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Types and Chronology of Bronze Ornaments for Girdles of the Mohe-Nuzhen Tradition

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Abstract Bronze ornaments for girdles of the Mohe-Nuzhen tradition unearthed from sites at Mohe, Bohai, and Nuzhen can be classified into two phases. One phase overlaps both the Mohe and early Bohai periods. These bronze ornaments for girdles of the Sumo Mohe-Bohai tradition are mostly distributed in the valleys of Songhuajiang and Mudanjiang. The other phase is called the Nuzhen period, when bronze ornaments for girdles belonged to the Heishui Mohe-Bohai tradition, and are frequently seen in the Heilongjiang Valley.

Keywords: Mohe, Nuzhen, bronze ornaments for girdles, archaeological research

1. Archaeological Discoveries

Bronze ornaments for girdles (bronze, card-shaped, and attached on waistbands) of the Mohe-Nuzhen tradition are rectangular or round artifacts with various decoration patterns hollowed out on the surface and 2 to 4 raised fasteners on the back. They were unearthed from sites of Mohe, Bohai, and Nuzhen in Northeastern China, the Far East of Russia, and even in Hokkaido, Japan^[1]. In China, sites from which bronze ornaments for girdles of the Mohe-Nuzhen tradition were unearthed were mostly distributed in the valleys of Songhuajiang and Mudanjiang^[2]. In addition, there were a few more discoveries in the valleys of Tumenjiang, Yalujiang, and Heilongjiang (Figure I).

Yangtun Site lies 500 m southeast of Yangtun Village, Wulajie Town, Yongji County of Jilin Province, in the middle valley of Songhuajiang. Seventy tombs of the Mohe-Bohai period were excavated in 1979 and 1980, and fifty-three bronze ornaments for girdles of the Mohe-Nuzhen tradition were found, thirty rectangular and the rest round. Tombs in the third cultural stage of Yangtun Site, excavated in 1979, have radiocarbon dates of 1460 ± 70 or 1440 ± 95 BP from charcoal

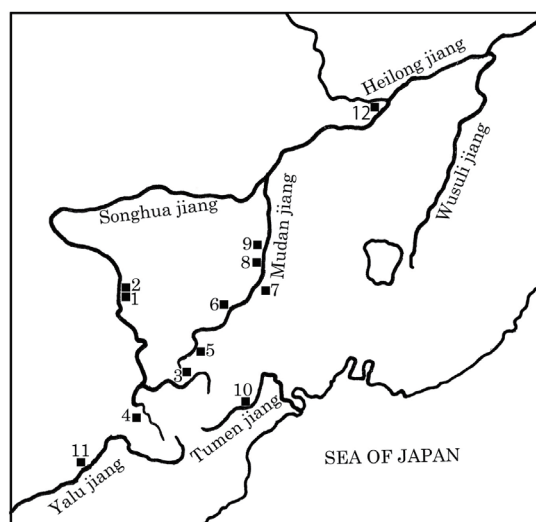


Figure I. The sketch map showing the distribution of bronze ornaments for girdles of the Mohe-Nuzhen tradition

1. Yangtun Site, 2. Chaliba Cemetery, 3. Dongqing Cemetery, 4. Yon-g'an Site, 5. Liudingshan Cemetery, 6. Hongzunyuchang Cemetery, 7. Shichanggou Cemetery, 8. Xilinhe Cemetery, 9. Hekou Site, 10. Huizhang Cemetery, 11. Dongtaizi Site, 12. Suibin 3 Cemetery

samples. Moreover, copper coins with the characters “开元通宝” of Tang Dynasty were discovered from Tomb 17. This proves that the date of the tombs in the upper layer of Yangtun Site is from the 6th to the 7th century^[6].

