

Overview: Japanese Archaeological Research Trends 2011¹

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When speaking of the year 2011, or of Japan at any subsequent point in time, it will likely be impossible to leave out the Great East Japan Earthquake. The three-fold disaster of a massive earthquake, followed by a gigantic tidal wave, then the dispersion of radioactive material from the hydrogen explosion at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant coming like a kick to someone already down, dealt a tremendous blow to Japanese society. And in the midst of all of this, a variety of systematic problems in Japanese society seem to have been exposed. Our academic discipline of archaeology and its operations hardly stand isolated from these events.

In face of this unprecedented catastrophe, the Preparatory Committee for a Special Emergency Response Committee to the Great Tōhoku-Kantō Earthquake³ (changed from April 1 to read “Great East Japan Earthquake”), established at the March 2011 meeting of the Japanese Archaeological Association’s Board of Directors, began its activities by ascertaining the fates of Association members and gathering information on the extent of damage to cultural properties, participating in the Agency for Cultural Affairs’ “Cultural Properties Rescue” program and sharing information about the conditions of damage, conducting on-the-ground inspections in Miyagi and Iwate prefectures and holding discussions there of the conditions suffered in the disaster, the handling of buried cultural properties in conjunction with reconstruction efforts, and the current state of cultural properties rescue operations. While it was confirmed that no Association member met with personal tragedy, we must not forget there were victims among archaeological researchers who were non-members.

The Board of Directors released an emergency statement from the Association

¹ [*Trends in Japanese Archaeological Research, 2011*, is a partial translation of “Nihon kōkogaku kenkyū no dōkō” 日本考古学研究の動向, in *Nihon kōkogaku nenpō 64 (2011 nendoban)* 日本考古学年報 64(2011 年度版) (Archaeologia Japonica 64 [2011 Fiscal Year Issue]) (Nihon Kōkogaku Kyōkai, 2013), pp. 1-65. 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 2013. 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 田中良之

³ Tōhoku Kantō Daishinsai Kinkyū Taiō Tokubetsu Iinkai Junbikai 東北関東大震災緊急対応特別委員会準備会

President, dated April 1 and titled “To Members of the Japanese Archaeological Association and Related Personnel,”⁴ and adopted an exemption from membership fees for a limited period as a measure of support for members who suffered damage.

The Special Response Committee to the Great East Japan Earthquake⁵ (hereafter, the Special Response Committee), formally established at the 2011 General Meeting, began its activities such as raising funds as contributions and financial support for cultural properties rescue operations, conducting a session of presentations at the General Meeting on the disaster and the lessons to be learned from the Great Hanshin Earthquake,⁶ and publishing a report summing up various problems in issue No. 174 of the Association’s Bulletin.⁷ Because these measures were already in progress when the media began reporting that buried cultural properties policies might hinder the recovery, a statement from the Association President titled “Expectations for the Preservation/Investigation of Cultural Properties in Conjunction with the Great East Japan Earthquake Reconstruction Efforts”⁸ was promptly released on July 12.

The Special Response Committee subsequently continued its discussions with cultural resource management personnel in the disaster region, conducting a

⁴ “Nihon Kōkogaku Kyōkai kaiin narabi ni kankeisha no minasama e” 日本考古学協会会員ならびに関係者の皆様へ. The statement is available in Japanese on the Association’s website (<http://archaeology.jp/proceedings/kaicho20110401.htm>).

⁵ Higashi Nihon Daishinsai Taisaku Tokubetsu Inikai 東日本大震災対策特別委員会

⁶ “Kinkyū hōkoku, Higashi Nihon Daishinsai ni chokumen shite: Hisaichi kara no hōkoku oyobi Hanshin Awaji Daishinsai ni manabu” 緊急報告 東日本大震災に直面して: 被災地からの報告及び阪神淡路大震災に学ぶ (Emergency Report, Confronting the Great East Japan Earthquake: A Report from the Stricken Region, Plus Learning from the Great Hanshin Earthquake), session held at the Nihon Kōkogaku Kyōkai 2011 Nendo Sōkai 日本考古学協会 2011 年度総会 (Japanese Archaeological Association 2011 General Meeting) (Kokugakuin University, 29 May 2011).

