Quantification of southwest China rainfall during the 8.2 ka BP event with response to North Atlantic cooling

Y. Liu[1,2], C. Hu[1]

[1] State key lab of biogeology and environmental geology, China University of Geosciences, Wuhan, 430074, PR China

[2] Faculty of Materials Science & Chemistry, China University of Geosciences, Wuhan, 430074, PR China

Correspondence to: Y. Liu (yhliu@cug.edu.cn)

Abstract. The 8.2 ka BP event could provide important information for predicting abrupt climate change in the future. Although published records show that the East Asian monsoon area responded to the 8.2 ka BP event, there is no high resolution quantitative reconstructed climate record in this area. In this study, a reconstructed 10-yr moving average annual rainfall record in southwest China during the 8.2 ka BP event is presented by comparing two high-resolution stalagmite $\delta^{18}O$ records from Dongge cave and Heshang cave. This decade-scale rainfall reconstruction is based on a central-scale model and is confirmed by inter-annual monitoring records, which shows a significant positive correlation between the regional mean annual rainfall amount and the drip water annual average $\delta^{18}O$ difference from two caves along the same monsoon moisture transport pathway from May 2011 to April 2014. Similar trends between the reconstructed rainfall and the stalagmite Mg/Ca record, another proxy of rainfall, during the 8.2 ka period further increase the confidence of the quantization of the rainfall record. The reconstructed record shows that the mean annual rainfall in southwest China during the central 8.2 ka BP event is less than that of present (1950 ~ 1990) by ~200 mm, and decreased by ~350 mm in ~70 years experiencing an extreme drying period lasting for ~50 years. Further analysis on the reconstructed rainfall in southwest China and Greenland ice core $\delta^{18}O$ with $\delta^{15}N$ records, suggests that the rainfall decrease in southwest China during the 8.2 ka BP period coupled with Greenland cooling with a possible response rate of 110±30 mm/℃.

1 Introduction

As evidence in support of global warming becomes stronger, it is apparent that the anticipated rise in sea levels may be higher than expected (Rahmstorf, 2007) and the frequency and amplitude of abrupt climate change (Martrat et al., 2004; Pall et al., 2007) may also be greater. As climate events are likely to be problematic for both ecosystems (Walther et al., 2002) and human society (Khasnis and Nettleman, 2005), any aid in prediction is crucial.

Studies of past climate events could hopefully provide useful information for exploring trigger mechanisms (Cheng, et al., 2009; Liu et al, 2013). The 8.2 ka BP event is noted to be the most pronounced abrupt climate event occurring during the whole Holocene (Alley and Ágústsdóttir, 2005). The highest magnitude variation across the low to high latitudes makes a viable target for numerical modelings (Daley et al, 2011; Morrill et al., 2011) and may offer an insight into the sensitivity of climate response in different areas (Condron and Winsor, 2011; LeGrand and Schmidt, 2008). This event was firstly identified in Greenland ice cores (Alley et al., 1997), showing a duration of 160-yr (Thomas et al, 2007) with a temperature drop of 3.3±1.1℃ in central Greenland (Kobashi et al, 2007), and is known globally (Dixit et al., 2014; Morrill et al., 2013; Ljung et al., 2008; Ellwood and Gose, 2006). However, as most records associated with this event mainly derived from North Atlantic and Europe (Daley et al., 2011; Szeroczyńska and Zawisza, 2011; Snowball et al., 2010; Hede et al., 2010; Domínguez-Villar et al., 2009; Prasad et al., 2009), the question remains as to how much it influenced the East Asian monsoon area (EAMA).

Although some proxies from lake sediments (Yu et al., 2006; Hong et al., 2009; Zheng et al., 2009;Mischke and Zhang, 2010), stalagmites (Wu et al, 2012; Cheng et al., 2009; Hu et al., 2008a; Wang et al., 2005; Dykoski et al., 2005) and marine sediments (Zheng et al., 2010; Ge et al., 2010) do record the 8.2 ka BP event in EAMA, only Hu et al. (2008a) attempted a quantitative reconstruction of rainfall by using stalagmite $\Delta\delta^{18}O$ records which indicated a decrease in precipitation during the event in southwest China, an area influenced by East Asian monsoon. However, the resolution of this precipitation record is approximately 100-yr and needs to be improved.