Chaliba Cemetery is located about 1 km south of

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Chaliba Village, Wulajie Town, Yongji County in Jilin Province. It is about 800 m south of Yangtun Site. Two tombs were excavated in 1985, and twenty-five rectangular bronze ornaments for girdles of the Mohe-Nuzhen tradition were unearthed in Tomb 1^[7]. Another forty-five tombs were excavated in 1987 and 1988, among which was Tomb 31 which had seventeen rectangular and one round bronze ornament for girdles of the Mohe-Nuzhen tradition. There are many similarities between tombs in Chaliba Cemetery and those in the upper level of Yangtun Cemetery, such as the tomb shape, burial custom, and features of the grave goods. Tomb 10 of Chaliba Cemetery has a radiocarbon date of about 1480±105 BP from the charcoal sample. Copper coins with the characters “开元通宝” of Tang Dynasty were found from Tomb 27. The date of Chaliba Cemetery is most likely the same as that of the upper level tombs in Yangtun Cemetery^[8].

Dongqing Cemetery is located 1,500 m north of Dongqing Village, Yongqing Town, Antu County of Jilin Province, in the upper valley of Songhuajiang. Thirteen tombs were excavated in 1990 and 1991, and two rectangular bronze ornaments for girdles of the Mohe-Nuzhen tradition were unearthed. Dongqing Cemetery is one of the sites of the early Bohai period, which is from the 7th to the 8th century^[3].

Yong'an Site is located 200 m west of Yong'an Village, Songshu Town, Baishan City of Jilin Province, also in the upper valley of Songhuajiang. In 1984, remains of houses, storage pits, etc. were found, with only one rectangular bronze ornament for girdles of the Mohe-Nuzhen tradition discovered in House 3. The ornament belonged to the Mohe and early Bohai periods, from about the 7th to the 8th century^[4].

Liudingshan (Liuding Mount) Cemetery is located 5 km south of Dunhua City in Jilin Province, being in the upper area of Mudanjiang. Seven rectangular bronze ornaments for girdles of the Mohe-Nuzhen tradition were unearthed in 2004 and 2005^[9]. Liudingshan Cemetery belonged to royal families and nobles of the early Bohai period in the 8th century^[10].

Hongzuyuchang Cemetery is located about 15 km northwest of Bohai Town, Ning'an County in Heilongjiang Province, in the lower valley

of Mudanjiang. In 1990, a construction project unearthed the potteries, bronze ornaments for girdles, skeletons, etc. In total, three hundred and twenty-three tombs were excavated during the fieldwork from 1992 to 1995. In Tomb 2205, three rectangular bronze ornaments for girdles of the Mohe-Nuzhen tradition were discovered. The excavators regarded Hongzuyuchang Cemetery as a possible site of the Bohai period, from the 8th to the 9th century^[12].

Shichanggou Cemetery is located 500 m southwest of Shichanggou Village, Hualin Town, Mudanjiang City in Heilongjiang Province, also in the lower valley of Mudanjiang. Eighteen tombs were excavated there in 1982 and 1984. During two field seasons, two rectangular bronze ornaments for girdles of the Mohe-Nuzhen tradition and copper coins with the characters “开元通宝” from Tang Dynasty were discovered. The date is most likely from the 7th to the 8th century^[13].

Xilinhe Site is located in the northeastern part of Hailin City, Heilongjiang Province, in the lower valley of Mudanjiang. In 1996, an excavation crew discovered artifacts such as remains of houses and cellars. During that time, one rectangular bronze ornament for girdles of the Mohe-Nuzhen tradition was found. Xilinhe Site is most likely that of the early Bohai period, from the middle of the 8th to the 10th century^[14].

Hekou Site is located southeast of Hekou Village, Sandaohezi Town, Hailin City in Heilongjiang Province, in the lower valley of Mudanjiang. In 1994 and 1995, a cast mold used to produce bronze ornaments for girdles of the Mohe-Nuzhen tradition was discovered in the Hekou Culture V. This cultural phase belongs to the Bohai period, from the 8th to the 9th century^[15].

Huizhang Cemetery is located 1 km west of Huizhang Village, Yonghua Town, Helong County in Jilin Province, in the valley of Tumenjiang. No archaeological excavations have been carried out in this cemetery. Rectangular bronze ornaments for girdles of the Mohe-Nuzhen tradition and bird-head bronze belt buckles, nine in total, were collected from a destroyed tomb in 1984^[16]. From analyses of the artifacts, Huizhang Cemetery is thought to have been a site from

the early Bohai period, in about the 8th century.

