

Neolithic stone burial site found on China-Russia border

Chinese archaeologists have discovered a Neolithic stone burial site by the side of a river on the border between China and Russia.

The Xiaonanshan ruins in Raohe County, northeast China's Heilongjiang Province, are located on the Chinese side of the Wusuli River, known as Ussuri in Russia.

Archeologists have excavated more than 20 tombs and unearthed a trove of cultural relics including jade, stoneware and pottery, dating back around 9,000 years, according to the provincial institute of archaeology.

Li Youqian with the institute said the tombs are built with malmstone and basalt. Basalt cannot be found in the surrounding area, which means that ancient people transported the stone from other areas, he said.

The tomb chambers have very small space, some less than one meter long and archeologists believe that the bodies were placed in the tomb on one side with limbs flexed.

Li said the tombs also suggested a gap between the rich and poor in burial practices, as some tombs have large amounts of burial artifacts while others have none.

Traces of powdered human bones were found in some tombs. Further study will be required to identify the burial customs and living behaviors of the ancient community, he said.

The ruins were found at Xiaonanshan, a public park on a small hill, where residents enjoy views of the river and Russia on the other side.

Yang Yongcai, a local cultural official, said the river has abundant fish stock and the surrounding large areas of virgin forest would have provided sufficient food sources for early human settlers.