⁷ “Higashi Nihon Daishinsai Taisaku Tokubetsu Inikai hōkoku” 東日本大震災対策特別委員会報告 (Report of the Special Response Committee to the Great East Japan Earthquake), *Nihon Kōkogaku Kyōkai kaihō* 日本考古学協会会報 (Bulletin of the Japanese Archaeological Association), no. 174 (December, 2011): 13-15. This report is also available in Japanese on the Association’s website (<http://archaeology.jp/proceedings/disast1.htm>)

⁸ “Higashi Nihon Daishinsai fukkō jigō ni tomonau bunkazai no hozon/chōsa ni nozomu” 東日本大震災復興事業に伴う文化財の保存・調査に望む. The statement is available in Japanese on the Association’s website (<http://archaeology.jp/proceedings/kaicho20110712.htm>).

[Translator’s note: As explained in the Special Response Committee’s December 2011 report (note 7, above), in June there were notices in the press of a request to build reconstruction housing on the Tako no ura Shell Mound in the city of Ōfunato (Iwate prefecture), a nationally designated Historic Site, plus a question about whether the need for investigation prior to construction at another Iwate location, in the city of Miyako, posed an obstacle for the reconstruction effort.

The July 12 statement released in response to such concerns noted the rich cultural heritage of the disaster region and the many museums and other facilities displaying that heritage, expressing the Association’s desire that in the conduct of reconstruction projects, efforts would be made to preserve and protect cultural properties, and restore facilities displaying them to their former states, while asking residents of the area for their understanding and cooperation in this regard. It further stated the hope that reconstruction efforts and any new investigations and administrative measures attending them would be conducted in accordance with the aims of the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties. Finally, it stressed that for the reconstruction effort after the Great Hanshin Earthquake, cultural properties served as a source of local identity and pride that proved invaluable for efforts to rebuild local communities, and expressed the hope that those lessons would be applied in the ongoing reconstruction.]

questionnaire survey of local preparations for excavations of buried cultural properties in conjunction with reconstruction projects, publishing the results in issue No. 176 of the Association's Bulletin.⁹ The problems of preserving, conserving, and protecting cultural properties remained without clear prospects for resolution, beset with numerous challenges such as securing sufficient preparedness for excavating buried cultural properties prior to development, and with no outlook whatsoever for countermeasures to deal with heritage that was radioactively contaminated from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear reactor accident. Moreover, the dispersion of radioactive material extended over a wide area. It is thought that many problems as yet not understood may emerge in the future, such as possible secondary exposure to radiation on occasions of excavating sites, the effects of contamination of sites and artifacts on analysis for chemical elements and isotopes, and so forth. The Special Response Committee will continue its activities while coordinating with various related academic societies, organizations, and institutions. We appeal to all members of the Association for their further cooperation and support.

The Association faces another significant challenge in the problem of its library. Originally this issue arose because the books in the Association's possession were kept in a storehouse and thus not under conditions where they could be utilized, and even though at first some solution was sought whereby they could be maintained while available for reading, the cost of doing so was prohibitive, and even the storage fees were pressing upon the Association's finances. After long examination, the decision made by the Board of Directors to donate the entire collection, and the ensuing open search and selection process for a receiving institution, resulted in the library being offered to the Sainsbury Institute of England. As is well known, this was overturned at a special General Meeting held in the previous Fiscal Year. Accordingly, based on the proposal made by the chair of the special meeting, a Special Committee Concerned with the Association's Library¹⁰ was established at the 2011 General Meeting. Because the Board of Directors' original proposal had been overturned, the point was to have a committee other than the Board of Directors consider the problem, and its members were selected so that there would be no bias either for or against the Directors' proposal of the previous year. Further, it was decided to have two intellectuals who are not members of the Association join the committee, to provide opinions from a wider perspective. The earnest debate conducted by the committee is being published in ongoing fashion in the Association's Bulletin and on its website, and the committee's findings are expected to be issued in the upcoming Fiscal Year, based upon which the Board of Directors will then submit a proposal to the General Meeting.

