Terrace 4 in Magwe, Pauk, Sangu and Bagan. It is so close to the Neanderthal (100,000-40,000 years ago). The result is that the implementiferous horizons are very spread out and relatively thin, no thick Pleistocene gravel exposures were found.

The Neanderthal is the Homosapian man and his feature was short in height with big head, low forehead, big jaw and little chin. We almost found Anyathian culture tools were found near the river in the central Myanmar and also found in rain shadow areas because Anyathian men are chosen their live area for easy to get daily food, water and raw materials. They had no knowledge to agriculture.

By the typology, the Anyathian stone artifacts can be mainly classify into Hand adzes, Choppers, Chopping tools and Scrapers. Any hand axe was found in the Palaeolithic culture of Myanmar. That can sub-divided into Single-ended Hand-Adze, Single steep-ended Hand-Adze, Double-ended Hand-Adze, Inverse Double-ended Hand-Adze, Concave-ended Hand-Adze, Single ended and side Hand-Adze, Side Hand-Adze or Chopper, Side and End Scraper, small Scraper with Scalloped Edge, Chopping tool with alternately flaked edge, Chopping tool with rounded edge, Single and double ended chopper, Pointed double sided chopper and pick-like implements<sup>6</sup>.

But T.O Morris found a large Hand-Axe in Magwe terrace. But it is not certain to say that was Anyathian implement because it is the only one of Hand-Axe of Anyathian culture. Early Anyathian and Late Anyathian tools are almost similarity to the typology but the Late

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6. "The Stone Age of Burma", TAPS, Vol. XXXII, iii, 1943, p.351.

Anyathian tools are more fine and well-developed. Because the culture phase are slowly developed and changed in the same region.

The raw materials of the Anyathian stone artifacts are 84% in fossil wood and others are making up of Silicified tuff (Rhyolithic tuff or Pebble) which were extensively employed by Palaeolithic Man in Myanmar. Fossil wood is an almost inexhaustible supply in the Late Tertiary-Early Pleistocene Ayeyarwaddy Beds of Upper Myanmar. This material must have been always more readily available to Palaeolithic Man than was the far more homogeneous silicified tuff. All silicified and of volcanic origin are grouped under the general term “silicified tuff”. These are all extensively developed in the volcanic regions of Upper Myanmar. They had chosen that kinds of raw materials for good density, hardness and easy to resiliency and not effortless to toughness.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, many Anyathian stone implements are found around the Ayeyarwaddy banks because these stone artifacts are used by Anyathian man in hunting. The animal of Anyathian period went to drink water at the Ayeyarwady river bank and then Anyathian men are hunted and attacked the animal in this river banks, so we can found many stone artifacts on the terraces of river banks. It must not be an industrial yard or settlement of Anyathian man. But they probably live near the stream or river for their water and food supply. By the study of Anyathian culture implements with their contemporaries, it seems that men at the Pithecanthropus-Sinanthropus stage of physical evolution extended down the eastern half of Asia from Beijing to Java and westward to Northern India and that they had a characteristic culture which was identical, or nearly so, throughout this vast area<sup>7</sup>.

