

Overview: Japanese Archaeological Research Trends 2015¹

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More than a decade has elapsed since the start of the twenty-first century, and it appears that at present we are facing a period of great transition. The wave of economic globalism is sweeping over our nation, bringing an end to the era of Japan's "postwar society," while at the same time issues of social disparity and an aging population are becoming increasingly evident. Trends in archaeological research can hardly be indifferent to this type of world or the conditions enveloping Japan. Here I would like to look back over the overall trends in Japanese archaeological research for the 2015 fiscal year.³ Below I shall note the outlines of research trends for each period in order.

Research for the Paleolithic period is progressing in the midst of coordination with various fields of Quaternary science in relation to the dispersal of modern man and human adaptation to the natural environment. It is said that research on the origins of mankind for the Japanese archipelago, while keeping in mind the variability of human adaptation, needs to make comparative examination of Paleolithic culture in the archipelago with materials from the Nansei Islands,⁴ where there are many finds of fossilized human bone. In research on the stone materials of stone tools, comparison is required of the results of field studies and analyses of source areas with the accumulation of archaeological knowledge. Also, regarding the issue of human adaptation and the natural environment during the transition from the Paleolithic to the ensuing Jōmon, the significance of this period in terms of cultural history is being investigated based on reconstructions of the paleoenvironment and paleoclimate and the debate over AMS ¹⁴C dating. Lithic research is diverse, including the clarification of stone tool-making technology from

¹[*Trends in Japanese Archaeological Research, 2015*, is a partial translation of "Nihon kōkogaku kenkyū no dōkō" 日本考古学研究の動向, in *Nihon kōkogaku nenpō 68 (2015 nendoban)* 日本考古学年報 68(2015年度版) (Archaeologia Japonica 68 [2015 Fiscal Year Issue]) (Nihon Kōkogaku Kyōkai, 2017), pp. 1-61. This essay appears on pp. 1-4, under the Japanese title "Sōsetsu" 総説. It was translated by Walter Edwards, and published by the Japanese Archaeological Association (Nihon Kōkogaku Kyōkai 日本考古学協会) online in 2018. To streamline the text, characters for Japanese names and terms, and bibliographic information have been placed in footnotes. When an English translation of the name of an organization or publication (or symposium, etc.) is supplied by the party responsible, this is used with minimum changes in capitalization etc. to conform to the style followed by *Trends in Japanese Archaeological Research*. Romanized names of individuals are given with the surname followed by the personal name.]

² 谷川章雄

³ The fiscal year begins on April 1 of each calendar year.

⁴ 南西諸島 (a general term for the islands lying between Kyushu and Taiwan)

an archaeological perspective, research on lithic technology as chains of operations, experimental tool-making research, and examinations with the obsidian hydration dating technique. In this manner, research on the Paleolithic period is progressing through cooperation between archaeological and natural scientific approaches with regard to the natural environment and human adaptation.

Also, as pointed out in the section on Paleolithic research trends,⁵ the drastic decrease in the numbers of researchers who support regional studies, and the severe personnel shortages of regional government research organizations, are issues held by archaeology as a whole. These also link up with the problem of the educational environment for archaeology in the universities, and the issue of training successors in the field, which have been taken up by the Research Conditions Investigative Committee⁶ and in the session on university education and cultural properties protection held at the Association's 2015 Autumn Meeting.⁷

Among trends in Jōmon period research, results were seen of reconsiderations of the notion of "Jōmon" itself, namely its temporal and spatial extents, periodization, discrepancies between the eastern and western portions of the archipelago, etc., and of giving serious consideration to the relatedness of the natural environmental and social dimensions. These are all trends of recent years. Representative of the former set of considerations is Yamada Yasuhiro's *Tsukurareta Jōmon jidai* (The Constructed Jōmon Period),⁸ while Anzai Masato's *Jōmonjin no seikatsu sekai* (The World of Daily Life of the Jōmon People)⁹ represents the latter. Diverse methodologies were seen with regard to spiritual culture. While there were positions asserting the need for detailed observations of the uses and conditions of discovery of ritual implements on the one hand, research on artifacts and features following in the line of Nelly Naumann's iconography, and ethnoarchaeological research incorporating results from anthropology were visible on the other. As research debating interregional relations through classifications and reassessments of materials, there were studies of the stone materials of stone tools and of regional typologies of stone points, and ceramic research on spouted vessels and pedestaled censer-shaped vessels in addition to deep bowls. Among analyses based on the natural sciences, analysis of the clay paste of pottery, research on the effects of the Kikai Akahoya volcanic eruption, analysis of diet based on the ratios of stable isotopes of carbon and nitrogen in materials adhering to pots and baked clay objects, analysis of starch remains, research on the shape of

