

Yayoi Period

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Fiscal 2015 Yayoi period study was introduced under seven categories: a. chronology and calendar dates, b. environment, c. subsistence, d. production and distribution, e. social structure, f. mentality of Yayoi people, and g. how the Yayoi period was.

Chronology and calendar dates

SATO Yukio ed. *Yayoi Doki (Yayoi Pottery)* was published. It also handled pottery types of epi-Jomon and late Kaizuka (shell-midden) cultures adjacent to Yayoi culture. KISHIMOTO Naofumi gave over a hundred years of range to Shonai type pottery from the second quarter of the second century AD to the first third of the third century AD, and tried to verify it with chronology of Han mirrors and dendrochronology of wood materials. KUSUMI Takeo criticized that there is a problem in the relationship between pottery and wood.

Environment

An outstanding thesis by NAKATSUKA Takeshi reconstructed the environment in the Yayoi period year by year. Per Nakatsuka, the second century AD that was described as “the rebellion of Wa” in Chinese history had the most rainfall in the past 2000 years, and flooding often took place. An Sohyun investigated forest environments and utilization of woods around settlements. 92 percent of excavated construction materials and half of wooden vessels at Aoya-Kamijichi site in Tottori Prefecture were cedar. Results of pollen analysis seem to reflect the situation, and although cedar wood was reduced after the formation period of the settlement, it was maintained until later years.

Subsistence

Plant utilization study saw progress by replication methods, hauled by NAKAZAWA Michihiko and OBATA Hiroaki. Obata regarded the shift to agriculture in Japan as consisting of five phases, and indicated the significance of the role of plant cultivation in

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the preceding Jomon period. Discussion is awaited as to whether the current definition is effective, or should be renewed.

Production and distribution

A thesis by KODERA Chizuko is significant in glass product study. She pointed out that cylindrical beads excavated from No. 3 Nishidani tomb in Shimane Prefecture contained alumina-soda-lime glass produced around the Mediterranean Sea, and she revealed that regional chiefs shared funeral customs. As for bronze tools, TSUNEMATSU Mikio unraveled crafting of socketed bronze spearheads, focusing on their knobs. For iron tools, theses by TAKAO Koji and Lee Changhee are interesting. Takao ventured into the personalities of chiefs who distributed iron tools, and Lee exposed the reality of the so called Neukdo trades through iron.

Social structure

Fiscal 2015 saw many theses on square ditched tombs. FUJII Hitoshi followed up on the proposal of square ditched tomb equates to family tomb theory and discussed problems today. NOJIMA Hisashi discussed the changes in construction methods of mounded tombs in early Late Yayoi, and interpreted this as the emergence of privileged people for whom time is extended from biological death to social death.

Mentality of Yayoi people

SUGIYAMA Kohei grasped the conscious difference between eastern and western Japan regarding red color, and MATSUGI Takehiko pursued what past societies have regarded as beautiful. For example, he insisted that as Jomon pottery thorough Yayoi pottery transformed to Haji and Sue wares, in most regions of the world, pottery goes through three stages from simple to complex to delicate.

How was the Yayoi period?

FUJIO Shin'ichiro published a history of the Yayoi period from the standpoint of long-term AMS chronology. He especially stressed the realm of Yayoi culture, and he defined Yayoi culture as "a culture which placed rice paddy farming as the center of general life" and settlement extended to the west of Niigata-Chiba. KAWANISHI Hiroyuki focused on the decline of settlement formation. He regarded the decline of settlement as emergence of nomadic people or outsiders, and gave thoughts on their role compared to sea people and so on.