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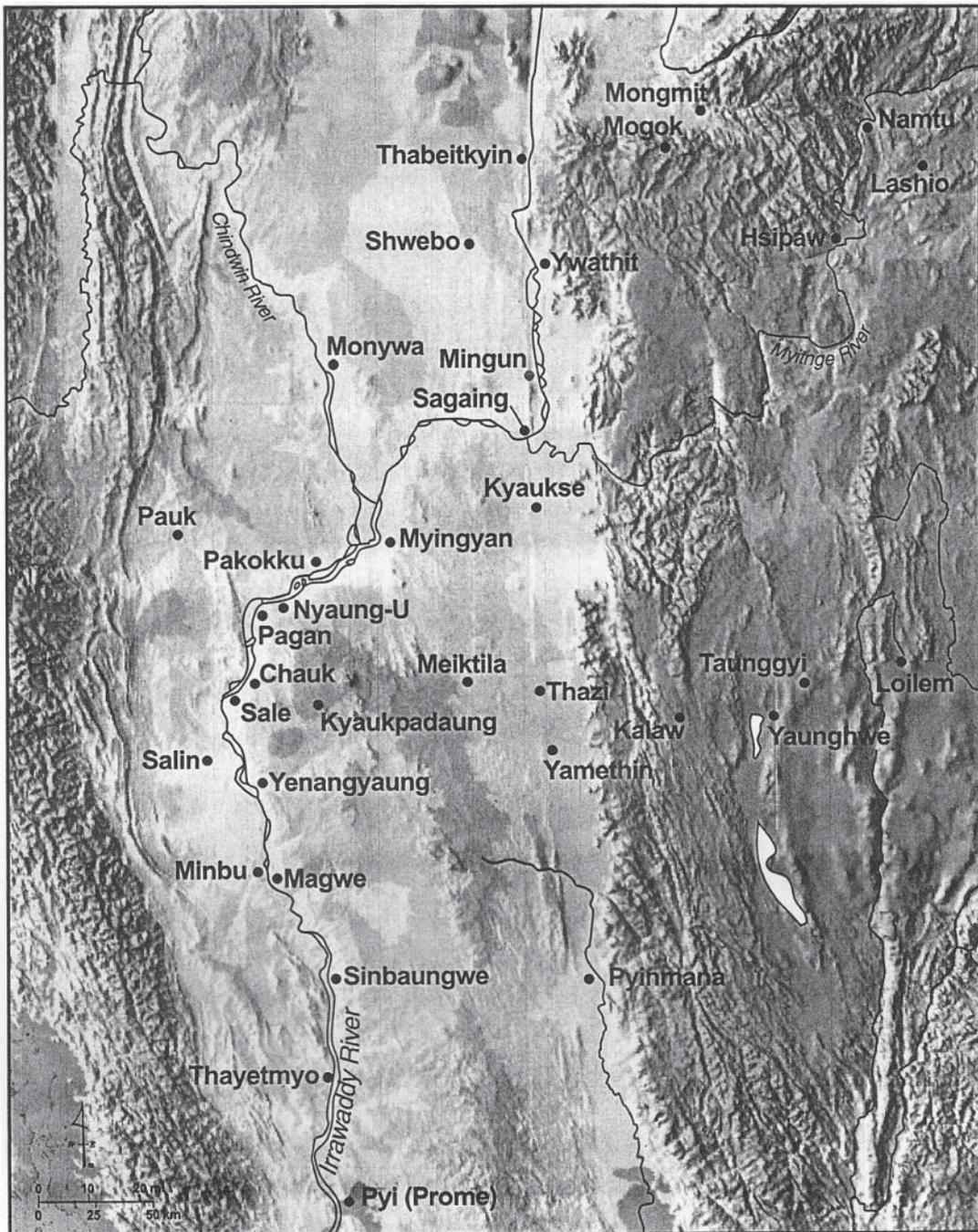