⁵ [Translator's note: The reference is to the section on Paleolithic period research trends appearing on pp. 20–26 of *Nihon kōkōgaku nenpō*, the same volume containing this introductory overview.]

⁶ Kenkyū Kankyō Kentō Iinkai 研究環境検討委員会 (a standing committee of the Japanese Archaeological Association)

⁷ "Daigaku kyōiku to bunkazai hogo" 大学教育と文化財保護 (University Education and Cultural Properties Protection), session at the Japanese Archaeological Association 2015 Autumn Meeting, Nara, 18 October, 2015.

⁸ Yamada Yasuhiro 山田康弘, *Tsukurareta Jōmon jidai* つくられた縄文時代 (The Constructed Jōmon Period) (Shinchosha, 2015).

⁹ Anzai Masato 安齋正人, *Jōmonjin no seikatsu sekai* 縄文人の生活世界 (The World of Daily Life of the Jōmon People) (Keibunsha, 2015).

utilization of plant materials using silicone replica studies of seed impressions in pottery, anthropological research on stress markers in human bone, and so forth, are being conducted. In the above manner, a variety of methodology can be seen in research on the Jōmon period, including approaches from archaeology, the natural sciences, anthropology, and the use of the results of iconography.

Also, as pointed out in the section on trends for the Jōmon period,¹⁰ various initiatives such as a *dogū* (clay figurine) guidebook aimed at a general audience,¹¹ cookies baked in the shape of potsherds, popularity contests for cartoon characters based on *dogū*,¹² a Jōmon-themed free magazine,¹³ and a Jōmon-themed art exhibit¹⁴ all impress upon us the emerging increase in popular interest towards the realm of archaeology.

In Yayoi period research, with regard to the calendrical age for Shōnai¹⁵ style pottery, there was debate based upon the chronology for Han mirrors and the results of dendrochronological analysis of wooden materials. For the ancient environment, based on an analysis of the ratio of oxygen isotopes utilizing the cellulose found in tree rings, Nakatsuka Takeshi has clarified changes in climate and rainfall on a yearly basis.¹⁶ This is a ground-breaking achievement. Also, consideration was made of the nature of relations between the forest environment and settlement formation at the Aoya Kamijichi¹⁷ site in Tottori prefecture, based on pollen analysis and identifications of the tree species for recovered architectural members and wooden utensils. With regard to livelihood, research on the utilization of plants with the silicone replica method for seed impressions in pottery is raising problems even for the nature of cultivation in the Yayoi period. Meanwhile, in terms of the history of the Yayoi period seen from the position of the AMS long chronology,¹⁸ Fujio Shin'ichirō defines the Yayoi as “a culture with paddy rice

¹⁰ [Translator's note: The reference is to the section on Jōmon period research trends appearing on pp. 26–32 of *Nihon kōkōgaku nenpō*, the same volume containing this introductory overview.]

¹¹ Konda Akiko 譽田亜紀子, *Nippon zenkoku dogū techō: Anata no ouchi no gokinjo dogū sagashite kudasai* につぼん全国土偶手帖: あなたのおうちのご近所土偶, 探して下さい (All-Japan Handbook of *Dogū*: Look for the Neighborhood *Dogū* Near Your Home) (Sekaibunka Publishing, 2015).

¹² [Translator's note: These contests have been sponsored in recent years by the website Dogūpota, which describes itself as a “*dogū* and Jōmon portal.” Final results for the 2015 contest were posted at the following URL: <http://dogupota.net/dogusen2015/>]

¹³ [Translator's note: Titled *Jōmonzine* 縄文 ZINE, published irregularly. Information is available from its website: <http://jomonzine.com/index.html>]

¹⁴ [Translator's note: The reference is to an exhibit titled “ARTs of JOMON” that was held in Tokyo 4-18 January 2015.]