Dongtaizi Site is located 500 m east of Guoneicheng Site, Ji'an County in Jilin Province, in the valley of Yalujiang. Four bronze ornaments for girdles of the Mohe-Nuzhen tradition were discovered in 1963^[17].

Suibin No. 3 Cemetery is located on the right bank of Heilongjiang, about 1 km east of the outfall of Gaolihe into Heilongjiang in Suibin County, Heilongjiang Province. There, fourteen tombs were excavated in 1975, and bronze rectangular ornaments for girdles of the Mohe-Nuzhen tradition were found, nineteen of which were in Tomb 3, and fourteen in Tomb 4^[18]. A study suggests that it is a site of Nuzhen after the middle Liao Dynasty^[19].

2. Types

There are two shapes of bronze ornaments for girdles of the Mohe-Nuzhen tradition: rectangular and round. The majority is the former shape.

The rectangular can be divided into five types by the pattern of surface decoration.

Type A: Often has flat top, two or three rectangular holes in the center, and three or four homocentric round and triangular hollows in lower part. Some individual differences in detailed patterns. 5.4 to 6.6 cm long, 4.5 to 4.8 cm wide and 0.2 to 0.25 cm thick (Figure II, 1-3, 19).

Type B: Often has eight round raised points in a line on top, three vertical rectangular hollows in upper part, five parallel homocentric round hollows in lower part, and five round raised points in a line at bottom. Individual differences between ornaments. 6 to 8 cm long, 4.2 to 5 cm wide and 0.2 to 0.25 cm thick (Figure II, 4, 5, 17, 18, 20-26).

Type C: Often has three parallel raised bird-head-shaped patterns on top, and two or three vertical rectangular hollows in center. 5.4 to 6.2 cm long, 3.4 to 4.1 cm wide and 0.2 to 0.25 cm thick. Can further be divided into two subtypes by patterns on lower areas.

Type Ca: Patterns on lower areas similar to those on Type A. Minor differences between individual ornaments (Figure II, 7, 12, 14, 15).

Type Cb: Patterns on lower areas similar to those on Type B. Minor differences between individual ornaments (Figure II, 6, 8, 13).

Type D: Often has three parallel raised bird-head-shaped patterns on top, three rows of vertical rectangles, cruciforms, or triangular hollows in the central area, and one row of parallel rectangular, cruciform, and triangular hollows in lower part. Flat bottom on which some ornaments have two holes or hinges to which bells can be tied. The dimensions range from 4.7 to 5.4 cm long, 3.9 to 4.3 cm wide and 0.2 cm thick (Figure II, 28-35).

Type E: Often has six parallel raised tooth-shaped patterns on top, and three rows of triangular hollows in center. Lower part has horizontal lines and circular patterns, and bottom is flat (Figure II, 36).

A cast mold used to manufacture bronze ornaments for girdles of the Mohe-Nuzhen tradition was also found in Hekou Culture V. This mold, which has raised patterns on the bottom, is composed of two symmetrical parts, each of which has horizontal lines of patterns on the top, continuous curtain-shaped patterns in the center, and two rows of round holes on the bottom. It is 13.2 cm long and 5.6 cm wide. This mold might have been used to simultaneously cast two bronze ornaments for girdles (Figure II, 27).

The round bronze ornaments for girdles can be classified into two types, depending on their exterior shape.

Type A: Diameter is 7.8 cm, and raised surface marked off into four equal fan-shaped parts by raised lines. Round mastoid encircled by eight L-shaped hollows in center, and two loops of arc-shaped hollows along edge (Figure II, 9).

