

Editorial

It has been almost four years since *Japanese Journal of Archaeology* was launched as the English language journal of the Japanese Archaeological Association in December 2013. Time has flown by, and we are pleased now to welcome you to the first issue of *JJA* Volume 5. Since Volume 4, *JJA* has been published biannually, and was accessed 18,678 times in the year 2016. It can be said that *JJA* has become established as a window open to the world on what is going on in Japanese archaeology.

Two original articles featured in this issue reflect that very well. Ayako Shibutani offers us a comprehensible overview of starch analysis in Japan. The paper charts the trajectory of the development of starch analysis, and describes how the internationally recognised methodological challenges including problems of identification, quantification and contamination have been tackled in Japan. The range of impacts that starch analysis has yielded upon the understanding of plant use in the Jomon period are covered through the concise description of case studies, allowing readers a clear idea of the state-of-the-art of archaeological starch analysis in Japan and elsewhere.

Yutaka Tanaka sheds light on the Kofun period of Japan from an angle that has not been pursued before. Tanaka focuses on sea currents, water courses and watersheds that physically constrained the way people moved around and conveyed and transported information, technology and various goods, revealing how they influenced the emergence and development of social complexity and hierarchy in locational and macro geographical terms. The findings, well-supported by fine-grained relative chronology, invite systematic comparisons with island communities and coastal regions across the world.

These articles make us imagine an exciting future: the international sharing of methodological achievement will make increasingly fine-grained reconstructions of past human lives possible, and the sharing of the outcomes of regional case studies will not only enhance our understanding of humanity but also inspire further innovations and refinements in our methodological and theoretical tools. In that regard, opening up Japanese archaeology as an arena of such fruitful interaction and the cycle of mutual enrichment between theoretical-methodological developments and the concrete reconstruction of past human lives is bound to make a major contribution to world archaeology. Hopefully, *JJA* will carry on contributing to the opening up of Japanese archaeology for many years to come.

Koji Mizoguchi

Chief Editor

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