⁹ "Higashi Nihon Daishinsai Taisaku Tokubetsu Iinkai hōkoku," *Nihon Kōkōgaku Kyōkai kaihō*, no. 176 (August, 2012): 51-54. This report is also available in Japanese on the Association's website (<http://archaeology.jp/proceedings/disast2.htm>).

¹⁰ Kyōkai Toshō ni Kakawaru Tokubetsu Iinkai 協会図書に係わる特別委員会

A proposal to institute three awards, a “Grand Award,” “Monetary Award,” and “Special Award,” was made and adopted at the 2010 General Meeting, after examining existing awards and methods of citation for merit as reference. Accordingly a Selection Committee was established, and after evaluating the works that were submitted as candidates, the results were announced at this year’s General Meeting and presentations made by Association President Kikuchi Tesuo. First, before the Grand and Monetary awards, the Japanese Archaeological Association Special Award was conferred on Association member Tsuboi Kiyotari,¹¹ for his contributions to the field of archaeology over many years, plus his receipt in 1999 of the Person of Cultural Merit award.¹² Then the first Grand Award was given to Association member Ikeya Nobuyuki for his monograph on the archaeology of obsidian,¹³ and the first Monetary Award to Association member Mizusawa Kōichi for his study of Medieval distribution along the Japan Sea.¹⁴ Even though the number of applicants was not great, perhaps because this was the first time for these awards and they were not sufficiently well known, it is thought they were given to suitable works for recognition through the Japanese Archaeological Association Awards. In addition to extolling the honor won by these three recipients, it is hoped that the Awards program will become enriched in the future, and that Association members will actively respond to calls for applications, so that the Awards will contribute to the development of archaeology in Japan as well.

The Japanese Archaeological Association has six standing committees, the Research Conditions Investigative Committee, Committee on Policy for the Preservation of Buried Cultural Properties, Committee to Investigate Social Studies and History Texts, International Exchange Committee, Editorial Committee, and Public Relations Committee,¹⁵ each of which is conducting its separate activities. The Research Conditions Investigative Committee has been examining the problem of the system for licensing archaeological investigators, and made a poster presentation at the General Meeting on the results of a questionnaire survey focusing on the issue,¹⁶ but since the Agency for Cultural Affairs, which should be

¹¹ 坪井清足

¹² Bunka Kōrōsha 文化功労者 (awarded by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology)

¹³ Ikeya Nobuyuki 池谷信之, *Kokuyōseki kōkogaku: Gensanchi suitei ga akiraka ni suru shakai kōzō to sono henka* 黒曜石考古学: 原産地推定が明らかにする社会構造とその変化 (Obsidian Archaeology: Social Structure and Its Transformation Revealed through Inferring Source Locations) (Shinsensha, 2009).

¹⁴ Mizusawa Kōichi 水澤幸一, *Nihonkai ryūtsū no kōkogaku: Chūsei bushidan no shōhi seikatsu* 日本海流通の考古学: 中世武士団の消費生活 (The Archaeology of Distribution on the Japan Sea: Consumption Habits of Medieval Samurai Groups) (Koshi Shoin, 2009).

¹⁵ Kenkyū Kankyō Kentō Inkaikai 研究環境検討委員会, Maizō Bunkazai Hogo Taisaku Inkaikai 埋蔵文化財保護対策委員会, Shakaika/Rekishi Kyōkashotō Kentō Inkaikai 社会科・歴史教科書等検討委員会, Kokusai Kōryū Inkaikai 国際交流委員会, Kikanshi Henshū Inkaikai 機関誌編集委員会, Kōhō Inkaikai 広報委員会