Based on the method presented by Hu et al. (2008a) , this study reconstructs a 10-yr averaged annual rainfall record in southwest China during the 8.2 ka BP event by comparing sub-annual (Liu et al., 2013) and 3.5-yr resolution stalagmite $\delta^{18}O$ (Cheng et al., 2009) records from the same moisture transport pathway. This study further addresses the sensitivity of the climate of southwest China to North Atlantic cooling during the 8.2 ka BP event, providing quantitative data for simulating this global event in climate system models.

2 Methods

2.1 Rainfall reconstruction

It has been previously discussed (Hu, et al., 2008a) that, in a monsoon area, regional rainfall histories could be reconstructed by using coeval stalagmite $\delta^{18}O$ comparisons between two close sites located along the same atmospheric moisture transport pathway, as the difference allows the removal of secondary controls, such as moisture transport and temperature on $\delta^{18}O$. Working with this premise, two published high resolution stalagmite $\delta^{18}O$ sequences during the 8.2 ka BP event from Heshang cave, central China (Liu et al., 2013) and Dongge cave, southwest China (Cheng et al., 2009), located directly upstream in the atmospheric pathway, were investigated.

2.1.1 Stalagmite $\Delta\delta^{18}O$ sequence establishment

There is only one high-resolution $\delta^{18}O$ record produced by stalagmite HS4 from Heshang cave (30°270′N, 110°25′E), central China, covered the 8.2 ka BP period (Liu et al., 2013), with an average resolution of ~0.3-yr. However, there are two published stalagmite $\delta^{18}O$ records (stalagmite DA and D4) from Dongge cave (25°17′N, 108°5′E), southwest China (Wang et al., 2005; Dykoski et al., 2005). Since Cheng et al.(2009) re-dated DA and D4 during the 8.2 ka BP period to obtain a better controlled chronology, both DA and D4 $\delta^{18}O$ records with an average resolution of ~3.5-yr and ~2-yr (Cheng et al., 2009) are compared with HS4 using the approach outlined in Hu et al. (2008a).

It may be observed that the $\delta^{18}O$ records from HS4 (Fig.1a) (Liu et al., 2013), DA (Fig. 1b) and D4 (Fig.1c) (Cheng et al., 2009) show similar patterns with matching peaks and troughs. Typical corresponding peaks or troughs are then marked as shown by dashed lines in Fig. 1 and the chronology of DA, D4 and HS4 are so matched to reduce the chronology uncertainty. It should be noted that the wiggle matching is within the analytical uncertainty of the U-Th chronology. As the resolutions of HS4, DA and D4 are different, all the sequences were first processed to create records of equivalent annual resolution and the resultant time sequences, then used to construct a 10-yr moving average sequence. Two new $\delta^{18}O$ difference ($\Delta\delta^{18}O$) sequences between HS4 and adjusted DA records (Fig.1d) and between HS4 and adjusted D4 records (Fig. 1e) were thus established.

Though there is a systematic offset between Fig.1d and Fig.1e, generally the variations and trends of the two sequences are similar, suggesting either of the two $\Delta\delta^{18}O$ sequences could be used for the following reconstruction. Since the $\delta^{18}O$ record from Dongge cave adopted in Hu et al.(2008a) is from DA, in this study $\Delta\delta^{18}O$ from Fig.1d is used for further rainfall reconstruction.

2.1.2 Uncertainties of $\Delta\delta^{18}O$

Since the $\Delta\delta^{18}O$ sequence is intending to reconstruct the regional rainfall quantitatively, it is necessary to assess the uncertainties of the record. The first need to be taken into consideration is the chronology uncertainty. As the maximum uncertainty of DA during the 8.2 ka BP period is 94-yr (Cheng et al., 2009) and the average difference between the adjusted and original DA data set is ~40-yr, the robustness of the approach is tested by shifting the whole DA $\delta^{18}O$ data set 50-yr young and 50-yr old respectively. The three $\Delta\delta^{18}O$ sequences are shown in Fig. 2a with unchanged DA chronology (in black), shifting DA 50-yr young (in blue) and 50-yr old (in red). Fig 2a demontrates that though the shifted chronology data sets do increase the uncertainty of the $\Delta\delta^{18}O$ with a maximum error of 0.76‰, the general variation trends are similar, suggesting that this difference method is sufficiently accurate for this study.

