Preliminary Report of the Archaeological Investigations
in Mongolia 2005

by

The Permanent Archaeological Joint Mongolian and Japanese Mission

Contents

Preliminary Report of the Excavation at Ulaan Uushig I in 2005

1. Introduction ....................................................................................................
2. Participants ....................................................................................................
3. Process of the season’s work ...........................................................................
4. Some remarks on this season’s research ........................................................
   1. Khereksur No.12 .......................................................................................
   2. The small stone heap south of Khereksur No.12 ....................................
   3. Slab Grave No.1 on the northeast of Khereksur No. 4 ..........................
   4. The area around Stag Stone No.7 ..........................................................
   5. The re-discovery of Stag Stone No.15 ......................................................
5. Observations on bones from Ulaan Uushig I ..............................................
List of Plates ........................................................................................................
Plates  I-VIII ........................................................................................................

Archaeological survey from Mörön to Ulaanbaatar in 2005 .........................

Bibliography ...........................................................................................................
1. Introduction

In 1999 we started the investigation of the Ulaan Uushig I, Khövsgöl aymag, in Mongolia. This site, rather well known as Uushigiin Övör on which Volkov and Novgorodova reported 15 stag stones, was chosen as an important site for the study of Mongolian Bronze Age, where two main types of Bronze Age constructions, khereksurs and stag stones, were found side by side. At Ulaan Uushig I, we found 15 khereksurs in the North Area of the site, while stag stones are located in the South Area, forming two groups.

We began the research by the excavation of Khereksur No. 1, which occupied the northernmost place of the North Area. Our main objective was to confirm that it was a burial site of the Bronze Age people of this region. That year we made research of the stone heaps constructed mainly on its east side, found horse skulls, neck bones and sometimes hoofs. In parallel to those diggings, we excavated stone circles around stag stone No. 4 in the South Area. There also we found horse skulls, neck bones and hoofs placed in exactly the same manner. Those facts made us conclude that khereksurs and stag stones are of the same period and that the same people made those two types of constructions.

In 2003 and 2004 we excavated the central mound itself. A stag stone ornamented with only two circles was found at the edge of the mound, and pottery shards of “Slab grave culture” type were unearthed on the surface and in the mound. Removing the stones of the mound, we discovered a stone cist, but found neither human bones nor grave goods in it. The reason why there was nothing inside is not clear. This khereksur might have been a memorial grave or the activity of small animals was responsible.

This year we made research in three places. We excavated Khereksur No. 12, a slab grave on the northeast of Khereksur No. 4 and the area around the Stag Stone No. 7. Apart from the results of these excavations, the re-discovery of Stag Stone No. 15, that has been lost for years, is also an important event for the Mongolian archaeology.
2. Participants

Mongolians
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Japanese
  TAKAHAMA Shu (Kanazawa University)
  HAYASHI Toshio (Soka University)
  MATSUBARA Ryuji (Seijoh University)
  KAWAMATA Masanori (Kokushikan University)
  SHINOHARA Toru (National Museum of Japanese History)
  HATAKEYAMA Tei (Yokohama Museum of EurAsian Cultures)
  YAGYU Toshiki (Kanazawa University)
  ISAHAYA Naoto (Kyoto University)
  TANAKA Yuko (Waseda University)
  SOMA Takuya (Waseda University)
3. Process of the season’s work

We arrived at Mörön on 2nd August and began working on 3rd. We first confirmed the positions and the sea levels of several basic points of Ulaan Uushig I, especially in the area where we planned to make research. And then we took photographs of the area before excavation.

On 4th August we found the lower part of Stag Stone No. 7, and began digging at Khereksur No. 12.

On 7th the cleaning work was completed at the eastern half of the Khereksur No. 12.
On 9th stone pavement was found near the stone circle at Stag Stone No. 7.
On 11th a horse skull was found at Stag Stone No. 7 area. President of Mongolia visited our site.