¹⁶ Kenkyū Kankyō Kentō Inkaikai, “Shinpojiumu ‘Kibishisa o masu kenkyū kankyō’ o kangaeru de shimesareta kaiin no iken” シンポジウム厳しさを増す研究環境を考えるで示された会員の意見 (Association Members’ Opinions Indicated at the Symposium “Thinking About the Increasingly Severe Conditions for Research”), poster presented at the Japanese Archaeological Association 2011 General Meeting (Kokugakuin University, 29 May 2011). [Translator’s note: The symposium named in the poster title, sponsored by the Association, was held at Tohoku Gakuin University, 3 March 2010.]

expected to provide direction on this issue, has been overwhelmed with the response to the recent catastrophe and has made no progress, the situation is left stranded without any prospect regarding what comes next. At the same time, the licensing system of the Japan Association for Preservation of Cultural Properties¹⁷ has started operation and appears to be taking hold, and it goes without saying that this situation is undesirable. The Committee on Policy for the Preservation of Buried Cultural Properties is continuing its vigorous program of activities, but in addition to the problems of heritage preservation it has dealt with previously, the Great East Japan Earthquake and its reconstruction are likely to influence the entire scope of buried cultural properties administration, so this committee is conducting its business in close cooperation with the Special Response Committee. This is a new issue for the Research Conditions Investigative Committee as well. In this manner, we are being influenced by the Great East Japan Earthquake in a variety of situations.

The Committee to Investigate Social Studies and History Texts continued its activities, holding a session at the General Meeting on “How Do We Relate the Yayoi and Kofun Periods to Children?”¹⁸ and presenting a poster there on the teaching of those periods in grade school.¹⁹ Education through the elementary and middle school levels becomes the foundation of historical cognizance for the majority of citizens, and is thus extremely important. In recent years, with so much emphasis being placed on modern history we even hear the extreme view that the ancient periods are unnecessary, but the modern nation state developed with a strong consciousness of the ancient state, and it goes without saying that knowing the passage of history in systematic fashion from prehistoric times on is indispensable for understanding the modern citizenry’s variety and the process of national unification.

The International Exchange Committee, in coordination with the Committee to Investigate Social Studies and History Texts, is conducting a survey of the contents of history texts for various countries in Asia, and presented a poster on this topic at the General Meeting.²⁰ Also, it continued to coordinate an open lecture series sponsored by the Association along with three other Japanese archaeological

¹⁷ Nihon Bunkazai Hogo Kyōkai 日本文化財保護協会 (an organization comprised of private contractors engaged in work with cultural properties)

¹⁸ “Kodomotachi ni Yayoi/Kofun jidai o dō tsutaeru ka: Gakkō genba de no jissenrei to sono kadai” 子ども達に弥生・古墳時代をどう伝えるか: 学校現場での実践例とその課題 (How Do We Relate the Yayoi and Kofun Periods to Children? Practical Examples and Issues from the Schools), session held at the Japanese Archaeological Association 2011 General Meeting (Kokugakuin University, 29 May 2011).

¹⁹ “Shōgakkō no kyōkasho de oshietai: Yayoi/Kofun jidai” 小学校の教科書で教えたい: 弥生・古墳時代 (What We Want to Teach through Grade School Textbooks: The Yayoi and Kofun Periods), poster presented at the Japanese Archaeological Association 2011 General Meeting (Kokugakuin University, 29 May 2011).

²⁰ “Ajia no rekishi/shakaika kyōkasho bunseki: Kōkogaku kijutsu o chūshin ni” アジアの歴史/社会科教科書分析: 考古学記述を中心に (Analysis of Asian School Texts in History and Social Studies: With a Focus on Archaeological Descriptions), poster presented at the Japanese Archaeological Association 2011 General Meeting (Kokugakuin University, 29 May 2011).

societies.²¹ The Editorial and Public Relations Committees worked diligently to enrich the journal, *Nihon kōkōgaku* (Journal of the Japanese Archaeological Association),²² the annual report, *Nihon kōkōgaku nenpō* (Archaeologia Japonica), and the Association's website.²³