Besides the chronology uncertainty, other factors may affect the uncertainty of $\Delta\delta^{18}O$. Firstly, it is from the $\delta^{18}O$ analytical uncertainties from HS4 and DA, which are 0.08‰ (Liu et al. 2013) and 0.15‰ (Cheng, et al., 2009) respectively. Secondly, it is from the standard deviation of the 10-yr average and the largest standard deviation of $\Delta\delta^{18}O$ between DA and HS4 is 0.62‰. Also, there is an estimated uncertainty of 0.35‰ from the model established by Hu et al. (2008a). Taking all of these factors into consideration, the final uncertainty of the Δ $\delta^{18}O$ sequence during the 8.2 ka BP period could be estimated to be ~0.53‰.

2.1.3 Rainfall reconstruction

Based on the $\Delta\delta^{18}O$ sequence shown in Fig. 2b, the quantitative rainfall reconstruction during the 8.2 ka BP period could be built by the previous model presented by Hu et al. (2008a), as the established model covering the 8.2 ka BP period. The relation between Δ $\delta^{18}O$ and rainfall (Rainfall=189.08×$\Delta\delta^{18}O$+1217.4) (Hu et al., 2008a) is therefore considered suitable for this study. And the uncertainties from Δ $\delta^{18}O$ would give an uncertainty of ~100 mm/yr for the reconstructed rainfall record.

The idea of reconstructing regional rainfall between two caves by comparing two spatially separated cave records along the same moisture transport pathway is to presume single stalagmite $\delta^{18}O$ values from monsoon areas at least contain rainfall information. For Chinese stalagmite $\delta^{18}O$ values, they are indeed influenced by different types of precipitation, and as well as moisture source and its pathway, local condensation and evaporation processes (Dayem et al., 2010). And a recent millennial climate simulation also suggests that Chinese stalagmite $\delta^{18}O$ records could be used as an indicator of intensity of the East Asian summer monsoon in terms of the continental scale Asian monsoon rainfall response in the upstream regions (Liu et al., 2014). As both Dongge and Heshang $\delta^{18}O$ records respond to the upstream rainfall respectively, the difference of the two records should be related to the regional rainfall between Dongge and Heshang cave.

Since on decadal scale, the relationship between $\Delta\delta^{18}O$ and rainfall records was confirmed (Hu et al., 2008a), here we further access this method on inter-annual time scale. Compared with local precipitation $\delta^{18}O$ ($\delta^{18}O_p$), an outside cave signal, monitoring cave drip water $\delta^{18}O$ ($\delta^{18}O_d$) signals from both DA and HS4 sites should reflect speleothem $\delta^{18}O$ variations more directly. Though there is no published monitoring data from Dongge, there are some latest published cave monitoring $\delta^{18}O_d$ data between May 2011 and April 2014 with local $\delta^{18}O_p$ data (Duan et al., 2016) from a cave named Liangfeng (26°16'N, 108°03'E), close to Dongge(25°17′N, 108°5′E), which might be an alternative to assess the rainfall reconstruction method.

There are three separate sequences of $\delta^{18}O_d$ from different dripping sites in Liangfeng cave (Zeng et al, 2015). Among them, LF6 $\delta^{18}O_d$ with a lowest drip rate but highest variation amplitude has been selected, as it may record climate information more efficiently. The lowest drip rate of LF6 from Liangfeng cave indicates fresh water mixed with more stored water for this dripping site (Zeng et al, 2015), which may provide longer term instead of seasonal information compared with the other two sites. Based on the 3-yr monthly monitoring data of LF6 and HS4 (Duan et al., 2016), the sequences of annual moving average $\delta^{18}O_d$ of LF6 and HS4 have been established respectively. Generally LF6 $\delta^{18}O_d$ values are higher than HS4 $\delta^{18}O_d$, which is sensible since Heshang cave is further along the moisture transport pathway. Since LF6 $\delta^{18}O_d$ is mixed by fresh and stored water, its response to the local rainfall may be delayed. As there is a positive correlation(R^2=0.62) between the local annual moving average $\delta^{18}O_p$ and the 2-month delayed annual moving average of LF6 $\delta^{18}O_d$, it is presumed that LF6 $\delta^{18}O_d$ may be delayed by 2 months. And the same analysis on $\delta^{18}O_d$ at HS4 site and $\delta^{18}O_p$ outside Heshang cave (Duan et al., 2015) reveals a positive correlation(R^2=0.71) between the local annual moving average $\delta^{18}O_p$ and the 4-month delayed annual moving average of HS4 $\delta^{18}O_d$. Further analysis shows a positive correlation (R^2=0.72) between the 2-month delayed annual moving average of LF6 $\delta^{18}O_d$ and the 4-month delayed annual moving average of HS4 $\delta^{18}O_d$, indicating the main factors controlled on both LF6 and HS4 $\delta^{18}O_d$ values should be similar, so it is sensible to use their $\Delta\delta^{18}O_d$ records to discuss the efficiency of the rainfall reconstruction method.