¹⁵ 庄内

¹⁶ Nakatsuka Takeshi 中塚武, “Sanso dōitaihi nenrin nendaihō ga motarasu atarashii kōkōgaku kenkyū no kanōsei” 酸素同位体比年輪年代法がもたらす新しい考古学研究の可能性 (New possibilities in archaeological research enabled by oxygen isotope dendrochronology), *Kōkōgaku kenkyū* 考古学研究 (Quarterly Journal of Archaeological Studies) 62, no. 2 (2015): 17–30.

¹⁷ 青谷上寺地

¹⁸ [Translator's note: The reference here is to research by a team at the National Museum of Japanese History, first published in 2003, which used calibrated radiocarbon dating to push the start of the Yayoi period back to the ninth century BCE, several centuries earlier than previous thought. While it is the application of calibration which gives the longer chronology, the team's aggressive use of measurements based on accelerated mass spectrometry (AMS) to back up their findings with large

cultivation placed within the whole of daily life,”¹⁹ and takes its sphere as extending west from Niigata–Chiba prefectures. For production and circulation, there were studies of the actual conditions of workshop production that focused on the flanges of bronze socketed spearheads, and of the nature of chiefs who distributed iron implements. Concerning social structure as seen through burial systems, there were discussions of the proposal and subsequent fate of the hypothesis of square-shaped moated burials being equivalent to family graves, and of the method of construction of burial mounds in terms of their temporal relation to the persons interred. With regard to the mind of the Yayoi people, there was research on an east–west difference in consciousness toward the color red. In this manner, in research on the Yayoi period, the results of work based on methodologies of the natural sciences, such as AMS radiocarbon dating, along with that of archaeology, were the focus of discussion.

Among the trends in Kofun period research, we can point to Wada Seigo’s *Kofun jidai no seisan to ryūtsū* (Production and Circulation in the Kofun Period),²⁰ which takes Kofun period economy as inseparable from the political system or religious outlook, and the examination in Sasō Mamoru’s *Kami to shisha no kōkogaku* (The Archaeology of Deities and the Dead)²¹ of the relationship between festivals for the deities and rites associated with tombs. Such systematic approaches are said to raise expectations for further examinations to probe more deeply how they may link up with individual studies carried out in various localities. There was heightened interest in the following topics for their respective areas: for burial facilities of tombs, research on clay compartments and horizontal stone chambers; for grave goods, examinations of examples in which weapons and armor were interred in large volumes; for handicraft production and technology, Haji²² ware, horse breeding, and iron production; and for settlement research, immigrant settlements and those with maritime orientations. In addition, there were publications of reports from reexaminations of previously excavated materials such as the Nara National Museum’s *Gojō Nekozuka kofun no kenkyū* (Research on the Gojō Nekozuka Tomb),²³ and many Kofun-related regular research meetings and gatherings of note in various regions, plus exhibits and symposiums, etc., for the public, are said to have thrived.

For investigative technology, 3D measurement technology is progressing, and

numbers of samples has resulted in Japanese archaeologists commonly misapplying the term AMS as referring to their approach and results as a whole.]

¹⁹ Fujio Shin’ichirō 藤尾慎一郎, *Yayoi jidai no rekishi* 弥生時代の歴史 (History of the Yayoi Period) (Kodansha, 2015), p. 233.

²⁰ Wada Seigo 和田晴吾, *Kofun jidai no seisan to ryūtsū* 古墳時代の生産と流通 (Production and Circulation in the Kofun Period) (Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2015).

²¹ Sasō Mamoru 笹生衛, *Kami to shisha no kōkogaku: Kodai no matsuri to shinkō* 神と死者の考古学: 古代のまつりと信仰 (The Archaeology of Deities and the Dead: Rites and Beliefs in Ancient Times) (Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2016).

