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A late Pleistocene skeleton of *Rhinoceros unicornis* (Mammalia, Rhinocerotidae) from western part of Thailand (Kanchanaburi Province) ✡

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Abstract

A subcomplete skeleton of a rhinoceros was discovered during excavation works in Kanchanaburi Province (Thailand) in May 1991. Fossil bones were preserved in anatomical connection in a late Pleistocene clay deposit. We describe these remains and refer them to as the Indian rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis*. This fossil skeleton is the only one of its kind discovered in Southeast Asia and allows a complete description of the skeletal morphology of this species. The metric data reveal a close skeletal morphology with extant specimens from India and Nepal. The Kanchanaburi rhinoceros specimen confirms the much broader geographic distribution of the greater one-horned rhino during late Pleistocene times. This discovery provides a useful benchmark for the study of the evolutionary stages of this species in Southeast Asia during the concerned time interval.

Keywords: Rhinocerotidae; Morphology; Biometry; Southeast Asia; Taphonomy

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1. Introduction

Rhinocerotids were abundant and diverse during the Pleistocene and the first part of the Holocene in southern Asia (Antoine, 2012). The three endangered species *Rhinoceros unicornis*, *Rhinoceros sondaicus* and the two-horned rhinoceros *Dicerorhinus sumatrensis* were more widespread during the past than today where they are restricted to some small, protected parks. In Thailand, only a few rhinoceros remains, limited to isolated bones or teeth, have been described in both Pleistocene paleontological and archeological sites. Some rhinoceros remains, mostly teeth, have been found in middle Pleistocene sites at Tham Wiman Nakin (Tougard, 1998) and Khok Sung (Suraprasit et al., 2016), in the late Pleistocene sites of Tham Prakai Phet (Tougard, 1998; pers. obs.), Cave of the Monk (Zeitoun et al., 2010), Tham Lod Rockshelter (Wattanapituksakul, 2006), Moh Kiew II (Auetrakulvit, 2004), and at