After the annual moving average $\Delta\delta^{18}O_d$ sequence between 2-month delayed LF6 $\delta^{18}O$ and 4-month delayed HS4 $\delta^{18}O_d$ has been built, the correlation between $\Delta\delta^{18}O_d$ and the regional average annual rainfall amount from six sites between Dongge cave and Heshang cave mentioned in Hu et al. (2008a) could be analyzed. The regional average annual rainfall amount is calculated from monthly instrumental records between May 2011 and April 2014 from http://www.wunderground. com/history/. Fig. 3 shows that there is a significant positive correlation (R^2=0.79) between annual $\Delta\delta^{18}O_d$ and regional annual rainfall amount. The significant correlation further supports the idea that the stalagmite $\Delta\delta^{18}O$ between two caves located along the same moisture transport pathway could reveal the regional rainfall variation, since stalagmite $\delta^{18}O$ derives from the drip water $\delta^{18}O$.

2.2 Mg/Ca data processing

In addition to $\Delta\ \delta^{18}O$, the Mg/Ca ratio, another important rainfall proxy, is considered in this paper. The Mg/Ca data set is taken from Liu et al. (2013) measured by a JEOL JXA8800R Electron Microprobe at the Department of Material Sciences, Oxford, along the HS4 stalagmite growth axis. The Mg/Ca data were processed to provide annual resolution and a 10-yr moving average constructed in the same way as for $\delta^{18}O$.

3 Results

The 10-yr moving average $\Delta\delta^{18}O$ records between DA and HS4 is shown in Fig. 2b. It is reasonable that the DA $\delta^{18}O$ values are generally higher than those of HS4 (Fig. 1a and Fig.1b) as Heshang Cave is located further along the moisture transport pathway, which produces a systematic $\delta^{18}O$ offset. Compared with an average $\delta^{18}O$ difference of 1.0‰ (Hu, et al, 2008) between HS4 and DA during the whole Holocene, the average $\Delta\delta^{18}O$ value during 8.2 ka BP event shown in Fig. 2b is much lower, only with a value of 0.26‰.

It may be observed in Fig. 2b that during the central event, some of the $\Delta\ \delta^{18}O$ values are around zero or even negative, indicating much reduced moisture transport during that time. While the lowest value of $\Delta\ \delta^{18}O$ is nearly -0.50‰ (Fig. 2b), we do not expected negative $\Delta\ \delta^{18}O$ values. Besides the uncertainty of ~0.53‰ produced by the $\Delta\ \delta^{18}O$ mentioned in 2.1.2, the difference in evaporation in the two caves contributes to the negative $\Delta\ \delta^{18}O$ as well. Actually cave monitoring data do suggest evaporation during the dripping and exuding processes in dry season could result in heavier drip water $\delta^{18}O$ values (Zeng et al., 2015), so evaporation must result in heavier stalagmite $\delta^{18}O$ values during dry period, especially in a ventilated cave.

Compared with Dongge , a cave consisting of branches with twists and turns, the structure of Heshang cave is much simpler only with a nearly straight main passage, and with a 20 m high entrance (Hu et al., 2008b). So Heshang cave is much more open and ventilated than Dongge cave, and indeed it leads to an obvious heat and moisture exchange between the inside and outside cave (Hu et al, 2008b). Therefore on similar dry conditions, the evaporation effect in Heshang cave is much more significant than in Dongge Cave, and the drier it is, the heavier HS4 $\delta^{18}O$ values would be, leading to lower or even negative $\Delta\delta^{18}O$ values between DA and HS4. That means less rainfall is still related to lower $\Delta\delta^{18}O$ values with the consideration of cave evaporation effect. Since the 8.2 ka BP event is the driest period during the whole Holocene (Hu et al., 2008), negative $\Delta\delta^{18}O$ values produced during the centre event is possible.

From the 10-year moving average $\Delta\delta^{18}O$ between the HS4 and DA records(Fig. 2b), there is a significant change in value by 1.8‰ from 1.3‰ to -0.5‰ happened in ~70 years at the beginning of the event. Compared with the average amplitude of $\Delta\delta^{18}O$ during the whole Holocene of 1.0‰ (Hu et al., 2008a), during the 8.2 ka BP period, the $\Delta\delta^{18}O$ value drops greatly and the amplitude is nearly doubled.