Type B: Round upper section and fan-shaped lower

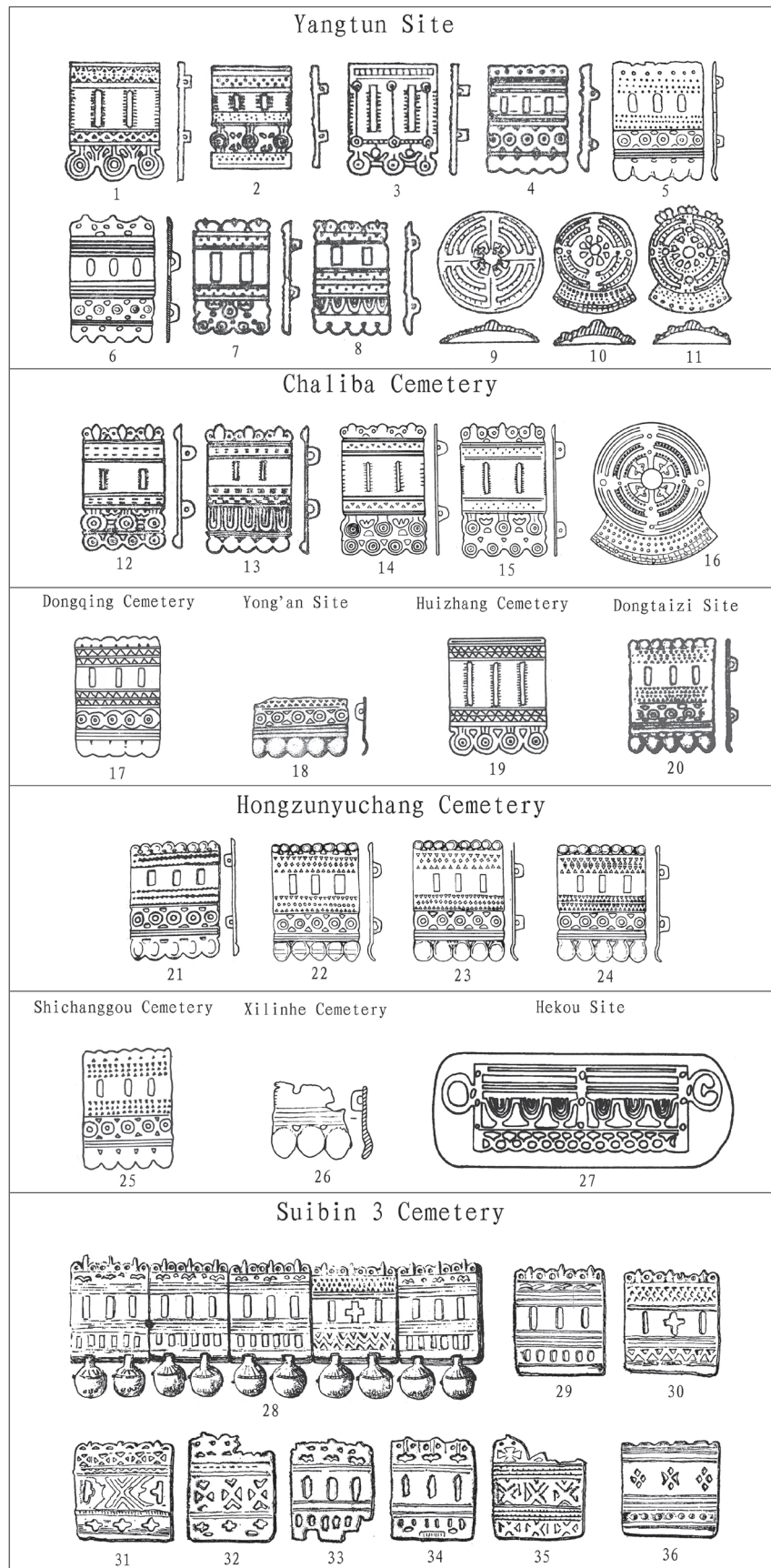


Figure II Samples of bronze ornaments for girdles of the Mohe-Nuzhen tradition discovered in China

part. Diameter of 5.4 to 5.7 cm. Surface of round part marked off into four equal fan-shaped parts by crossed rows of mastoids, raised with rounded mastoid in center. Either eight triangular hollows with arc-shaped edges or four bird-head-shaped patterns encircling mastoid. Two loops of arc-shaped hollows and some other arc-shaped patterns and dots decorate outer edge. Fan-shaped part composed of three rows of dots, one row of small mastoids, and horizontal lines. Minor differences between individual ornaments (Figure II, 10, 11, 16).

