

Section HUMAN DIVERSITY

RUSSIAN FIELD STUDIES OF ETHNIC GROUPS IN CHINA AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

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The Russian school of physical anthropology is one of the oldest in Europe. Russian researchers have been actively engaged in studying modern and ancient populations in multinational Russia and abroad. In the 19th century N.N. MiklukhoMaklay described several ethnic groups of the Malay Peninsula and Oceania. In the 20th century a wide range of methods and hypotheses relating to craniology, anthropometry, dental anthropology, dermatoglyphics, and genetics was introduced, and further studies of various populations of the world were carried out. In 1956–58, N.N. Cheboksarov worked in China. He studied northern and southern Chinese and other ethnic groups in Guangdong – Huay, Yao, Miao, Li (see *Ethnic anthropology of China, in Russian, Moscow, 1982*). Data on the peoples of China are important for elaborating the classification of Asian Mongoloids. According to Cheboksarov, Mongoloids fall into the Continental and Pacific branches. The latter branch is divided into Eastern (Arctic and Far Eastern) and Southern Mongoloids. All native peoples of South China, Southeast Asia, and several neighboring regions form the southern Mongoloid area. Cheboksarov described the Eastern Himalayan anthropological type of southern Mongoloids together with the TaiMalay and Indonesian varieties. Anthropometric and dental variation in Thai (three local groups), Khmu, northern Viet, Cham, and Churu was studied by I.M. Zolotareva, A.G. Kozintsev, and G.A. Aksyanova during the SovietVietnamese ethnographic and anthropological expeditions in 1976–78 and 1984 (see in *The Paths of Mankind's Biological History, in Russian, Moscow, 2002*). Three major phenomena were described: (1) contacts between Mongoloids and VeddoAustraloids in Southeast Asia; (2) increase of Mongoloid features in Vietnam from the Bronze Age onward; (3) the affinities of the northern Viet with the Far Eastern racial type. In 1987, V.P. Alexeev studied the aboriginal groups of the Tay Nguyen plateau and in 198890 V.A. Sheremetieva studied several groups of northern and southern Viet (unpublished results). East and Southeast Asia remain the key areas for field work and theoretical research.

Key words: *physical anthropology, Russia, China, Indochina, Vietnam*

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SART KALMYKS OF THE ISSYK KUL PROVINCE, KIRGHIZSTAN: THE ANALYSIS OF FIELD DATA

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The Sart Kalmyks are a small group of Oirat origin now living in the Ak-Suu District, Issyk Kul Province, Republic of Kirghizstan. It is impossible to accurately determine their number at present: according to the 2009 census, 3800 people were counted, but ¾ of the Kalmyks were recorded as Kirghiz for social reasons. The headcount in four villages – Chelpek, Burma-Suu, Tash-Kyya and Beryu-Bash, where 90% of the population are Sart Kalmyks – is about 12 thousand people. Due to their Western Mongolian origin the Sart Kalmyks speak a language which is very close to Kalmyk. At this moment, only few of its speakers have remained, mostly the elderly. Original ethno-cultural characteristics are gradually giving way to Kirghiz and general Muslim traditions. The language, ethnography, and history of the Karakol Kalmyks were studied by scholars such as A.V. Burdukov (1935), Sh. Dondukov (1973), E.R. Tenishev (1976), N.L. Zhukovskaya (1980), D.A. Pavlov (1984),