

PaleoAsia2018

The International Workshop

Cultural History of PaleoAsia

— Integrative Research on the Formative Processes of Modern Human Cultures in Asia

December 15–18, Kyoto, Japan

Program and Abstracts

Edited by

Yoshihiro Nishiaki
Seiji Kadowaki, and
Yasuhisa Kondo

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Yoshihiro Nishiaki, The University of Tokyo

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Joe Yuichiro Wakano, Meiji University

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PaleoAsia Project Group

The University Muesum

The University of Tokyo

Hongo, 7-3-1, Bunkyo, Tokyo, Japan

TEL +81 3-5841-2485

E-mail: paleoasiaproject@gmail.com

<http://www.paleoasia.jp>

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Preface

The processes of the dispersals of anatomically modern humans into regions of Eurasian Continent represent one of the most hotly debated issues among paleoanthropologists and archaeologists today. The PaleoAsia project 2016–2020 (Cultural History of PaleoAsia: Integrative Research on the Formative Processes of Modern Human Cultures in Asia) aims to contribute to our better understanding of these processes in Asia, where a recent increase in the number of new finds has led to the need for fresh insights and interpretations. This project was launched as a five-year multidisciplinary research program in July 2016, following our previous work, the RNMH Project 2010-2014 (Replacement of Neanderthals by Modern Humans: Testing Evolutionary Models of Learning, Project Leader: Takeru Akazawa), also with support from a Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research on Innovative Areas from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan.

While RNMH dealt with biological diagnostics, especially regarding the cognitive capacity of modern humans, the PaleoAsia project focuses on their cultures, as indicated by the subtitle. It is well known that modern humans developed regionally varied cultures in a relatively short period after their dispersals. Can these cultures be explained by the inherent behavioral patterns of modern humans in response to different ecological conditions? Or were they established as historical events involving contacts with indigenous populations who already developed local cultural traditions? Further, is the regional pattern a reflection of the cultural evolution made during the population dispersals? We suppose that comparative perspectives on the different cultural processes noted in Asia provide an opportunity, in turn, for a better understanding of modern humans.

In the present workshop, the project participants will present their initial attempts for the research according to their disciplines, related to either field or theoretical science. In addition, in order to supplement the project, up-to-date inputs on the research by our overseas collaborators are consolidated as well. We hope that through intensive discussion sessions the participants will be able to further develop their own research strategies or collaborative research schemes on issues of PaleoAsia. Lastly but not the least, I would like to express our deep thanks to all those who helped in preparing the workshop. We owe much , needless to say, to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan for their sponsorship, as well as to the Kyoto International Conference Center and the Research Institute for Humanity and Culture, for providing the venues.

Yoshihiro Nishiaki

Project Leader

The University Museum,
The University Tokyo

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ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

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HEAD OFFICE PaleoAsia

The University Museum,

The University of Tokyo,

Hongo 7-3-1, Bunkyo

Tokyo 113-0033, Japan

Email: paleoasiaproject@gmail.com

Tel: +81-3-5841-2485

Fax:+81-3-5841-2485

URL: <http://www.paleoasia.jp>

Poster 1

Excavations of Upper Paleolithic sites in southern Kazakhstan

Sadakatsu Kunitake

Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, Japan

Kazakhstan is indispensable area for the argument of diffusion and fixation of *Homo sapiens* in Asia, because Kazakhstan is in the geographically important area which connects between Altai mountains and Caucasus area, Uzbekistan. Upper Paleolithic culture in the eastern Kazakhstan were developed together with the northern Altai Mountains. It is consistent the result of investigation of Ushbulak-1 site (Shunkov et al.2017) which were discovered in 2016 that Initial Upper Paleolithic (IUP) industries were excavated from the lowest layer with this idea.

Therefore, in the next argument, it is assumed that it is with the point at issue whether Altai IUP industry is a common aspect of the whole Central Asia or not. In other words, it is the point at issue which makes Altai IUP industry relativization.

Based on the above, I conducted general surveys in the north foot of Tianshan Mountains and Karatau Mountains in south of Kazakhstan by a joint investigation with Kazakhstan as PaleoAsia project. In this investigation, 15 Upper Paleolithic sites were discovered, and multi-stratified sites in less sediment were recognized in two sites of them (Kunitake et al. 2018).

In south of Kazakhstan, three Paleolithic sites were excavated from July to October in 2018. In this poster presentation, an outline of this investigation will be reported.

Chokan Valikhanova(Стоянка им.Ч.Балиханова) site in Turkestan region is situated in the west of the foot of Karatu Mountains. In this site, six Upper Paleolithic layers have been recognized by investigation from 1958 to 2015. The sixth cultural layer was dated to $39.5\text{ka} \pm 3.8\text{ka}$ by polymineral plR-IRSL analysis (Fizsimmons et al.2017).

In our 2018 investigation, three cultural layers were newly discovered under the sixth cultural layer that had been the oldest so far.

Biryokbastau·Bulak(Бүйрекбастау·Булак) -1 site in Jamble region that is situated in the east foot of Karatau Mountains was discovered in our general survey of October 2017. In the preliminary investigation of October 2017, artifacts were recognized that were stratigraphically contained in less sediments. In our 2018 excavation, two cultural layers were stratigraphically recognized. The second cultural layer is estimated to belong to Early Upper Paleolithic age in term of its assemblage.

Kyzylaus(Кызылауз)-2 site in Almaty region that is situated the north foot of Tien Shan Mountains was discovered in our general survey of November 2017. In the preliminary investigation of April 2018, artifacts were recognized that were stratigraphically contained in less sediments. In our 2018 excavation, four cultural layers belonging to Upper Paleolithic age were stratigraphically recognized in about 3m less deposition.

OSL and 14C dating samples have been extracted from every cultural layer of these sites and they are under analyses now. These analyses will reveal the precise period when each assemblage belonging. Those will be very important to the Paleolithic study in Kazakhstan because of the lack of materials stratigraphically excavated so far. These materials will be indispensable to pursuit the formation process of Upper Paleolithic culture in Kazakhstan. In future, these assemblages will be compared to those of other regions and I will explore furthermore new Paleolithic sites in Kazakhstan.

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Fig. 1. Multi-stratified Upper Paleolithic sites excavated in 2018 Japan-Kazakhstan joint expedition



Fig. 2. 2018 excavation at Chokan Valikhanova

