

1,800 years old tomb group found in central China

A tomb complex likely used by nomadic people to bury their dead was recently discovered in Yinxu archaeological site in Anyang City, Henan Province.

Over 90 tombs were excavated, among which 18 were believed to have been the final resting place of a nomadic group. From soil samples and some of the items unearthed, the tombs are believed to be around 1,800 years old, according to the Institute of Archaeology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences Anyang station.

Shen Wenxi, with the station, said evidence has been found that indicates that Dasikong Village, the area where the tombs are located, had been a human settlement since as early as the Shang Dynasty (1600 B.C.-1046 B.C.). The 18 nomadic tombs, which are relatively small and made from brick, were likely built after the Shang Dynasty.

The burial objects include two-handled bronze and iron pots, iron short swords and agate beads on strings – all typical items of nomadic people of the time. Experts believe that the 18 tombs could belong to the northern nomads who settled down in central China.

Among the remains was a well-preserved human skeleton, which was initially confirmed to be a male over 160 cm tall. Anthropologists will test the remains and hopefully shed light on the origins of these nomadic people, said Shen.

In the 1950s, a tomb containing similar burial items was discovered in Dasikong. This discovery, however, was the first time such a large nomadic tomb complex has been discovered in Anyang. Further exploration will continue.

Yinxu, or the Ruins of Yin, is one of China's oldest archaeological sites. Named after the last capital of Shang, the Ruins of Yin was where the earliest written Chinese characters were discovered, etched on bone and tortoise shell.