

【Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (S)】

Broad Section A



Title of Project : The foundation and development of Suyab, an ancient multicultural trading city of the Silk Road: Coexistence of agricultural-urban and transhumance spheres

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Research Project Number : 21H04984

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Term of Project : FY2021-2025

Budget Allocation : 146,700 thousand Yen

Keyword : Ak-Beshim, Suyab, Agricultural urban space, Nomads, Silk Road

【Purpose and Background of the Research】

Ak-Beshim archaeological site located in the northern part of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, formerly known as Suyab, was a city colonized and built by the Sogdians, traders of the Silk Road, in the 5th century. In the latter half of the 7th century, Suyab Garrison City, the military base of the Tang Dynasty was also built in the adjacent area.

Based on the results of archaeological excavations since 2011, this project will excavate Suyab more systematically, aiming for detailed reconstruction of history and people's lives from the establishment of the city to its decline around the 10th century. Furthermore, since this is a region where the farming city settlers and nomads, or different religions came into contact and coexisted, we aim to clarify the contact and exchange between the agricultural world and the nomadic world, the nomads and the Tang dynasty, or the conflict and coexistence of various religions.

To comprehensively elucidate these issues based on the achievements and experiences thus far, leading-edge scholars in the fields of archeology, art history, architectural history, bioarcheology, conservation science, medical science, organic chemistry, geography, folklore, history, and religious archaeology will collaborate to clarify interdisciplinary and multifacetedly the lives of people at Ak Besim site and the surrounding steppes.

【Research Methods】

The research organization is comprised of management team and eight research teams: archeology, art and architectural history, bioarcheology, conservation science, archaeo-medical science, archaeo-organic chemistry, geography and folklore, and history and religion.

Each research teams are a self-contained module, and each team conducts research independently. At the same time, each team cooperates to comprehensively reconstruct the clothing, food, shelter, culture, and history of the inhabitants in the cultural sphere including the site. Each research team will cooperate and collaborate to promote research on the following themes.

(1) To systematically excavate the entire site of Suyab to clarify the commonalities and differences in the lifestyles of Sogdians and Chinese, and their relationship based on the materials excavated from Sogdian settlement and the Tang military facilities (Suyab Garrison City).

(2) In addition to traditional archaeological excavation and research, new approaches will be tested involving cutting-edge technologies in various fields to analyze excavated materials from different angles, and to restore

the history and culture of Suyab and people's lives.

(3) Conduct research focusing on the nomadic world and elucidate the coexistence with farming city settlers.

(4) Clarify the aspects of contact and symbiosis of various religions spreading through the Silk Road to this area.

(5) Comprehensively elucidate the city Suyab (agricultural urban space) and the Chu River basin area (nomadic world) as one space, to build a model for understanding the coexistence of agricultural urban space and nomadic world in a similar environment located along the Silk Road.

【Expected Research Achievements and Scientific Significance】

The actual aspect of the exchanges and coexistence of the East and West, of different ethnic groups, cultures, or religions in the trading city of the Silk Road will be elucidated using concrete materials.

By comprehensively elucidating the agricultural urban space, Suyab, and the nomadic world, the Chu River basin, as one space, the "Suyab Model" will be constructed enabling us to understand the symbiotic relationship of the two living spheres that exist widely along the Silk Road. Furthermore, since the "Suyab model" will be a highly versatile model for understanding and restoring human life in a similar natural environment, we will disseminate this model internationally and contribute to academics.

By collaborating with researchers in the field of medicine and applying cutting-edge technologies and methodologies, we will develop new approaches and methodologies in line with this research, as well as creating new fields such as "archaeo-medical science" and "archaeo-organic chemistry".

The findings obtained from this research will increase the value of Suyab as a cultural heritage, lead to utilizing this World Heritage Site as a tourism resource, and will greatly contribute to the SDGs.

【Publications Relevant to the Project】

Yamauchi, K. and Amanbaeva, B. eds. (2020) *Ak-Beshim (Suyab) 2019*. The National Academy of the Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic, Teikyo University Research Institute of Cultural Properties.

Yamauchi, K. (2019) Transformation of the plan of the

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