On 12th animal bone was found at the small stone heap south of Khereksur No. 12, and the cleaning of Slab Grave was completed.
On 15th upper stones of eastern half of Khereksur No. 12 were all removed.
On 17th upper stones of Khereksur No. 12 were removed and the stone cist appeared. The construction process of the khereksur was visible clearly.
On 20th a pit and the skeleton within were discovered in Slab Grave.
On 25th bones were uncovered in the stone cist of Khereksur No. 12.
On 30th the restoration of the site was completed.
On 31st Mongolian students left to Ulaanbaatar.
On 1st September we started the archaeological survey from Mörön to Ulaanbaatar.
4. Some remarks on this season’s work

1. Khereksur No. 12

Khereksur No. 12 is one of the smallest khureksurs in Ulaan Uushig I, situated to the east of Stag Stone No. 3. In 2004, we found a stone cist within Khereksur No. 1, but neither human bones nor grave goods were discovered in it. In this season we chose this small khureksur since we wished to confirm again that the khureksurs were constructed as graves. The central mound of the khureksur before the excavation is 9 m in diameter, surrounded by a circular enclosure of 16 m in diameter. To the south of this khureksur is found a small stone heap.

![Fig. 1 Khereksur No. 12 as seen from the north](image)

First we removed the soil between stones and confirmed that the khureksur was on the layer of yellowish brown soil (Fig. 1; Pl. II). That layer is found directly on the virgin soil at many places of Ulaan Uushig I, and Khereksur No.1 with its stone heaps was constructed on that layer.

![Fig. 2 First layer of Khereksur No. 12 as seen from the northwest](image)

Removing the stones that were scattered outside the original mound, we tried to find the edge of the mound, and then recognized that the edge was defined with rows of stones that were put lengthwise leaning toward the center, instead of encircling large stones as was seen at Khereksur No.1. Not only the stones that were placed at the edge, but all the stones of the first layer were seen leaning toward the center (Figs. 2, 3, Pl. II). This peculiar construction process, which has not been found in former excavations, is considered due to the small size of the khureksur, making it unnecessary to define the edge of the mound beforehand.
At the center of the mound was observed an oval structure consisting of radial long stones (Fig. 3). Considering it to be the stone cist, we removed the outside stones (Fig. 4).

The stone cist was oval in shape and composed of 3 or 4 tiers of spiraling long and flat stones. There was no big stone within. As we removed upper stones and the soil inside, we discovered bones almost at the bottom, the level on which is laid the khereksur (Fig. 5).

The stone cist was constructed first by placing seven stones in rectangular form (Fig. 6), then attaching with stones on its outside, finally laying radial long and flat stones spirally, so that the opening at the top dwindled (Pl. IV).

Most of the bones from the cist are judged by Dr. D. Tümen, Professor of the National University of Mongolia, to be those of human child of 5 or 6 years old (in detail, see pp. 75, 76). This judgment is very important for it gives yet another support to the theory that the khureksurs are basically burial sites. According to Prof. Erdenebaatar, this is the fourth case of human remains being found inside the cist of khereksur in Mongolia. Several burned bones from the khereksur, fragmentary skull bones and vertebrae, also belong to the child, the fact that needs some explanation.
Fragmentary animal bones were discovered in the process of excavation, but their relationship with the khereksur is not clear.

In addition, an iron knife was found between stones of upper level (Fig. 7). Its length is 16.7 cm and general shape resembles to that of bronze knives of Spring and Autumn – Warring States period, and the end of the handle is bent to form a tube. A similar iron knife was found at Maoqinggou in Inner Mongolia (Tian, Guo 1986: 295, fig. 56-4).

(Takahama Shu)

2. The small stone heap south of Khereksur No. 12 (Pl. V)

The stone heap was placed on the south side of Kh-12. Beneath this, we found a sheep jawbone and some teeth under a stone.