Of course, there were important discoveries and research seen for the field of archaeology in the 2011 Fiscal Year. Trends for 2011 in every period and region are given in detail in the sections of this volume that follow,²⁴ and I ask the reader to examine these while noting that many presentations and reports were given at the General and Autumn Meetings. On the first day of the 2011 General Meeting, held at Kokugakuin University, Kobayashi Tatsuo, a professor emeritus of that institution, gave an open lecture on the topic of Jōmon monumental sites,²⁵ and the following day there were poster sessions plus research presentations at four different lecture halls, all of which were well attended. From the current fiscal year there is a change in the format of the presentations for the General Meeting, as in addition to the individual oral presentations continuing from before, sessions focusing on particular topics were introduced. As a result of proposals made under the latter category, there were sessions on ancient cooking methods inferred from residues on pottery, a reexamination of Jōmon agriculture based on the results of paleoethnobotanical work, examinations of human skeletal remains from the Shiraho Saonetabaru Dōketsu site in Okinawa, and the investigation of stone tool-making behaviors of people in the Paleolithic and later eras.²⁶ In addition, there were the two sessions held by Association committees already mentioned, focusing

²¹ [Translator's note: The four societies all share a regional focus on Asia. The other three organizations are the Japan Society for Chinese Archaeology (Nihon Chūgoku Kōkōgakkai 日本中国考古学会), the Japan Society for Southeast Asian Archaeology (Tōnan Ajia Kōkōgakkai 東南アジア考古学会), and the Japanese Society for West Asian Archaeology (Nihon Nishi Ajia Kōkōgakkai 日本西アジア考古学会). The fourth annual program of open lectures jointly sponsored by these four societies was held on the theme of Asian ceramics ("Kōkōgaku kara mita Ajia no yakimono" 考古学から見たアジアの焼き物 [Asian Ceramics Seen from Archaeology]), at Meiji University on 6 March 2011.]

²² *Nihon kōkōgaku* 日本考古学 (Journal of the Japanese Archaeological Association)

²³ <http://archaeology.jp/index.htm>

²⁴ [Translator's note: The reference here is to summaries, by period and region, of research trends contained in *Nihon kōkōgaku nenpō*, the same volume as this introductory overview.]

²⁵ Kobayashi Tatsuo 小林達雄, "Gekijō kūkan to shite no Jōmon kinenbutsu" 劇場空間としての縄文記念物 (Jōmon Monuments as Theatrical Space), open lecture given at the Japanese Archaeological Association 2011 General Meeting (Kokugakuin University, 28 May 2011).

²⁶ The titles for these four sessions, respectively, all held at the Japanese Archaeological Association 2011 General Meeting (Kokugakuin University, 29 May 2011), are as follows: "Doki shiyōkon kenkyū: Susu/koge kara mita Jōmon/Yayoi doki to Hajiki ni yoru chōri hōhō" 土器使用痕研究: スス・コゲからみた縄文・弥生土器と土師器による調理方法 (Research on Vestiges of Pottery Use: Cooking Methods Seen from Soot/Scorched Residues on Jōmon/Yayoi Pottery and Haji Ware); "Saikin no kominzoku shokubutsugaku kenkyū no seika kara mita Jōmon nōkō saisaikō" 最近の古民族植物学研究成果からみた縄文農耕再々考 (A Re-reconsideration of Jōmon Agriculture Seen from Recent Paleoethnobotanical Research); "Okinawa-ken Ishigaki-shi Shiraho Saonetabaru Dōketsu kara shutsudo shita kōki kōshinsei jinkotsu: Kōkōgaku to kotsukōkōgaku no kyōdō" 沖縄県石垣市白保竿根田原洞穴から出土した後期更新世人骨: 考古学と骨考古学の協働 (Late Pleistocene Human Skeletal Remains Recovered from Shiraho Saonetabaru Dōketsu, Ishigaki, Okinawa: Cooperation between Archaeology and Osteoarchaeology); "Kyūjin/shinjin no sekki seisaku gakushū kōdō o saguru" 旧人・新人の石器製作学習行動を探る (Probing for Learned Behavior of Stone Tool-making of Paleolithic and Neolithic Man).

on the teaching of the Yayoi and Kofun periods in the schools and the emergency report on the earthquake,²⁷ for a total of six sessions in all organized around particular themes. The proposed sessions permit the participation of related academic societies, and on this occasion the Anthropological Society of Nippon²⁸ made a submission. As the individual presentations in each session are all mutually related, the format is felt to have helped maintain a high level of interest. We believe this kind of experimentation will promote the revitalization of the Association in the future.