Fig (1) Map of Palaeolithic and Early Anyathian sites

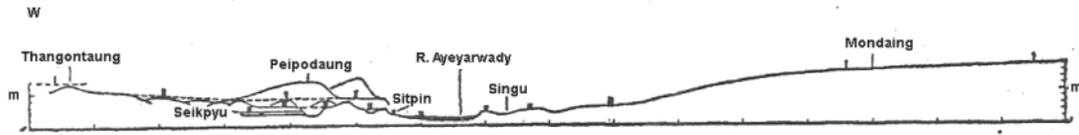


Fig (2) Geographic feature of Ayeyarwady region

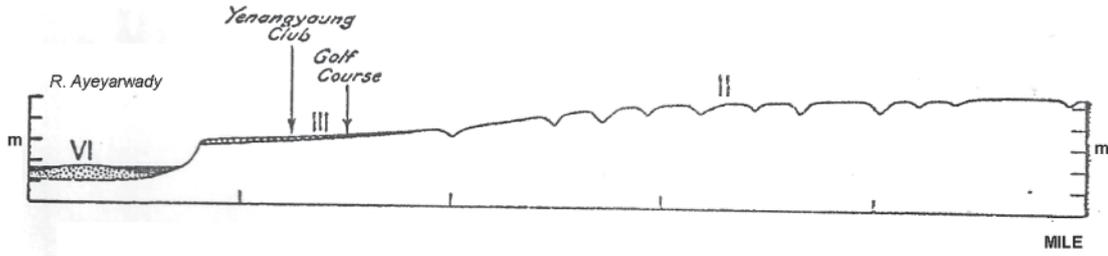


Fig (3) River terraces of Ayeyarwady river between Sale and Chauk regions

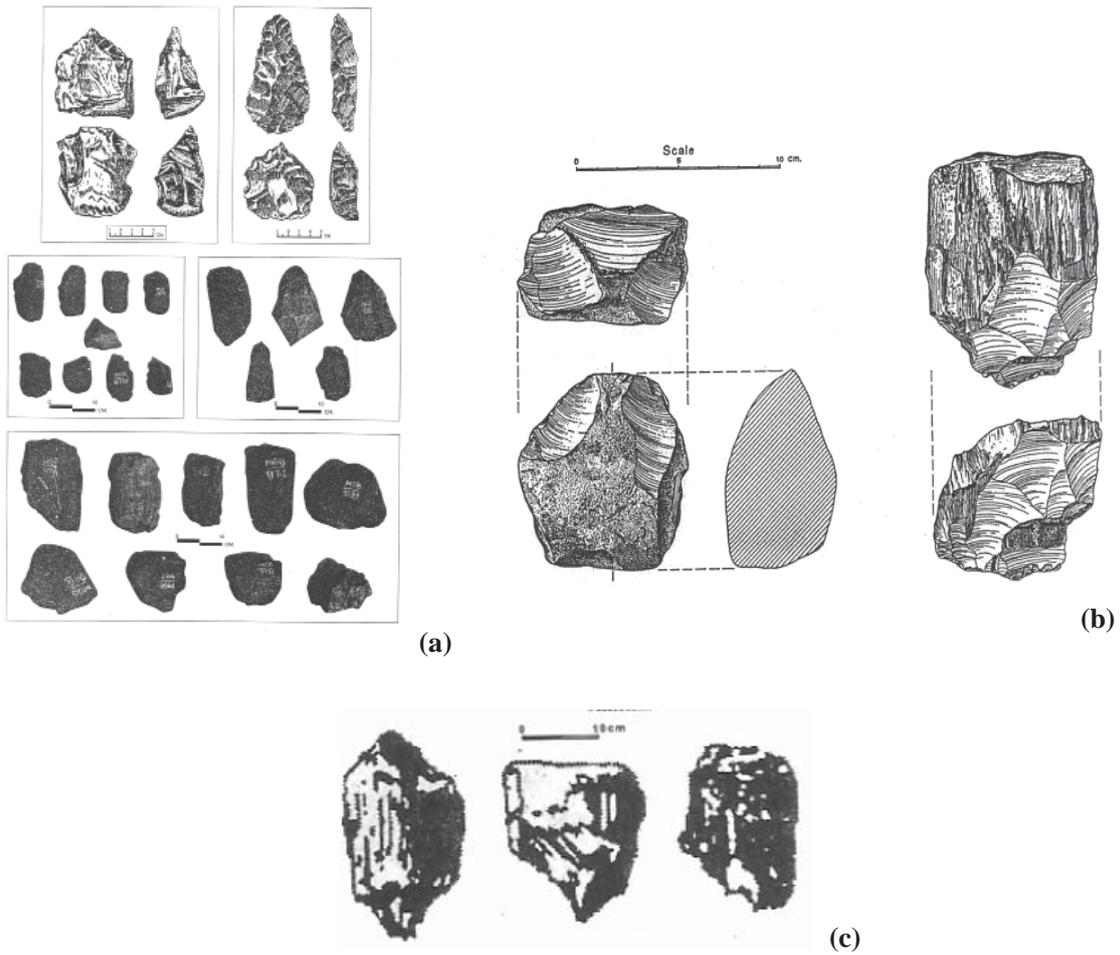


Fig (4) a, b, c-Stone tools typical of the Anyathian culture of Upper Myanmar