Based on the $\Delta\delta^{18}O$ record shown in Fig. 2b, using the previously determined relation (Rainfall=189.08 $\times\Delta\delta^{18}O$ +1217.4) published in Hu et al. (2008a), the rainfall record in southwest China during the 8.2 ka BP period could be established as shown in Fig. 2b. Besides the support for the reconstruction method by monitoring records shown in 2.1.3, stalagmite Mg/Ca ratios might provide some useful information to test the robustness of the reconstructed rainfall record as well.

Stalagmite Mg/Ca ratio is another proxy mainly controlled by local rainfall, though it may show some temperature dependence, increasing slightly with temperature raise, higher Mg/Ca values usually correspond to lower rainfall (Fairchild and Treble, 2009). This is understood to result from CO_2-degassing occurring earlier during water movement in dry seasons as cave water seeps more slowly, thus Ca is lost from karst waters by formation of calcite earlier during transport processes and before waters reach the stalagmite. Such a prior-calcite-precipitation process would be expected to produce higher Mg/Ca ratios (Tremaine and Froelich, 2013; Fairchild and Treble, 2009). Although it is hard to obtain quantitative rainfall data from Mg/Ca ratios, the change of Mg/Ca may give a qualitative indication of the rainfall variability and trend. Therefore the variation trend of Mg/Ca ratios could tell whether the reconstructed rainfall from $\Delta\delta^{18}O$ is reliable or not.

The HS4 Mg/Ca sequence presented as a 10-yr moving average record during the 8.2 ka BP event is shown in Fig. 2c. As high Mg/Ca values are considered to indicate low rainfall, the Y axis of Mg/Ca was reversed to make the comparison clearer. Both the Mg/Ca ratios and the reconstructed rainfall data are presented as 10-yr moving average values. Although the two data sets show slight differences, there is a general inverse relationship between the two sequences giving a correlation coefficient (R^2) of 0.56 (n=219). And overall similarity could be observed between the trends of the two patterns with high (low) Mg/Ca values corresponding to low (high) rainfall, which suggests that the Mg/Ca results roughly support the reconstructed rainfall record as well.

The reconstructed rainfall record (Fig. 2b) shows a maximum decline in annual rainfall of 350 mm/yr, which is nearly twice that obtained from the low-resolution (~100-yr) rainfall record (Hu et al., 2008a) during the same period and the lowest annual rainfall in this study is lower than that from Hu et al. (2008a) by ~100 mm. This is believed to be a result of the record resolution. Fig. 2b also shows that the period of decreasing rainfall at the beginning of the event lasts for ~70 years, before entering into an extreme dry period. During the central period of the 8.2 ka BP event, the average annual rainfall is only ~1200 mm, which appears to be the driest period during the whole Holocene in this area, lasting for ~50 years. As the rainfall calculation developed in Hu et al. (2008a) was made by averaging annual rainfall records from 6 sites between Heshang and Dongge and the averaged annual rainfall between 1950 and 1990 from the 6 sites is ~1380 mm, indicating the average annual rainfall during the central 8.2 ka BP period is less than present by ~200 mm.

4 Discussions

It has been reported that the response of the EAMA to North Atlantic cooling during the 8.2 ka BP event results from atmospheric rather than oceanic processes (Liu et al., 2013). It might be assumed that the high northern latitude ice-cover reinforces Northern Hemisphere cooling, increasing the temperature gradient between the high and low latitudes which leads to southward migration of the inter-tropical convergence zone (Chiang and Bitz, 2005; Broccoli et al., 2006). This would result in weakening of the East Asian Monsoon and increased aridity around. Assessment of the sensitivity of southwest China climate response to North Atlantic cooling might provide a clue to how North Atlantic cooling affects the EAMA.

Fig. 4 demonstrates three sequences of Greenland ice core $\delta^{18}O$ (Thomas et al., 2007)(Fig. 4a) , a palaeo-temperature indicator (Stuiver, et al., 1995), Greenland ice core $\delta^{15}N$ (Kobashi et al., 2007)(Fig.4b), a newly developed palaeo-temperature proxy (Buizert et al., 2014) and the reconstructed rainfall record in southwest China during the 8.2 ka BP period(Fig. 4c). The data shown in Fig. 4a are from Thomas et al. (2007) with a 3-yr resolution. To allow comparison with the reconstructed rainfall records, the $\delta^{18}O$ of the ice core was processed to provide a 10-yr moving average squence. The $\delta^{15}N$ data in Fig. 4b are from Kobashi et al. (2007) with a 11-yr resolution and were processed similarly.

