

Overview

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Over ten years has passed in the 21st century, and it seems we are in for a period of change at the present. The wave of economic globalism is coming to our country, and as Japan's "post-war society" has come to the end, social disparity and an aging society with fewer children is becoming evident. Trends of archaeological study cannot be separated from such situations surrounding Japan and the world.

Since study trends of each period and region are discussed in separate articles, the author would like to discuss some issues.

Looking over study trends of the Paleolithic to the Kofun period, research using natural scientific methods occupies an important position in each period. The study themes are multidisciplinary, such as paleoenvironment/paleoclimate, dating measurement, subsistence, production site/material/technique, anthropology including phenotypic traits and DNA analysis, and excavation methods and so on.

On the other hand, for studies after the ancient period, examples of introducing natural scientific methods are less than preceding periods, while the connection between historical archaeology and history is more important. In analysis of ancient pottery with ink writing and engraving, the importance of consistent interpreting/understanding of contradicting data through synthetic examination of not only the writing itself but also characteristics of each artifact, excavated situation, and accompanying artifacts was pointed out. Also, study was done on terms (*meiji*) of pottery/ceramic recorded in medieval documents, indicating the importance of document study in historical archaeology.

As for research technology, three-dimensional measurement technology has advanced and study is now conducted using high precision survey maps. Progress of this study is a result of introducing new technology.

Thus, an overall trend of fiscal 2015 Japanese archaeological study seems to be a big stream of methodological diversity regarding archaeology and expansion of archaeological research subjects. Methodological diversity means proactive introduction of natural scientific analysis in addition to traditional analysis methods of archaeology,

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and a movement to take in results and framework of thoughts from similar sciences like cultural anthropology and history. Also, expansion of archaeological research subjects means expansion of analyzed subjects due to methodological diversity, as well as establishment of research/study for modern or contemporary sites such as Mietsu Naval Yard and Tomioka Silk Mill that were not handled by archaeology in the past.

Also, our society surrounding archaeology is at the period of big change, and Japanese archaeology is facing problems such as how to handle so called “internationalization,” a generational change of researchers, a drastic decrease of researchers who support regional study, a serious personnel shortage in local municipalities, educational environment and development of successors at universities, and so on. On the other hand, the spread of population interested in the world of archaeology in the future is suggested by various efforts: publication of a guide book aimed to the public for Jomon period clay figurines, cookies in the shape of pot sherds, popularity vote for clay figurine characters, publication of free magazines, creation of contemporary arts, and so on. These phenomena would lead to a question of how to succeed and develop a wide and deep “world of knowledge” fostered by Japanese archaeology.