The stone heap formed a circle, about 3 m in diameter, and was constructed of red granite, the same as Kh-12 (Fig. 8). These stones were placed on the yellowish brown soil or the virgin soil, the same layer as Kh-12. Removing some surface stones, we recognized the core part (Fig. 9). It was square in shape and constructed with bigger stones.

Under the stone which was placed on the most east side of the core part, a sheep jawbone, some pieces of the fragment and six teeth were found. The jawbone was put left side up and the muzzle oriented to the south. The condition of bones was quite bad. Three front teeth and three molar teeth were found near the jawbone. These bones and teeth were placed directly below the stone. And they were put in the upper layer in a hole, which was observed under the core part.

The hole had the soft brown soil inside and dug in the virgin soil. Except sheep bones and teeth, we could not find any artifacts or animal bones.

This stone heap was placed close to Kh-12, but did not destroy any part of the khereksur. And its character is different from other stone heaps, which we have excavated around Khereksur No. 1. They had horse skulls which were put orienting to the east. These were constructed so that bigger stones enclosed the outside of heaps, and the inside were put smaller ones. In the buried animals,
in the form, and in the feature of construction, this stone heap is considered as the particular one. But we cannot recognize any relationship between this and Kh-12.

(TANAKA Yuko)

3. Slab Grave No. 1 on the northeast of Kh-4 (Pl. VI)

This slab grave is located on the northeast of the Kh-4, the biggest khereksur in Ulaan Uushig I. It was chosen for excavation, since, in addition to the fact that it was the only slab grave in this area, it appeared to have destroyed the eastern part of the northern pavement of Kh-4, providing the clue as to the relationship between khereksurs and the slab graves.

We began the excavation by removing the soil between stones. Slab Grave No.1 is squarish in shape, but with the convex, nearly semicircular, south side (Fig. 10). Its size: East-West 3.5 m, North-South 4.5 m. Stones are laid within the slab enclosure and small stones are laid outside the southeastern, southern and southwestern slabs. Slabs are set lengthwise and all leaning outward. To the west of the slab grave, four or five slabs are set also lengthwise in a line, but their connection with the slab grave is not clear.

Through the observation of the cross section of layers, we judged this slab grave was constructed on the yellowish brown soil, the same layer on which khereksurs were also constructed. The slabs were inserted into the virgin soil, leaving V-shaped hollows in cross section, which were filled with darkish brown soil later. Since V-shape of the hollows is leaned outward, especially those of east and west, we consider slabs were inserted into the hollows from outside, and then set to the upright position. Small stones outside the enclosure were laid also on the layer of yellowish brown soil, confirming the observation by A. D. Tsybiktarov that slab graves and the outside stones are contemporaneous (Tsybiktarov 1998: 32-43).

A pit was found inside the enclosure and a skeleton was found at the bottom (Figs. 11, 12). The pit was dug into the virgin soil. We did not succeed in defining its contour clearly because of several holes of small animals. The skeleton was not in a good condition but despite damages given by small animals, its skull, pelvis, leg bones etc. were found in situ.
The skeleton is of male of 50 to 55 years old, his height 161 cm (in detail, see p. 76), and his head oriented to the southeast.

Between his legs was found a pair of bow attachments made of antler (Figs. 13, 14). Another fragmentary attachment was found in the upper level of the burial pit. The bow was probably placed under his body.

This kind of bow attachment is widely distributed among Eurasian nomads, having been used by people of Slab Grave culture, Xiongnu, Xianbei and even in the Medieval Ages. It is very difficult to determine the date of this grave precisely by these artifacts.