As low Greenland ice $\delta^{18}O$ and $\delta^{15}N$ values indicate local cooling (Thomas et al., 2007; Kobashi et al., 2007), both Fig. 4a and Fig. 4b reveal similar trends of decreasing temperature during the 8.2 ka BP event. The comparison between each data set in Fig. 4 suggests that the decrease in rainfall in southwest China may indeed be in response to Greenland cooling. Further analysis shows a slight positive correlation between Greenland ice core $\delta^{18}O$ and the reconstructed rainfall with a correlation coefficient (R^2) of 0.47 (n=219) indicating a 1‰ drop in Greenland ice core $\delta^{18}O$ could lead to ~7% decrease in rainfall in southwest China. Though there is not enough $\delta^{15}N$ data to reveal further correlations, it does indicate a drop of 3.3±1℃ when the 8.2 ka BP event occurred(Kobashi et al., 2007). As the reconstructed annual rainfall record reveals a maximum decrease of 350 mm, the magnitude of rainfall response of southwest China to Greenland cooling during 8.2 ka BP period could be assessed as 110±30 mm/℃.

5 Conclusions

1. Based on a comparison of two high-resolution stalagmite $\delta^{18}O$ records from Dongge cave and Heshang cave along the monsoon moisture transport pathway in China, a 10-yr moving average quantitative annual rainfall record in southwest China is established during the 8.2 ka BP event.
2. Significant positive correlation between drip water annual average $\delta^{18}O$ difference from two caves along the monsoon moisture transport pathway and the regional average annual rainfall from May 2011 to April 2014 provides a monitoring support for the reconstruction. And similar trends between the reconstructed rainfall sequence and the stalagmite Mg/Ca ratios, another proxy of rainfall, further increase the confidence of the quantization of the rainfall record.
3. The reconstructed rainfall record shows that the annual rainfall in southwest China decreased sharply by ~350 mm in 70 years when the 8.2 ka BP event occurred and experienced an extreme drying period lasting for ~50 years during the central event. Compared with the modern instrumental records, the averaged annual rainfall in southwest China during the 8.2 ka BP event is less than that of present (1950 ~ 1990) by ~200 mm.
4. The correlation analysis between the reconstructed rainfall in southwest China and Greenland ice core $\delta^{18}O$, an indicator of temperature, suggests that the rainfall decrease in southwest China during the 8.2 ka BP period coupled with Greenland cooling. And a possible response rate of 110±30 mm/℃ could be presumed by the temperature drop derived from Greenland ice core $\delta^{15}N$ and rainfall decrease from the reconstructed record.

Acknowledgements. This work was supported by NSFC Grants 41371216 and 41130207. We thank the editor and the two anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments that greatly improved the manuscript.

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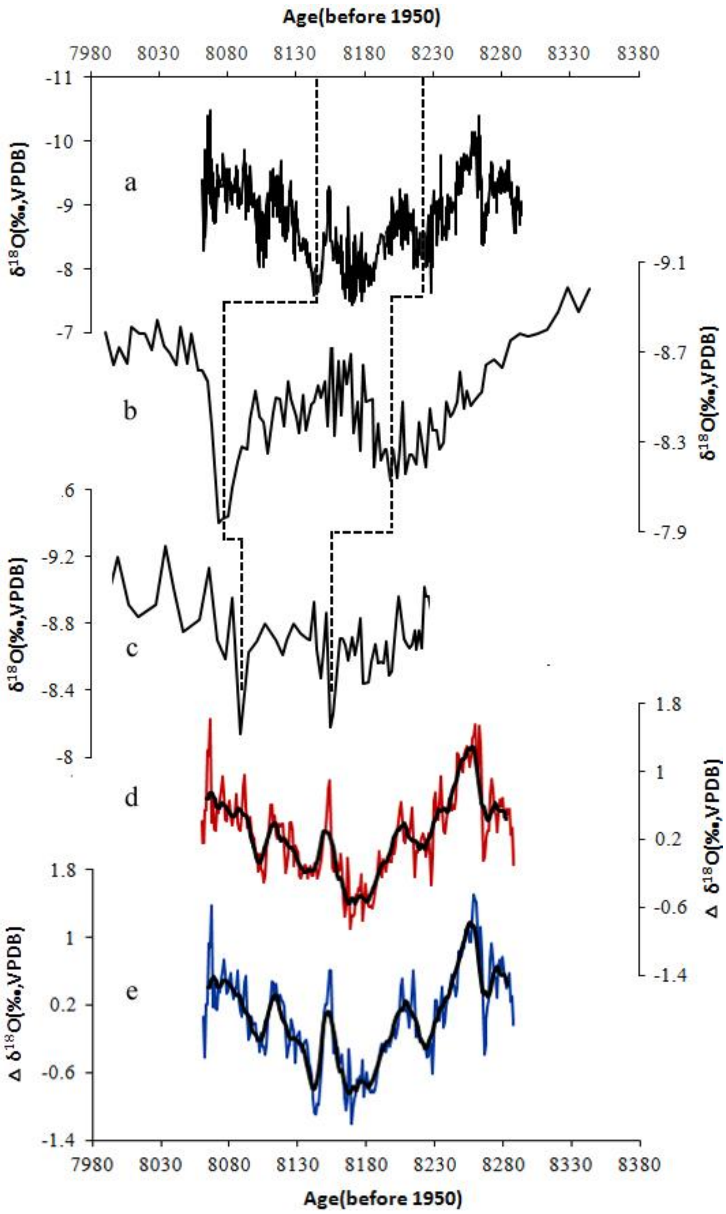