3. Chronology

Judging from the above-mentioned archaeological materials, bronze ornaments for girdles of the Mohe-Nuzhen tradition seem to have been present mainly from the 6th to the early 12th century.

The Type A rectangular bronze ornaments for girdles came earliest. In Tomb 11 in Yangtun Site, excavated in 1979, ceramic pot Type I was discovered together with Type A bronze ornaments. This pot is similar to that found in House 3, Tongren Site, Suibin County in Heilongjiang Province. The house's radiocarbon date from charcoal is about 1420 ± 80 BP, 1380 ± 80 BP (599–684 AD) after calibration^[20].

Therefore, the date of Tomb 11 of Yangtun Site should be from the 6th to the 7th century. Type A bronze ornaments were discovered in Yangtun Site, and also Huizhang Cemetery which is of the early Bohai period, i.e. the 8th century. Therefore, Type A appeared earliest in the middle and lower valleys of Songhua Jiang, generally regarded as the major distribution area of the Sumo-Mohe, and also the core area of Type A rectangular bronze ornaments for girdles. Few Type A ornaments which are from a relatively later date, were discovered in Huizhang Cemetery. This is most likely because of diffusion from the valley of Songhua Jiang into Tumenjiang during the Bohai period.

The Type B rectangular bronze ornaments for girdles are slightly later than Type A and are associated with the Type II pot unearthed from Tomb 43 of the Yangtun Site. According to typological studies on Mohe pottery, Type II pots are from a later date than

Type I^[21]. The date of Tomb 43 in Yangtun Site is about the 7th to the early 8th century; and the date of the sites from which Type B were excavated, such as Liudingshan Cemetery, Hongzunyuchang Cemetery, Shichanggou Cemetery, Xilinhe Site, Yong'an Site and Dongqing Cemetery, is mostly of the 7th to the 8th century. The earliest discovery of the Type B was in the middle and lower valleys of Songhua Jiang, present in the early Bohai period and within the Bohai territories.

There are two subtypes of Type C rectangular bronze ornaments for girdles. Both Type Ca and Type Cb were discovered in Tomb 1 of Chaliba Cemetery, and Type Cb and Type A were discovered in Tomb 43 of Yangtun Site, so Type C was most likely used first in the 7th century. So far this type has only been found in Yangtun Site and Chaliba Cemetery, the middle and lower valleys of Songhua Jiang. The unique trait of Type C is the three parallel bird-head-shaped patterns on the top. Type C bronze ornaments are often discovered in sites of Mohe in the valley of Heilongjiang, during the period from the 9th to the 10th century^[22]. Type C should appear slightly later than Type A and Type B, be present for a shorter time, and be more limited in distribution.

Type D and Type E bronze ornaments have only been discovered in Suibin 3 Cemetery, Junminnongchang Cemetery, and several other sites in the valley of Heilongjiang^[23]. Type D and Type E were discovered together in Tomb 4 of Suibin 3 Cemetery, probably from the same period. Based on the analyses of relevant archaeological materials from Russia and from the middle and lower valleys of Heilongjiang, Type E might have evolved from Type D. Compared to other types, Type E shows a trend toward simplification in patterns on the surface, and archaeological discoveries decrease, showing that there may have been a decline of bronze ornaments for girdles of the Mohe-Nuzhen tradition. In other words, Type E is the latest ornament among all types^[24]. Potteries from Suibin 3 Cemetery show some traits similar to those of the Bohai period and early Liao Dynasty. The date is most probably from the 10th to the 11th century.

Moreover, the clay mold used to manufacture bronze

ornaments for girdles of the Mohe-Nuzhen tradition, found in Hekou Culture V, shows features similar to the patterns on bronze ornaments found in Russia and in the middle and lower valleys of Heilongjiang. In Russia, the bronze ornaments were found with Type D, which is identified in this paper. Therefore, they most probably have the same date ^[25].

Round bronze ornaments for girdles were found only in Yantun Site and Chaliba Cemetery, and also only in a small number. From the archaeological context, we now know that round bronze ornaments were used with the rectangular ones ^[26]. In Tomb 37 of Yangtun Site excavated in 1979, Type B round bronze ornaments were found with Type A and rectangular Type C ornaments. In Tomb 31 of Chaliba Cemetery excavated in 1987, Type B round bronze ornaments were found with rectangular Type C's. Therefore, the date of round bronze ornaments would be very close to Type A and rectangular Type C's.

