

Title:

The dual structure hypothesis after 30 years

Co-presenters:

Dr. Shigeki Nakagome (genetics)

Dr. Mark Hudson (archaeology)

Abstract:

The dual structure model, originally proposed by Hanihara (1991), explains morphological similarities between geographically distant populations, the Ainu living in Hokkaido and the people living in Ryukyu Islands, by the admixture between two different ancestries, Jomon and Yayoi. Archaeological evidence provides the history of cultural transition; the Neolithic Jomon culture began after the Late Paleolithic period and is characterized with a hunter-gatherer lifestyle that included some of the earliest pottery in the world, while the post-Neolithic Yayoi culture began 2,000-3,000 years ago and included weaving, metalworking, and large-scale rice cultivation. Since Hanihara's original work, however, there have been a number of major new findings from archaeology, anthropology, genetics and linguistics which have added new components to the dual structure theory. Firstly, the Ryukyu Islanders do not seem to be directly descended only from the Jomon; instead, immigration from mainland Japan played a major role in the population history of Ryukyu Islands since the Middle Ages. In Hokkaido, recent research has found that the Okhotsk people played a significant role in Ainu genetic history. Another major change since 1991 has been new radiocarbon dates for the start of the Yayoi period, which has been moved back to around 900 BC. While it is still widely accepted that the Yayoi period saw significant immigration into the Japanese Islands, the exact timing of that immigration is unclear. This presentation aims to provide new perspective on the original dual structure model and to seek the possibility of future collaborations to advance our knowledge on the origin of modern Japanese.