4. The area around Stag Stone No. 7 (Pl. VII)

Stag Stone No. 7 appeared to be deeply inserted into the earth, visible only its upper part. When V. V. Volkov and E. A. Novgorodova made research here, they could see the entire stag stone and reported it. We wanted to examine its entirety by digging out the lower part from the earth. Removing the soil around it, we soon noticed that the lower part is not deep in the earth, but broken and lying nearby. The stag stone was broken into two, the upper part above the earth, the lower part lying in the earth.
As we excavated around Stag Stone No. 7, it became apparent that it was surrounded by a stone circle of about 4 m in diameter. The stone circle is placed on the yellowish brown soil, the same layer on which stood Kh-1, Kh-12, and Slab Grave No. 1. On the northeast of the stone circle a square stone pavement was found (Fig. 15). It is about 2 m x 2 m, rimmed with small stones. The surface of the pavement was made more flat than the pavements, which were found under the stone heaps belonging to Khereksur No. 1 and the stone circles near the Stag Stone No. 4. It appeared to extend under the stone circle, surrounding the stag stone. A very small fragment of green stone (turquoise?), 5 mm x 6 mm, was found from the stone pavement (Fig. 16).

![Fig. 15 Stone pavement and Stag Stone No. 7](image1)

![Fig. 16 Green stone fragment](image2)

As we excavated around Stag Stone No. 7, it became apparent that it was surrounded by a stone circle of about 4 m in diameter. The stone circle is placed on the yellowish brown soil, the same layer on which stood Kh-1, Kh-12, and Slab Grave No. 1. On the northeast of the stone circle a square stone pavement was found (Fig. 15). It is about 2 m x 2 m, rimmed with small stones. The surface of the pavement was made more flat than the pavements, which were found under the stone heaps belonging to Khereksur No. 1 and the stone circles near the Stag Stone No. 4. It appeared to extend under the stone circle, surrounding the stag stone. A very small fragment of green stone (turquoise?), 5 mm x 6 mm, was found from the stone pavement (Fig. 16).

Two stone heaps appeared to the east of Stag Stone No. 7 and one stone heap to the southwest (Figs. 17-19). The latter stone heap, which emerged at the corner of our excavation area, is considered to be only a part of a big stone heap, extending to the southwest. We again observed those stone heaps were constructed on the layer of yellowish brown soil.

Pavement of small stones was found around the stone heaps, especially to the east of the southeastern stone heap. It resembles the stone pavement found at stone circles near Stag Stone No. 4, and under the stone heaps belonging to Khereksur No. 1.
A horse skull was discovered between two eastern stone heaps, its muzzle orienting to the east (Fig. 20). Since, to date, horse head bones have been found under the stone heaps belonging to khereksur or from stone circles near stag stones, this discovery was a little unexpected of.

The excavation of this area brought us several important problems: how Stag Stone No. 7 was inserted into ground originally, what is the pavement extending under the stone circle, the relationship between the stag stone and the stone heaps, how big the southwestern stone heap is, why the horse head was placed at the present spot, different from others, etc.

Because of the time limit of this season, we decided to stop the excavation here and cover the area with soil until the next season. We will resume the work here in the next summer to answer these problems.

5. The re-discovery of Stag Stone No. 15

V. V. Volkov and E. A. Novgorodova reported 15 stag stones when they wrote about this site in 1975 (Волков, Novgorodova 1975), and Volkov published the same stag stones in his book in 1981 and 2002 (Волков 1981; 2002). However D. Tseveendorzh wrote about 14 stag stones later (Цэвээндорж 1979), and when we visited the site in 1997, we also found only 14 stag stones, without seeing Stag Stone No. 15 according to the Volkov/Novgorodova’s number.

Stag Stone No. 15 is described as the finest stag stone in Ulaan Uushig I, decorated with interesting design of two beasts of prey attacking a horse.

In this season we dug small trenches (width 50 cm, depth 30 cm) in wide area where this stag stone might be lying, but could not find it.

The curator of the Khövsgöl aymag Museum in Mörön told Prof. D. Erdenebaatar about a stag stone in their possession, and as we went to see it, it turned out to be Stag Stone No. 15, which had been missing from the site for years (Fig. 21, Pl. VIII).

The stag stone is not in a perfect condition, the lower part is missing and some parts are also missing in the middle and upper parts. One beast of prey is lost and only the pommel of stag head
design is left from the dagger.

