

Yayoi Period

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It has been a long time since the Yayoi period in Japanese Archaeology was established as an era indispensable in the historical chronology unique to Japan. However, traditionally valued indicators of the Yayoi period: existence of wet rice cultivation, metal tools, and warfare (added later), do not actually overlap in their distribution and the time they began. At present, researchers are starting to recognize that the deviation should be understood as a complex of multiple “archaeological cultures” that differ significantly. While it is generalized as a name “Yayoi culture,” there are few researchers who can come up with an easy answer to the question: which region or timeframe is appropriate to be designated as the central location or representative aspects of material culture. Therefore, although the Yayoi period in Japan was an effective historical division of a country in the eastern edge of Asia for a long time, if you compare it to the world standard of time division, it is hard to say it is inseparable with the geographical space that it was once assumed to have represented, despite the fact it is still a historical step/concept that is difficult to judge. It should be welcomed academically that there are quite many opinions in recent years suggesting a reevaluation of the Yayoi period. Simultaneously, the organization of study history that once seemed clear may lead to a bold cleaning up of pre-war study movements in Showa history with different handling views and attitudes, which could be the foundation of discussions profitable for the future. Recent works by OTSUKA Tatsuro are deepening examination on academic history of Yayoi cultural study, going back to the days of YAMANOUCHI Sugao, MORIMOTO Rokuji, KOBAYASHI Yukio and others. He is expressing his unique interpretation of situation analysis, taking the social condition of the militaristic Japan at the time of invasive war in his view. He is also requesting Yayoi scholars in Kansai region to use criticism on succession of typology, but no one is yet to give him a full-scale opposing argument.

One of the things in this fiscal year that made us realize how the time goes fast was that it has been ten years since the National Museum of Japanese History officially announced the long term chronology of the Yayoi period by AMS carbon dating. When

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it was announced at the general meeting of the Japanese Archaeological Association, the sensational dating framework advocating high accuracy chronology went well beyond the academic society. The ten years after the announcement has not been long enough time to make a proper interim judgement, and it was filled with pluralistic criticisms and counter criticisms. FUJIO Shin'ichiro, who was directly involved with the Yayoi chronology, published a thesis on Yayoi cultural theory which could be a final conclusion. Fujio stated the process of presenting the framework, and reconstructed the historical image of the Japanese Islands. The author has been observing the struggle for development of the ever changing northern limit of Yayoi since this kind of study started in 2000 with "Yayoi Bunka no Han-i (Extent of the Yayoi Culture)" *Wajin wo Torimaku Sekai (World Surrounding Wajin)*, but Fujio's definition of the Yayoi culture was settled as "a culture that located wet rice cultivation within a selective subsistence structure and then specialized it, and once the cultivation started it was never stopped and continued to Kofun culture." He stands to accept wet rice farming in Jomon culture as a part of the all-inclusive subsistence structure, and he distinguished three other wet rice farming cultures that do not belong to the Yayoi culture: Satsuma after 7th century B.C., central and southern Tohoku in 400 B.C., and Aomori between 4th to 2nd centuries B.C. He acknowledged that the former two cultures made transition to Kofun culture, and he summarize by stating "Kofun culture was created by Yayoi culture and non-Yayoi culture falling into mass hypnosis," stressing that Kofun culture was not an extension of productivity expansion and development of a farming/political society. The author wonders what kind of agreement could be reached on such argument if verified from the standpoint of Kofun period researchers.

It can be stressed that this fiscal year saw abundant Yayoi period studies from many standpoints.