

Excavations at Emeelt Tolgoi Site: The third Report on Joint Mongolian-Japanese Excavations in Outer Mongolia

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Closing Remarks

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Through excavations at Emeelt Tolgoi Site along with the results of previous excavations at Bor Ovoo Site and Khyar Kharaach Site, we were able to construct a chronology for Bronze Age graves in western Mongolia. Round Khirigsuur and round graves were distributed mainly in western Mongolia and spread eastward to the middle Mongolian Plateau in the latter half of the second millennium BC. At the same time, square Khirigsuur and Type 4 square graves were also distributed mainly in northern Mongolia and spread southward to western and middle Mongolia. Round Khirigsuur and round graves can be classified into two types according to whether or not four corner stones are present. Square Khirigsuur can be also classified into two types according to whether or not four corner stones are present on square enclosure. The presence of four corner stones, the same as with Type 4 square graves, indicates stylistic similarities with Sagsai shaped-graves (Гантулга 2017), a situation identical with that encountered at Khyar Kharaach Site (Miyamoto ed. 2017).

On the other hand, Type 1 rectangular stone construction graves emerged in the southeastern Mongolian Plateau and spread westward in the latter half of the second millennium BC (Miyamoto 2016). However, Type 4a square graves differ to Type 1 rectangular stone construction graves in southwestern Mongolia in terms of burial structure. Type 1 rectangular stone construction graves in southeastern Mongolia developed simultaneously into figured graves, mainly in the middle Mongolian Plateau. On the other hand, Type 4b square graves developed from square Khirigsuur with four corner stones on the enclosure. Square Khirigsuur and Type 4a and Type 4b square graves of the Khirigsuur culture emerged in northern Mongolia and spread to western and middle Mongolia during migrations with round Khirigsuur and round grave. The Sagsai-type, particular in that it has four oval stones, is also assumed to have been established in northern Mongolia and spread to the western and middle Mongolian Plateau. These are thought to be included in Khirigsuur Culture. In the

latter half of the second millennium BC, during the Karask period, there were two separate burial customs in the east and west of the Mongolian Plateau: a stone-slab burial culture and Khirigsuur culture. Two separate social groups were a part of the same bronze culture in the Mongolian Plateau. The Type 3b figured graves of the stone-slab burial culture spread to Bor Ovoo Site from the 12th to 10th centuries BC. And Type 3b figured graves spread to Emeelt Tolgoi Site from the 10th to 9th centuries BC.

According to physical anthropological research, the individuals buried at Emeelt Tolgoi Site are, like at Khyar Kharaach Site, Bor Ovoo Site and Tevsh Site, taller in height compared with other prehistoric peoples in East Asia (Okazaki et al. 2016). The peoples found at Emeelt Tolgoi Site, like at Khyar Kharaach Site, Bor Ovoo Site and Tevsh Site, sustained far more injuries than other hunter-gatherers or farmers as a result of accidents related to riding horses (Okazaki & Yonemoto 2017). Herding societies would have been based on a more nomadic lifestyle than other peoples. And the individuals found at Grave No. 40 and No. 44 of Emeelt Tolgoi Site are identified as a Mongolian people based on physical anthropological analysis.

Strontium analysis on teeth was also conducted at Emeelt Tolgoi Site, like at Khyar Kharaach Site, Bor Ovoo Site and Tevsh Site. Strontium figures on teeth indicate local geological differences in Mongolia. According to these results, differences in Strontium ratios at Khyar Kharaach Site indicate different birthplaces between different Strontium figures. On the other hand, there are no differences in Strontium ratios between round graves and figured graves at Bor Ovoo Site, thought to be due to the fact that people who built figured graves moved westward from the eastern Mongolian Plateau to cemeteries originally established by people who built round graves. Nor are there differences in Strontium ratios between both round graves at Emeelt Tolgoi Site: Grave No. 40 and Grave No. 44. These results indicate similar geographical origins for both types of graves at Bor Ovoo and Emeelt Tolgoi Sites.