

Back to the Source: Exploring Northeast Asia for the Origins of the First Americans

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The peopling of the Americas was a complex process that played out over 20,000 years or more, from the early formation of ancestral human populations in northeast Asia (> 35,000 years ago) to their eventual dispersal north into the Arctic, east across the Bering Land Bridge, and finally south throughout the rest of the Americas. In this presentation, we examine the first chapter in this saga, reviewing the Paleolithic archaeological record of China, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, and Russia to address the question, “Who Were the Ancestors of the First Americans?”. Along the way, we reconcile the archaeology of early Asia with the prevailing genetic model — unmasking potential archaeological progenitors and discovering likely ‘homelands’ — all the while considering links with the Pre-Clovis record of Beringia as well as North and South America.