²² 土師

²³ Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan 奈良国立博物館 (Nara National Museum), *Gojō Nekozuka kofun no kenkyū* 五條猫塚古墳の研究 (Research on the Gojō Nekozuka Tomb), vol. 1-3 (Nara, 2013–15).

research utilizing high-precision scale drawings is being advanced. In the future, the making of such high-precision scale drawings in every region will likely enable debate on a level unseen until now. This is an advancement in research through the introduction of new technology.

In this manner, looking at the outlines of research trends from the Paleolithic to the Kofun periods, it can be seen that methodology from the natural sciences holds an important position for each period. As interdisciplinary trends, the results of cooperative work with fields of natural science are being introduced,²⁴ and the wide-ranging themes include the paleoenvironment/paleoclimate, dating methods, the form of production, production locales/materials/technologies, physical anthropology including DNA analysis, and site investigation methods. To name the analytic methods in concrete fashion, although there will be some overlap with what has already been introduced, there are AMS-based ¹⁴C dating of materials adhering to pottery, the calculation of regional offset values for the marine reservoir effect based on an analysis of shells from the Initial Jōmon period, nitrogen and carbon stable isotope ratios in materials adhering to pottery, dating methods including the study of isotope ratios for oxygen using cellulose contained in tree rings, analysis of diet based on the ratios of stable isotopes of carbon and nitrogen in materials adhering to pots and baked clay objects, inference of the place of production of bronze implements and so forth based on lead isotope ratios, analysis of isotopes of the three elements of sulfur/mercury/lead in vermilion (cinnabar), and so forth, with new methodologies using various isotope analyses thus being included, and the active pursuit of research drawing attention.

Research on the paleoenvironment/paleoclimate, the analysis of obsidian sources, clay paste analysis, X-ray fluorescence analysis of ancient glass, reconstructions of shellfish-gathering activity based on growth line analysis of shells, the study of plant utilization with the silicone replica technique applied to seed impressions in pottery, and so forth, are all studies that have been conducted from before and are yielding regular results. Also, in anthropology, the relationship between archaeological knowledge and the results of DNA analysis and research on genetic traits is drawing attention.

In research on the Ancient period, with regard to transportation, post stations found in multi-period sites were debated from a variety of perspectives. Also, research is consolidating with regard to ancient cities such as the ancient capitals, regional cities represented by Dazifu²⁵ (Fukuoka prefecture) and Tagajō²⁶ (Miyagi prefecture), the provincial headquarters of regional units under the ritsuryō system, as well as to the ancient land division system. For regional government offices, investigations in the ancient province of Kōzuke,²⁷ such as at the sites of the official

²⁴ [Translator's note: The reference is to the section on interdisciplinary research trends appearing on pp. 5–10 of *Nihon kōkōgaku nenpō*, the same volume containing this introductory overview.]

²⁵ 太宰府

²⁶ 多賀城

²⁷ 上野 (modern Gunma prefecture)

granary of Tago district²⁸ and the district office of Nitta,²⁹ drew attention. In a special issue of *Kōkogaku jānaru* (The Archaeological Journal) concerning regionally located state-supported temples and the ritsuryō state, Suda Tsutomu declares that Dazai Kanzeonji³⁰ (Fukuoka prefecture) and Shimotsuke Yakushiji³¹ (Tochigi prefecture) were conceived as Japan's earliest regional state-supported temples but at first were not carried through, and that they started forward again with the construction of Daikan Daiji³² (Nara prefecture) and the regional Buddhist policy that were advanced along with the compilation of the Taihō Ritsuryō³³ code.³⁴ Also, the journal *Kikan kōkogaku* (Archaeology Quarterly) had a special collection on pit structures.³⁵ Voicing objections to the careless use of the conventional term *pit dwelling*, along with asserting the importance of the alternate *pit structure*, various facilities of these buildings, including cooking stoves, and their functions are widely debated.

For research on the Ancient period, while examples of studies bringing in methodology from the natural sciences appear to be fewer in number, in their place points of contact with the study of history as historical archaeology come to hold an important position. For example, in the analysis of ink-inscribed and incised pottery, it is said to be not only a matter of interpreting the writing, but also of seeking interpretation and understanding in coordinated fashion of the points of contrast with other historic materials through a comprehensive examination, for each individual artifact, of its nature and the conditions of its discovery, the accompanying finds, etc. This can be said to indicate the significance in historic archaeology of debate surrounding documentary materials.

