

Title of dissertation			
The Monuments and Lifeways Transition of the Bronze Age and Early Iron Age in Southeastern Mongolia			
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The Mongolian plateau lies in the eastern part of the Eurasian steppe zone, and it is known that during the Bronze Age a vast regional network was established through extensive exchanges. Western and central Mongolia in particular have attracted the attention of Western scholars because of issues such as the emergence of nomadic peoples and the rise of power in the steppe region. In contrast, eastern Mongolia has a different culture from western and central Mongolia, but has not been extensively studied. In this study, we focused on eastern Mongolia, organised the latest excavation and research cases, and tried to clarify the cultural characteristics of the region.

First, in Chapter 1, we set out the sub-themes that needed to be addressed, based on the history and achievements of Mongolian Bronze Age archaeological research, and then in Chapters 2 to 4 we deepened our examination of these themes. One of these themes was the issue of the naming of material culture by Soviet researchers who explored Mongolia at the beginning of the 20th century. In Chapter 2 of this study, when summarizing the cultural changes in Mongolia, I explained that we should not focus on the characteristics of the burial methods, but rather on the names of the regions where they were found, and on the expressions in the local languages that indicate their morphological characteristics. This is because at present the terms are translated and used in different countries, so the names are not stable and in some cases even the definition of a grave is not clear. Furthermore, the Ulaanzuukh type monument and the Shorgooljin (ant-shaped) grave have been called the prone burial culture, but in fact they also include prone burials, so I proposed that they be called the Tevsh culture, using the name of the place where they were discovered as a representative term.

In Chapter 3, the author organized the graves excavated and surveyed in the southeast of Mongolia, and clarified that the graves that had been thought to be the Durvuljin grave (rectangular grave, or so-called slab grave) were often the Ulaanzuukh type monument. It was also pointed out that the Ulaanzuukh type monument often had no burial facilities. In Chapter 4, based on the examples dealt with in the previous chapter, a typological classification and proposed transition were presented for the Shorgooljin grav and Ulaanzuukh type monument of the Tevsh culture, while organizing the 14C dating data. It was found that the Shorgooljin graves changed from being long and narrow to the typical hourglass shape (anthill shape) with a strong neck, and that the Ulaanzuukh type monuments changed from having a double fence (cairn side wall) to a single fence.

In Chapter 5 we examined the burial practices and artefacts of the Tevsh culture. Previous research has suggested that women had a low status in the Tevsh culture, but while the ratio of male to female burials was indeed low, women were not inferior in terms of artefacts and burial goods. Similarly, the status of children and the elderly is thought to have been

low among the Xiongnu, who are representative of nomadic peoples, but this is not the case in the Tevsh culture. Among the excavated artefacts, the ornaments are important for considering regional exchange, as they include items that can be traced back to their place of origin. Carnelian beads have been recovered from Tevshi burials, but recent research suggests that they were made from locally sourced materials. However, there are earlier examples of carnelian beads in the Hexi Corridor and Great Wall regions south of the Gobi Desert. A small number of earrings and tripods have also been excavated from the Tevshi culture, so it is clear that there was some exchange with these regions.

In the final chapter we examined the origins of the Tevsh culture, taking into account the factors we have considered so far, as well as factors such as climate. Firstly, the accepted theory on climate suggests that the region underwent significant changes around 3500 BC. This is important in relation to the sudden appearance of monuments in the semi-arid grasslands of the Gobi Plain and south-eastern Mongolia. On a global scale, this is a phenomenon associated with the 4.2k event, and it can be thought that environmental changes due to progressive aridification were one of the triggers for the emergence and spread of the Tevsh culture. In addition, when the chronology was organised, it was found that the Shorgooljin grave appeared first, and then the Uraanzuukh-type monument coexisted. After that, the number of Durvuljin tombs seemed to be less than that of the Tevsh culture, and they were often found together with the Khirgisuur, which is thought to have come from the west. The number of livestock also increased compared to the Tevsh culture, and it is possible that the role of pastoralism increased more in the Durvuljin grave phase than in the Tevsi culture, or that the nomadic pastoral lifestyle became more established. In other words, we can see that there was a major cultural change in the Late Bronze Age when the Durbuljin graves appeared. The data analysed in this study is based on the findings of previous research and my own research, but it is undeniable that there are still many areas that need to be addressed. In the future, I would like to create a good database by ensuring accurate excavation and thorough recording, which is a problem for Mongolian archaeology.

Photos



At the gate of Saitama University



On the field of Archaeology