It is very regrettable that the stag stone has not been preserved in the same good condition as V. V. Volkov and E. A. Novgorodova found 30 years ago.

Professor Matsubara found another small fragment of the stag stone (length 39 cm), which resembled in quality of stone to the one Professor Erdenebaatar had found two years ago (Fig. 22). It is too small to recognize the design.

(TAKAHAMA Shu)
5. Observations on bones from Ulaan Uushig I

by Dr. D. Tümen
Professor of the National University of Mongolia

Bones from Khereksur No. 12

From the stone cist, August 26th (Fig.5, 6; Pl. IV)
1. Fragment of animal mandible with two teeth.
2. Fragment of left ulna of child of 5-6 years old.
3. Right radius of child of 5-6 years old.
4. Right ulna of child of 5-6 years old.
5. Fragment of Glenoid cavity of left scapula of child of 5-6 years old.
6. Ilium’s fragment of hip bone of child of 5-6 years old.
7. Left femur of child of 5-6 years old.
8. Right tibia condyles of child of 5-6 years old.
9. Left 11th rib of child of 5-6 years old.
10. Right femur of child of 5-6 years old.
11. Fragment diaphis of tibial bone and 1st thoracic vertebrae of child of 5-6 years old.
12. Left fibula of child of 5-6 years old.
13. Small fragment condyles of left tibia of child of 5-6 years old.
14. Fragment of left tibia of child of 5-6 years old.
15. Burned head of left humerus of child of 5-6 years old.
16. Left 8th rib of child of 5-6 years old.

From other places between the stones
August 26th
1. Fragment of mandible and rib of sheep or goat.
2. Four femurs and a mandible, a tibia (maybe marmot’s) and two femurs of very small rodent.
3. Fragment of hip bone, vertebrae and two ribs.

August 25th
1. 1,2,3 first row or proximal phalanges (toe) of the foot and burned 3rd or 4th thoracic vertebrae of child of 5-6 years old.
2. Burned very small bones (probably child’s burned head bone pieces).
3. Rib’s fragment of sheep.
4. Fragments of burned bones (maybe from child’s skull).

August 24th
1. Burned lumbar vertebrae body and two pieces of rib or ribs.
2. 4 tibia and 1 femur bones of small wild animal (maybe marmot?).
3. Rib’s fragment of sheep or goat?
4. Fragment of sheep or goat’s glenoid cavity.

August 23rd
1. Very small bone pieces, not possible to define.
August 19th
1. Mandible (1 piece), tibia 2, femur 3, humer 2 of rodents (2·3 individuals) and fragment of femur or humer bone of animal (not possible to define species).
2. Burned bone pieces (small fragment of skull and glenoid cavity of scapula).
3. Burned bone pieces of skull and burned lumbar vertebrae. body of child of 5·6 years old.

August 17th
1. Fragment of right cheek or malar bone of child of 5·6 years old.
2. Burned two bones of skull.
3. Two femurs and tibia, fibula bone of marmot?

August 16th
1. Long bone fragment of large animal and long bones of two rodent individuals.

August 15th
1. Sheep right ankle bone and tibia fragment.
2. Right part of mandible of very small rodent.
3. Two femurs, two tibia of marmot.
4. Long bones (femur, tibia, humerus of 4·5 individuals of rodent).
5. Small fragment of long bone sheep or goat.
6. Long bone fragments of large animal.
7. Sheep left ankle bone.

August 12th
1. Sheep or goat’s tooth.

August 11th
1. Four teeth of sheep or goat.

Undated
1. Fragment of left mandible of sheep or goat.
2. Many small fragments of long bones of sheep or goat.