For trends in Medieval period research, studies of sites of cities and villages included examples from the Tōhoku region, plus Kamakura³⁶ (Kanagawa prefecture) and Hakatatsu Tōbō³⁷ (Fukuoka prefecture). With regards to castles, research meetings were seen focusing on such topics as the conditions in western Japan of the introduction of Azuchi-Momoyama castles,³⁸ the establishment of the stone walls

²⁸ 多胡郡正倉

²⁹ 新田郡家

³⁰ 太宰觀世音寺

³¹ 下野薬師寺

³² 大官大寺

³³ 大宝律令

³⁴ Suda Tsutomu 須田勉, “Chihō kanji to ritsuryō kokka” 地方官寺と律令国家 (Establishment of Local Government Temples and the Monmu Age Taikantaiji Temple), *Kōkogaku jānaru* 考古学ジャーナル (The Archaeological Journal), no. 680 (2016): 3-7.

³⁵ “Kodai ‘tateana tatemono’ kenkyū no kanōsei” 古代「竪穴建物」研究の可能性 (Possibilities of Ancient “Pit Structure” Research), special issue of *Kikan kōkogaku* 季刊考古学 (Archaeology Quarterly), no. 131 (2015).

³⁶ 鎌倉

³⁷ 博多津唐房

³⁸ [Translator's note: The term used, *Shokuhōkei jōkaku* 織豊系城郭, is based on the first characters of the surnames of Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who advanced the unification of the country while promoting the building of castles characterized by high stone walls, imposing central keeps, and tiled roofs. Hōshoku is also used as an alternate name for the Azuchi-Momoyama period, which itself is a term derived from the names of castles built by these two figures.]

characteristic of this style of castle seen from the perspective of construction technology, and gardens at castle residences of the Sengoku period, while compilations were published on castle planning and design. For burial systems and religious matters there was research on beliefs about interring cremated remains and sacred sites, and on stone monuments and stone-processing technology. Regarding ceramics, research was carried out on porcelain and glazed stoneware, including Tōbankei Sueki,³⁹ ash-glazed stoneware, and trade ceramics of the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries in the Japan Sea area centering on the San'in region. For transportation and circulation, there were studies of water transport in the San'in region in the latter half of the sixteenth century, of the circulation of silver with the Iwami Ginzan⁴⁰ Silver Mine at its core, of the utilization of lumber, and of border region issues such as the Ainu and trade ceramics in Okinawa.

Research by Nakai Atsushi on terms noted in historic documents for pottery is an issue concerning a point of contact between historical archaeology and history.⁴¹ Also, the 13th Symposium on Archaeology and Medieval Period History “Kōkogaku wa Chūsei o katareru ka” (Can Archaeology Discuss the Medieval Period?),⁴² held at the Research Institute of Cultural Properties of Teikyo University, saw debate synthesizing the discussion of this research group. It suggests that a period of generational change in Medieval period research is approaching.

With regards to Early Modern period research, investigations and research related to features of Early Modern cities such as castles and castle towns were active. For castles, projects including excavations and symposiums were carried out in conjunction with designations as Historic Sites and the attending site preparations. For castles and castle towns, a session on castles and cities of the transitional period from the Medieval to Early Modern eras was held at the Association's 2015 Autumn Meeting,⁴³ and the Osaka Museum of History had a special exhibit, for the 400th anniversary of the Osaka Castle Siege, on Osaka as an Early Modern city revealed archaeologically.⁴⁴ Investigations and research on castle towns are happening not only for Edo and Osaka but are also gradually expanding to include regional castle towns and domain headquarters. With regards to

³⁹ 東播系須恵器 (Tōban [= eastern Harima, southern Hyōgo prefecture] Sue ware)

⁴⁰ 石見銀山

⁴¹ Nakai Atsushi 中井淳史, “Chūsei doki/tōjiki no meiji to sono kinō: Toku ni ‘chawan’ ‘wan’ ‘sara’ o megutte” 中世土器・陶磁器の名辞とその機能: とくに「茶碗」「椀」「皿」をめぐって (Names for Medieval Pottery/Porcelain and Their Functions: Particularly Concerning “Bowl” “Cup” and “Plate”), Ōtemae Daigaku Shigaku Kenkyūjo Kiyō 大手前大学史学研究所紀要 (Research Report of the Ōtemae Research Center of History), no. 10 (2015): 1-28.

