

**The Spread of Agriculture Through the Japanese Islands:  
people, crops, and language**

*Abstract*

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The spread of agriculture into Northeast Asia involved immigrants introducing and directly practicing new cropping techniques *and* the adoption of those techniques by indigenous peoples through acculturation. These two processes are dubbed the DDM (demic diffusion model) and the CDM (cultural diffusion model). For the spread of agriculture through Japan, DDM operated in the first two phases in the 1st millennium BC and CDM in the third phase in the 1st millennium AD. However, DDM and CDM can occur simultaneously and can result in population admixtures, as immigrants intermarry with locals whose descendants then become migrants in spreading cropping techniques further.

The presence of paddyfields and canals is tangible evidence of a new subsistence system, whereas the presence of foodstuffs (such as grains and seeds) may result from trade and exchange. Dry-field crops grown in an extensive agricultural regime tend not to leave physical field evidence other than plant remains *per se* (including phytoliths). However, in Japan, more sites are being discovered with plough marks (signaling dry field cultivation), and limited-area ridge (*une*) and furrow constructions, similar to those common in kitchen gardens today. Moreover, the intentional burning of woodlands and fields, both during swidden agriculture and for the maintenance of grasslands, is another aspect of agricultural management that is not being addressed. Our presentations will outline the state of data, problems in interpreting these data, and potential future research on the topics of population dispersion and growth, field and crop types following the inception of agriculture, and processes of language change and dialect development.