In summary, we can divide the bronze ornaments for girdles of the Mohe-Nuzhen tradition into two phases.

The first is the Mohe and early Bohai period, but no bronze ornament for girdles was found from the early Phase 1 Mohe sites, Tuanjie Cemetery of Luobei County in Heilongjiang Province and Tongren Site. This implies that bronze ornaments for girdles of the Mohe-Nuzhen tradition most likely appeared after the middle of the 6th century. In this phase, rectangular Type A, B, and C, and all round bronze ornaments for girdles of the Mohe-Nuzhen tradition were popular, so they appeared earliest in the middle and lower valleys of Songhuajiang. By the 8th century, Type B had become widespread in the Bohai, but mostly in the valleys of Songhuajiang and Mudanjiang. In the 9th century, the late Bohai period, rare bronze ornament for girdles of the Mohe-Nuzhen tradition were discovered in the sites.

The second phase is the Nuzhen period, from the 10th to the 11th century. This is represented by Type D and E rectangular bronze ornaments for girdles of the Mohe-Nuzhen tradition, mostly found in the valley of Heilongjiang.

Based on analyses of distributive change and chronological relationships, Type A, B, and C rectangular

bronze ornaments for girdles of the Mohe-Nuzhen tradition, found in the valleys of Songhuajiang and Mudanjiang, belong to the Sumo-Mohe-Bohai tradition. Type D and Type E, found in the valley of Helongjiang, belong to the Heishui-Mohe-Nuzhen tradition. In China, since the materials related to bronze ornaments for girdles of the Mohe-Nuzhen tradition found in the valley of Heilongjiang have been few, it is still impossible to elucidate the exchange and diffusion processes of bronze ornaments for girdles between the two different areas.

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和文抄訳

靺鞨—女真系の銅帶飾は、平面形が長方形のものと円形のものの二種類があり、長方形の銅帶飾の数量が絶対的多数を占める。表面の文様の主体となる形式から、長方形銅帶飾は5型式に分けられる。円形銅帶飾は平面の形状から、2型式に分けられる。中国出土の靺鞨—女真系銅帶飾の流行期間は、だいたい6-12世紀初めである。

A型長方形銅帶飾の年代がもっとも早く、6-7世紀に流行する。A型長方形銅帶飾はまず松花江中・下流地区で出現するが、ここは粟末靺鞨の主要な分布区域であり、A型長方形銅帶飾が主に流行した地域でもある。B型長方形銅帶飾の出現はA型長方形銅帶飾よりやや遅れ、流行年代は7-8世紀である。B型長方形銅帶飾はまず松花江中・下流地区に出現して、渤海国前期に流行し、分布範囲は渤海国内になる。C型長方形銅帶飾には二つの亜型があり、Ca型とCb型の銅帶飾が共存する。出現年代は7世紀である。C型長方形銅帶

飾はこれまでのところ松花江中・下流地区でのみ見られる。D型、E型長方形銅帶飾は黒竜江流域の靺鞨—女真遺跡から出土する。D型、E型長方形銅帶飾には共存現象が見られ、両型の銅帶飾の年代は基本的に同じで、10-11世紀に流行している。

靺鞨—女真系銅帶飾の流行時期は、二つの時期に分けることができる。第1段階は靺鞨—渤海期に相当し、長方形銅帶飾A、B、C型と円形銅帶飾に代表され、6-9世紀に主に松花江と牡丹江流域で流行する。第2段階は女真期に相当し、年代は10-11世紀である。長方形銅帶飾D、E型に代表され、主に黒竜江流域で流行する。

靺鞨—女真系銅帶飾の類型、分布、年代などの変化を分析すると、松花江と牡丹江流域で流行したA、B、C型長方形銅帶飾の系譜は粟末靺鞨—渤海系統と言え、黒竜江流域で流行したD、E型長方形銅帶飾の系譜は黒水靺鞨—女真系統に属すると言えよう。