⁴² “Kōkogaku wa chūsei o katareru ka” 考古学は中世を語るか (Can Archaeology Discuss the Medieval Period?), Dai 13-kai Kōkogaku to Chūseishi Shinpojiumu 第13回考古学と中世史シンポジウム (13th Symposium on Archaeology and Medieval Period History), held at Teikyo University Research Institute of Cultural Properties, 4-5 July 2015.

⁴³ “Chūkinsei ikōki no shiro to toshi” 中近世移行期の城と都市 (Castles and Cities of the Medieval to Early Modern Transitional Period), session at the Japanese Archaeological Association 2015 Autumn Meeting, Nara, 18 October, 2015.

⁴⁴ Ōsaka Rekishi Hakubutsukan 大阪歴史博物館 (Osaka Museum of History), “Ōsaka: Kōkogaku ga kataru kinsei toshi” 大阪: 考古学が語る近世都市 (Osaka: An Early Modern City as Told by Archaeology), special exhibit for the 400th anniversary of the Osaka Castle Siege (18 April - 8 June 2015).

townhouses, continuing from the previous fiscal year the Edo Archaeological Site Research Society took up the topic of “commoners’ districts,”⁴⁵ and at the Itami Gōchō⁴⁶ site in Hyōgo prefecture an oil-pressing feature was excavated. As production sites, there were investigations of kiln remains of Kyō⁴⁷ ware, Akahada⁴⁸ ware, and Nabeshima⁴⁹ ware. Kobayashi Katsu’s research on *garo*, vessels used in the manufacture of white sugar, drew attention.⁵⁰ In research on porcelain and glazed stoneware, there were research meetings on Bizen⁵¹ ware, and on the circulation and composition of Hizen⁵² porcelain in the Early Edo period.

Further, among Early Modern research trends, the need is being advocated for cooperation and support for projects in the Tōhoku region accompanying work for reconstruction from the Great East Japan Earthquake, and for the Japanese Archaeological Association it is likely necessary to maintain a constant disaster response.

Also, investigations and research on modern and contemporary era sites are producing results, and excavation in conjunction with site preparation was conducted at the Mietsu Naval Facility⁵³ site in Saga prefecture, and the Tomioka Silk Mill⁵⁴ in Gunma prefecture, both inscribed on the World Heritage List. This development can be assessed as part of the trend for the broadening scope of objects of archaeology.

For trends in research in overseas archaeology, I will yield to the descriptions given for each region,⁵⁵ but for the regions surrounding Japan beginning with the Korean peninsula and China, comparisons of data and problems concerning the circulation of goods are being taken up. In concrete terms, for the Paleolithic period there was a study of the appearance of laminar blade tool groups in the central part of the Japanese archipelago and relationships with various regions of the Eurasian continent, and a comparison of stone tool assemblages for northwestern Kyushu and the southern half of the Korean peninsula in relation to flaked projectile points. For the Yayoi period there were studies of cylindrical beads from the Nishidani No. 3 tomb⁵⁶ of Shimane prefecture that included glass composition indicating

⁴⁵ “Edo no chōninchi 2: Iseki kara miru kinsei toshi Edo” 江戸の町人地2: 遺跡から見る近世都市江戸 (Edo Commoners’ Districts 2: The Early Modern City of Edo Seen from Archaeological Sites), Edo Iseki Kenkyūkai Dai 29-kai Taikai 江戸遺跡研究会第29回大会 Edo Archaeological Site Research Society 29th Meeting, held at Nihon University, 30–31 January 2016.

⁴⁶ 伊丹郷町

⁴⁷ 京

⁴⁸ 赤膚

⁴⁹ 鍋島

⁵⁰ Kobayashi Katsu 小林克, “Edo jidai no garo” 江戸時代の瓦漏 (*Garo* in the Edo Period), *Nihon Kōkōgaku* 日本考古学 (Journal of the Japanese Archaeological Association), no. 40 (2015): 89–106.