Bones from Slab Grave No. 1 (Fig. 12)

There was found uncompleted skeleton of male individual 50·55 years of age. Skull without mandible, all long bones, most of them were uncompleted. Most of teeth were fallen when the person was alive. Body height is 161.03 cm (by Trotter and Glaser formula). Very clear Pathology on the 4th and 5th lumbar vertebrae and promontory’s side was defined. Apart from the human bones, a long bone fragment of a large animal was found on August 22nd.
List of Plates

Pl. I  General map of Ulaan Uushig I
Pl. II  Plan of Kherekusur No.12 and the small stone heap after cleaning
Pl. III  First layer stones of Kherekusur No.12
Pl. IV  Stone cist of Kherekusur No.12
   1. Third layer of the stone cist
   2. Second layer of the stone cist
   3. First layer of the stone cist
   4. Unearthed bones
Pl. V  Core part of the small stone heap south of Kherekusur No.12
Pl. VI  Slab Grave No.1
Pl. VII  Area around Stag Stone No.7
Pl. VIII  Rubbings of Re-discovered Stag Stone No.15
Pl. I General map of Ulaan Uushig I
Pl. II  Plan of Khereksur No. 12 and the small stone heap after cleaning
Pl. III  First layer stones of Khereksur No. 12
1. Third layer of the stone cist
2. Second layer of the stone cist
3. First layer of the stone cist
4. Unearthed bones

Pl. IV Stone Cist of Khereksur No. 12
Pl. V Core part of the small stone heap south of Khereksur No.12
Pl. VI  Slab Grave No. 1
Pl. VII Area around Stag Stone No. 7
Pl. VIII  Rubbings of Re-discovered Stag Stone No. 15
Archaeological Survey from Möörön to Ulaanbaatar in 2005

01 Sept. (Thu.)

Dörvöljin am (Khövsgöl aymag, Shine-Ider sum; N48 54 58.6; E99 20 56.4)

There is a big khureksur with four stag stones, two of which were published by V.V. Volkov (2002: 90-91, Табл. 92-1, 3) [Fig. 1]. We made rubbings of two sides of Volkov’s No.1 [Fig. 2] and four sides of his No.2 [Fig. 4]. We observed that one front leg of the upper deer is bent [Fig. 3], while it is depicted straight on the Volkov’s illustration. Anyhow, the straight legs representation of deer is typical of the early Scythian period (8th-6th centuries B.C.).

Four kilometers west of Dörvöljin am, there is another site: Tsokhiotyn am (N48 53 21.8; E99 18 43.1; N48 53 22.7; E99 18 41.9). The site is consisted of khereksurs and two stag stones (Fig. 5), one of which was published by V.V. Volkov (2002: 91-92, Табл. 91-2).
Between those two sites, there are two stone enclosures of Old Turkic period (N48 54 º 16.5 ´; E99 20 º 25.9 ´). One of them is measured 7.17x6.5m. Outside of the eastern edge, there stands a stela without representations; it means this is not a stone statue. East of the stela, a long (about 500m) row of 53 balbal-stones runs to the east (Fig. 6, 7).

Nükhtiyn am (Khövsgöl aimag, Galt sum; N48 49 º 46.7 ´; E99 46 º 49.5 ´; 47 º 33.4 ´)

Along the River Nükht gol, there spread many khereksurs and 9 stag stones, most of which were published by V.V. Volkov (2002, Òàáë. 99-102).

02 Sept. (Fri.)

Khöshöötiyn am (Khövsgöl, Galt sum; N48 42 º 41.6 ´; 42 º 18.2 ´; E99 53 º 54.5 ´; 53 º 40.4 ´)

Along the River Salbar gol, there spread a long row of balbal-stones, nearly 10 khereksurs, and 6 stag stones (Fig. 10) [Volkov 2002: 85, Òàáë. 85-86]. The western isolated stag stone,
not mentioned by V.V. Volkov, has only three rings without deer representations (l, 186cm; w, 18cm; d, 73cm) [Fig. 11]. Stag stone No.4 now stands upside-down, so the dagger handle is downward [Fig. 12]. One of the khureksurs has two stone rows, so-called “moustaches” to the east [Fig. 13]. I have pointed out that a kind of a kurgan “with moustaches” (курган “усаами” in Russian) spreads not only in Kazakhstan but also in the Tien Shan, Chinese Altay and Western Mongolia [Hayashi 1999].