Figure 1. Original $\delta^{18}O$ stalagmite records adopted in this paper with $\Delta\delta^{18}O$ sequences between stalagmites from Dongge and Heshang. a. HS4 $\delta^{18}O$ record from Heshang cave(Liu et al., 2013); b. DA $\delta^{18}O$ record from Dongge cave(Cheng et al., 2009); c. D4 $\delta^{18}O$ record from Dongge cave (Cheng et al., 2009); d. $\Delta\delta^{18}O$ between DA and HS4 (red) with a 10-year moving

average(black); e. $\Delta\ \delta^{18}O$ between D4 and HS4 (blue) with a 10-year moving average (black). The dashed lines show typical corresponding peaks from each original record.

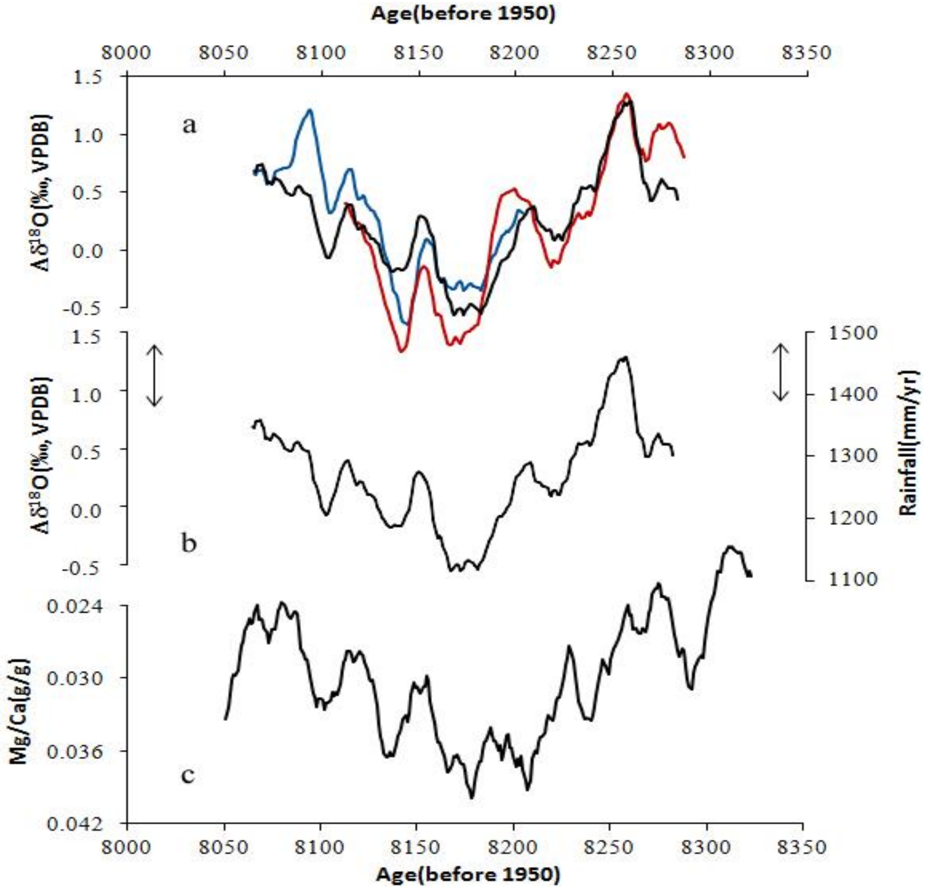

Figure 2. 10-yr moving average records during the 8.2 ka BP period. a) $\Delta\ \delta^{18}O$ records between HS4 and DA with unchanged chronology (black), shifting DA 50-yr young (blue) and 50-yr old (red); b) $\Delta\ \delta^{18}O$ record between HS4 and DA and reconstructed annual rainfall in southwest China with error bars; c) Mg/Ca ratios of HS4 shown on inverted scales, which reveals a similar trend to the rainfall sequence, increasing the confidence of the quantization of the reconstructed record.