⁵¹ 備前

⁵² 肥前

⁵³ 三重津海軍所

⁵⁴ 富岡製糸場

⁵⁵ [Translator’s note: The reference is to the sections on overseas research trends for the Korean peninsula, China, South Asia, and Western Asia, appearing on pp. 62–87 of *Nihon kōkōgaku nenpō*, the same volume containing this introductory overview.]

⁵⁶ 西谷3号墓

production in the environs of the Mediterranean, and of exchange with Neukdo Island⁵⁷ (South Gyeongsang province, South Korea) in relation to iron from the Korean peninsula. A joint Japanese–Korean research meeting was held related to pottery/iron production and settlements of the Kofun period,⁵⁸ and there was a study for the Medieval period of castles built by the Jurchen people along the Russian sea coast and the northeastern region of China.

Also, from the question of what past society has taken as beauty, Matsugi Takehiko asserts that by the same path taken from Jōmon through Yayoi pottery to Haji and Sue⁵⁹ wares, pottery in nearly all regions of the world follows three stages from simple to complex to noble.⁶⁰ This is a study made from the vantage point of comparative archaeology, with the same type of methodology as Kawanishi Hiroyuki who sorts out the transitions in settlement formation all over the world, and tries to link the rises and falls of human activity with settlement research of the Kofun period.⁶¹ Such relations with overseas archaeology appear to suggest one direction for the so-called “internationalization” of Japanese archaeology.

In the above manner, regarding the overall trends of Japanese archaeological research in the 2015 fiscal year, outlines have been given for the research trends of each period in turn. These can be seen as set in the midst of larger currents representing prior ongoing trends, which, put briefly, are an increasing diversity in methodology related to archaeology, and an expansion of the objects of archaeological study. The methodological diversification consists of the active introduction of natural scientific analyses as additions to traditional archaeological analytic methods, plus the incorporation of the results and ideational frameworks of adjacent disciplines such as cultural anthropology and history. At the same time, the expansion of objects of archaeological study, in addition to being a broadening of the scope of analysis attending the diversification of methodology, can also be seen as resulting from the gradual normalization of investigation and research in areas which archaeology conventionally did not handle, such as sites of the modern and contemporary eras.

Additionally, as touched upon at the start of this contribution, the larger society enveloping Japanese archaeology is facing a period of great transition, in which the discipline of archaeology is confronted with problems such as drastic decreases in the numbers of researchers who support regional research, severe personnel

⁵⁷ 勒島

⁵⁸ “Nikkan 4-5 seiki no doki/tekki seisan to shūroku” 日韓4～5世紀の土器・鉄器生産と集落 (Japanese–Korean Pottery/Iron Production and Settlements of the 4th–5th Centuries), Dai 3-kai Kyōdō Kenkyūkai, Nikkan kōshō no kōkogaku: Kofun jidai 第3回共同研究会 日韓交渉の考古学: 古墳時代 (3rd Joint Research Meeting, Archaeology of Japanese–Korean Negotiations: The Kofun Period), held at Ryūkyoku Daigaku, 10–11 January 2016.

⁵⁹ 須恵

⁶⁰ Matsugi Takehiko 松木武彦, *Bi no kōkogaku: Kodaijin wa nani ni miserarete kita ka* 美の考古学: 古代人は何に魅せられてきたか (The Archaeology of Beauty: By What Has Ancient Man Been Charmed?) (Shinchosha, 2016).

⁶¹ Kawanishi Hiroyuki 川西宏幸, *Datsu shinka no kōkogaku* 脱進化の考古学 (Freeing Archaeology from Evolution) (Douseisha, 2015).

shortages for regional government research organizations, and issues in the educational environment for archaeology in the universities and in the training of successors. On the other hand, as pointed out for Jōmon period trends, a variety of initiatives aimed at the general public brings premonitions of future increases in the numbers of people with an interest in archaeology. These phenomena will most likely link with issues of how Japanese archaeology will pass on and advance the broad and deep “world of knowledge” that it has cultivated thus far.