The 2011 Autumn Meeting was held in the city of Tochigi at the Kokugakuin University Tochigi Educational Center. The first day saw an open lecture by Kokugakuin Tochigi Junior College Professor Sakayori Masashi focusing on Japanese archaeological investigations on the Asian mainland in the 1930s,²⁹ followed by three simultaneously held symposia on the utilization of stone material (especially obsidian) in the stone age, on archaeological perspectives of mortuary practices and rituals, and on problems related to livelihood in ancient society.³⁰ There were also poster presentations focusing on social studies school texts,³¹ and the ongoing problem of the locus of responsibility for the protection of buried cultural properties.³² The results of the above investigations and research will likely be published in various academic journals, beginning with the Association's *Nihon kōkōgaku*.

As is clear from this brief overview, with its background of an enormous number of investigations, the volume and variety of archaeology in Japan may be regarded as among the foremost in the world. In addition, within this great volume lies much research that can be described as international, interdisciplinary, and integrated with other fields, keywords currently in great demand in Japanese academics. In that regard, Japanese archaeology has certainly been undergoing transformation.

²⁷ See notes 6 and 18, respectively, above.

²⁸ Nihon Jinrui Gakkai 日本人類学会

²⁹ Sakayori Masashi 酒寄雅志, "Tōa Kōkōgakkai no tanjō to katsudō: Bokkaikoku Tonkinjō no chōsa o chūshin ni" 東亜考古学会の誕生と活動: 渤海国東京城の調査を中心に (The Birth and Activities of the East Asia Archaeological Society: Focusing on the Investigation of Dongjingcheng in Bohai), open lecture given at the Nihon Kōkōgaku Kyōkai 2011 Nendo Shūki Taikai 日本考古学協会 2011 年度秋季大会 (Japanese Archaeological Association 2011 Autumn Meeting) (Tochigi, 15 October 2011).

³⁰ The titles for these three sessions, respectively, all held at the Japanese Archaeological Association 2011 Autumn Meeting (Tochigi, 15-16 October 2011), are as follows: "Sekki jidai ni okeru sekizai riyō no chiikisō: Kokuyōseki o chūshin to shite" 石器時代における石材利用の地域相: 黒曜石を中心として (Regional Aspects of Stone Material Utilization in the Stone Age: Focusing on Obsidian); "Kōkōgaku kara mita sōsō to saishi" 考古学からみた葬送と祭祀 (Mortuary Practices and Rituals Seen from Archaeology); "Kodai shakai no nariwai o meguru shomondai" 古代社会の生業をめぐる諸問題 (Various Problems Concerning Livelihood in Ancient Society).

³¹ Committee to Investigate Social Studies and History Texts, "Shakaika kyōkasho o kangaeru" 社会科教科書を考える (Thinking About Social Studies Texts), poster presented at the Japanese Archaeological Association 2011 Autumn Meeting (Tochigi, 15-16 October 2011).

³² Special Response Committee to the Great East Japan Earthquake, "Maizō bunkazai no hogo wa dare no sekinin de nasareruka (2011 aki)" 埋蔵文化財の保護は誰の責任でなされるか(2011 秋) (Under Whose Responsibility Will Protection for Buried Cultural Properties to Undertaken? (2011 Autumn)), poster presented at the Japanese Archaeological Association 2011 Autumn Meeting (Tochigi, 15-16 October 2011).

For the future it is vital that this not end as merely a domestic dialog, but that the results of archaeological developments in Japan be broadcast to the world to partake in mutual evaluation. When that becomes the normal situation, the genre of “Japanese archaeology” will have become established within archaeology on a worldwide scale.