

## **Humanities and Social Sciences**



### **Title of Project : Integrative Human Historical Science of "Out of Eurasia": Exploring the Mechanisms of the Development of Civilization**

**MATSUMOTO Naoko**  
(Okayama University, Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Professor)

Research Project Number : 19H05731 Researcher Number : 30314660

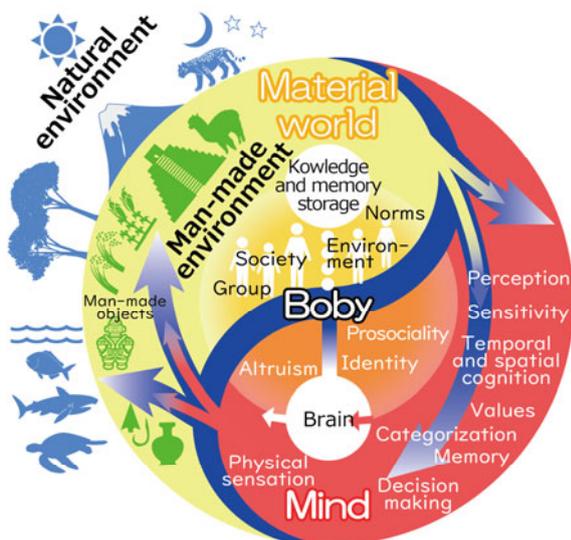
#### **【Purpose of the Research Project】**

It was in the period of the development of civilization that the specific characteristics which greatly separate human from other animal behaviors, such as a large-scale and complex social structure, a high level of scientific technology, and a variety of religious beliefs including massive world religions, made their appearance. The developmental period of civilization may be assessed as the time when the nomadic hunting-and-gathering lifestyle, which had continued through 2 million years of evolution of the genus *Homo*, made a massive change in direction. Accordingly, in order to understand how mankind has reached its present state, it is necessary to clarify how the formation and development of civilization occurred.

In this regard, the current research area focuses on the human being itself which links nature and culture, mind and matter, and on human action and cognition, and advances an unprecedented theory of the development of civilization. Based on the three vantage points of the material realm physically produced by humans, the human body, and the mind which lies at the nucleus of the interaction of these two and produces culture, and focusing on the material culture of the period of the development of civilization, we construct an integrative history of humankind that will clarify how the specifically human niche construction has been formed.

#### **【Content of the Research Project】**

We place a model of the mutual permeation of matter and



Mediated by the body, mind and the material world permeate one another. Through the process of mutual creation between humans and the material world, the body also changes.

mind as mediated by the body as the basis of our research strategy. Based on this model, as a theoretical framework for considering temporal change, we adopt the theory of niche construction which holds that organisms change their environments on their own, and such changes influence the evolution of succeeding generations. The Americas, the Japanese archipelago, and Oceania, the regions of final destination for *Homo sapiens* who left Eurasia and dispersed by overcoming bottlenecks and extreme conditions, are strategically selected as research objects. We will systematically compare the unique developments of civilization under different circumstances in a transdisciplinary framework including archaeology, bioarchaeology, anthropology, cognitive science, brain and neuroscience, social psychology and molecular anthropology. The results will be integrated and shared for discussion, mathematical analysis and modelling.

#### **【Expected Research Achievements and Scientific Significance】**

Establishing a new research field of Integrative Human Historical Science is the core accomplishment that can be anticipated. More specifically, the actual state of affairs concerning how culture as a system of knowledge surpassing the abilities of individuals as biological creatures came to be formed, will be made clear for various places in the Japanese archipelago, Mesoamerica, the Andes, and Oceania. Thus the historical process by which unique social realities are formed will be clarified, providing new understandings of man and culture.

As a ripple effect of this research, as the peculiarities of modern warfare and international relationships are thrown into relief, new insights for relieving social stress and violent behaviors, and the formation of a sustainable society will be obtained. A basis can be obtained for considering, as globalization progresses, how the body and culture will change, and the significance of maintaining diversity.

#### **【Key Words】**

Niche construction: The process by which an organism alters its own local environment through actions and selections.

**【Term of Project】** FY2019-2023

**【Budget Allocation】** 1,069,000 Thousand Yen

#### **【Homepage Address and Other Contact Information】**

<http://out-of-eurasia.jp>

[contact@out-of-eurasia.jp](mailto:contact@out-of-eurasia.jp)