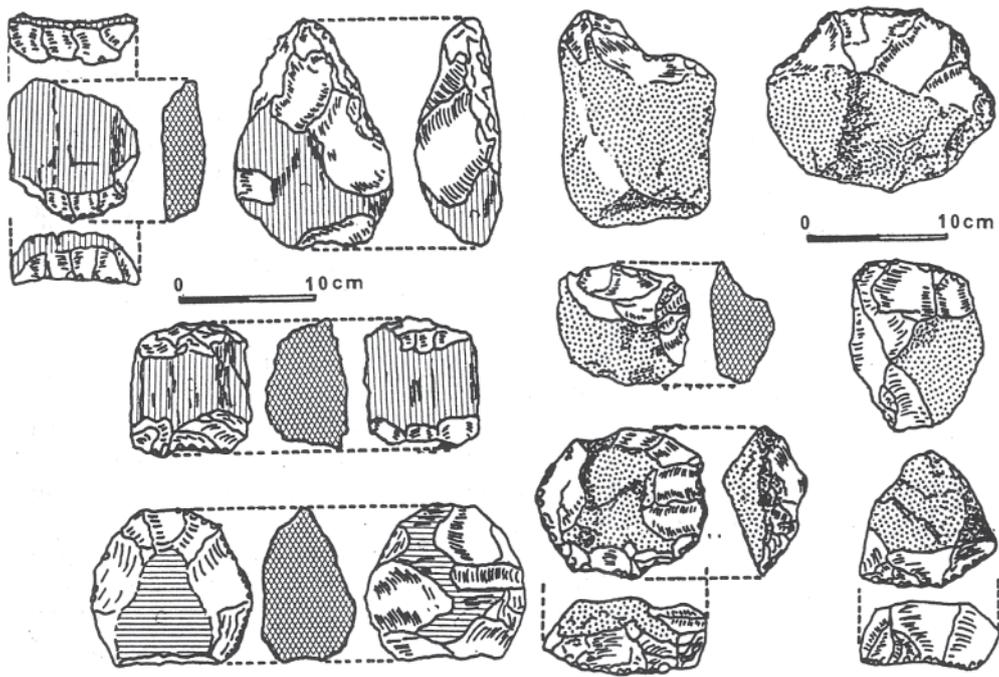


Fig (5) Anyathian chopping tools of the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic

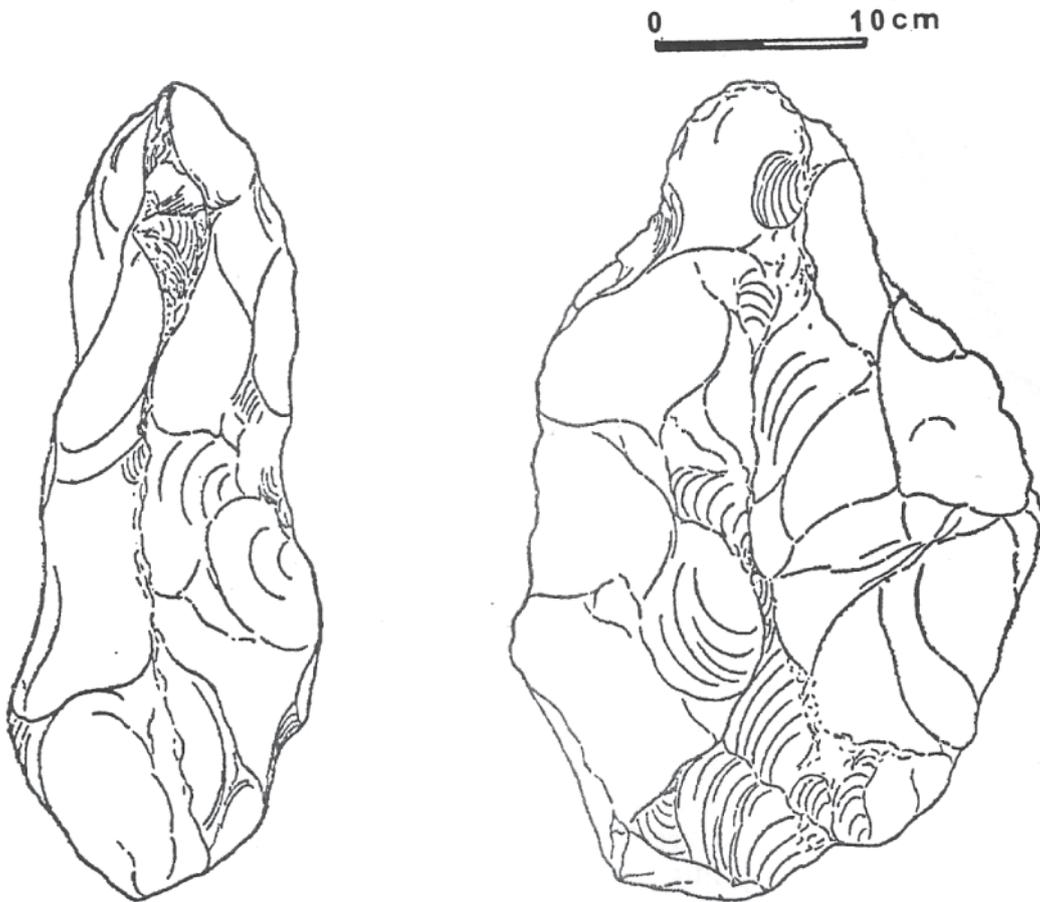


Fig (6) Acheulean hand axe from surface of the Konbyinmyint Terrace at Yenangyaung



(a)



(b)

**Fig (7) a, b-Hunting Life-way of Anyathian Men**