Two kilometers west of Dongoy, just north of the main road “A0603”, there is a khereksur and a slab grave (Arkhangay aymag, Öndör-Ulaan sum: N47 51 09.6 E100 45 14.5). In the robber’s hole of the grave, there is a stag stone (l, 259cm; w, 17cm; d, 59cm) which was not mentioned by V.V. Volkov [Fig. 14].

03 Sept. (Sat.)

Artsatyn am (Arkhangay aymag, Ikh Tamir sum: N47 34 25.1 E101 17 51.3 E17 32.2)

Just east of the main road “A0603” between Ikh Tamir and Shar Bulagiyn davaa, there is a small valley, where is full of khureksurs and stag stones not mentioned by V.V. Volkov. In the depth of the valley, one stag stone (h, 121cm; w, 14cm; d, 92cm) is reused as a standing corner stone of a slab grave (Fig. 15). In the mouth of the valley, there is another
stag stone reused as a part of a slab grave (Fig. 16).

**Center of Ikh Tamir sum**

On the back of the building of Ikh Tamir sum government, there stands a stag stone and a Turkic stone statue without head. The stag stone was published by V.V. Volkov (Вolkов 2002: 32, Tabl. 3:1) [Fig. 17]. One slanting line on the upper front side is very rare (Fig. 18); two or three lines are common.

The long beards of the statue are unique (Fig. 19). Other elements, 1) holding a small stand of a cup with a thumb and a forefinger of a right hand; 2) grasping a sword with a left hand; 3) a belt ornamented with square plates; 4) a round small bag and a whetstone hung from a belt) are typical of the Turkic stone statues of the 7th-8th centuries (Hayashi 2005: 20-47). Local people say that the head was damaged and lost three years before. Hungarian archaeologist, Erdély I. published a photograph of this undamaged statue (Erdélyi 1978). On the backside of the statue we can see slightly the traces of deer representations. This shows that this statue was reused from a stag stone.

**Altan-sandal 1** (Arkhangay aymag, Ikh Tamir sum; N47°32’20.8”; E101°01’59.1’’)

On the left bank of the river Khoyd Tamir, 14 km west of the center of Ikh Tamir sum, there is a big flat hill, Altan-sandal (Golden chair). To the west of Altan-sandal, a Turkic stone statue stands in front of the eastern side of a mostly broken small stone enclosure. The
head is falling down on the back. The statue faces to the east-southeast (h, 145cm; w, 39cm; d, 23cm) [Fig. 20]. A small anthropomorphic stone (h, 60cm) stands beside the statue. We can see the traces of a belt and deer representations of both standing stones (Fig. 21). We suppose that these stones might have been cut into two pieces from one stag stone. We have published this stone statue on the article (Hayashi 1996). We could not find a row of balbal-stones.

Altan-sandal 2 (N47 33 00.5 E101 01 54.6)

To the north of Altan-sandal, there lies a mountain, on the flat top of which spread khereksurs and slab graves. Six or seven stag stones were reused as a corner stone of a slab grave [Fig. 22]. The most remarkable stag stone was published by V.V. Volkov as stag stone No.1 (Волков 2002: 32-33, Табл. 4-1) [Fig. 23]. On the left side we can see horse representations probably dated to the early Scythian period, while on the right side we can see deer representations probably dated to a little earlier than the early Scythian period.
According to V.V. Volkov, on the upper front side is depicted a curled beast of prey (Волков 2002: 32-33, Табл. 4-1), clearly dated to the early Scythian period, but only curled carving can be seen. Unfortunately we cannot confirm whether the curled carving depicts a beast of prey.

04 Sept. (Sun.)

We visited to see the excavated area of Khar Khorin, where the Mongol-German (Bonn University) expedition is working.

(Hayashi Toshio)
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