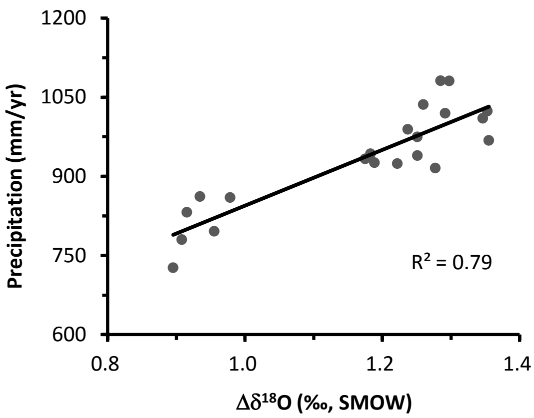

Figure 3. Correlation analysis between annual moving average precipitation $\delta^{18}O$ difference of 2-month delayed LF6 and 4-month delayed HS4 from May 2011 to April 2014. The $\Delta\delta^{18}O$ data are calculated from monthly monitoring data from Liangfeng cave and Heshang cave

(Duan et al., 2016). The annual precipitation data are the average from six sites between Dongge cave and Heshang cave mentioned in Hu et al. (2008a) and the original monthly rainfall data are from http://www.wunderground.com/history/. The correlation factor of 0.79 indicates a significant positive correlation between annual regional rainfall and annual $\Delta\delta^{18}O$.

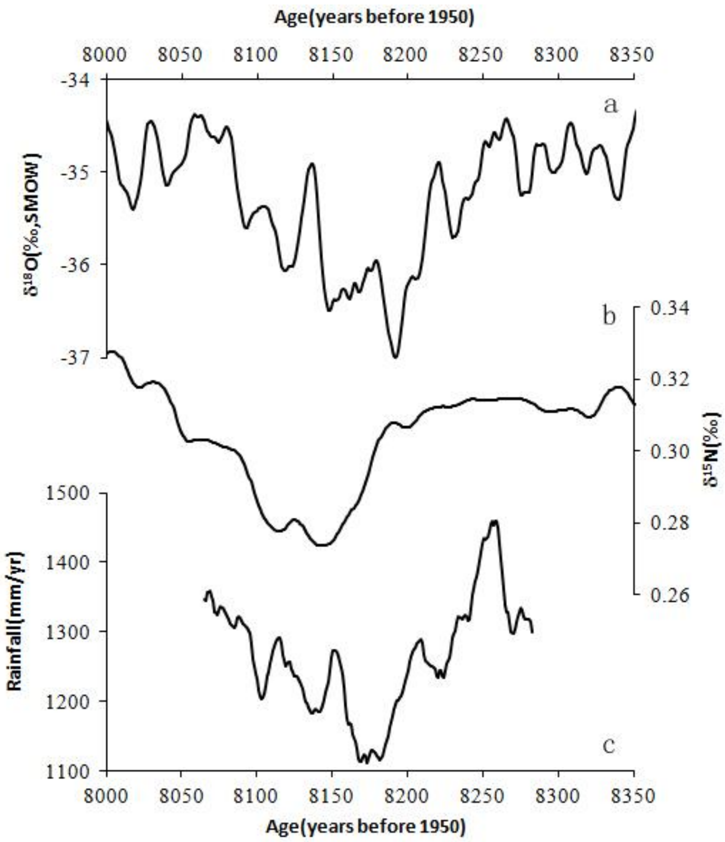

Figure 4. Records from Greenland ice core $\delta^{18}O$ (Thomas et al., 2007) (a), Greenland ice core $\delta^{15}N$ (Kobashi et al., 2007) (b) and the reconstructed annual rainfall from this study(c) during the 8.2 ka BP event. Three sequences show a similar pattern indicating the decrease in rainfall in southwest China coupled with Greenland cooling during the 8.2 ka BP event.