

Editorial

JJA is entering into a new phase: it will be published twice annually from the fiscal year 2015. In its third year of existence, a clear journal character appears to be emerging: a mixture of reporting what is happening on the Japanese archaeological scene right now, and original research papers reflecting some distinctive features of Japanese archaeological practice.

Mizumura's original research paper in the current volume, for instance, reveals the character and the scale of an interaction and exchange network whose significance has been underestimated till now, by conducting a detailed examination of the exceptionally well-preserved artefacts from a single site dating from the Yayoi and the Early Kofun periods, namely Aoya Kamijichi. The area investigated so far during sixteen rescue excavations comprises just a small portion of the entirety of the site. By making full use of the detailed pottery typo-chronological system that covers the entirety of the Japanese archipelago, along with parts of the Korean peninsula and mainland Asia, created and continuously re-validated by the rigorous application of cross-dating methods, Mizumura has managed not only to specify the provenance of imported items, but also to reconstruct the actual routes through which they were brought to the site, which, as the study has clearly suggested, was functioning as an important hub in the network.

Kikuchi reports on various projects organised for rescuing, storing and restoring cultural heritage damaged by the Great East Japan Earthquake and/or abandoned in areas evacuated due to radioactive contamination resulting from the meltdown of the Fukushima nuclear power plant. His paper well illustrates some of the advantages of maintaining the mixed system of centralised co-ordination and control of cultural heritage management, which works across the whole nation, and the relevant sections of local government which manage local rescue and heritage protection on a day to day basis. The former enabled the rapid organisation of aid initiatives for the areas most affected by the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear plant disaster, by dispatching human and material resources from across Japan to help with rescue work. The latter made it possible to flexibly organise various rescue works according to different conditions and needs between damaged/contaminated areas. The overwhelming scale of devastation, combined with and never-before experienced difficulties in rescuing items in radiation contaminated areas, some of which were themselves contaminated by radiation, have made this undertaking extremely difficult, and have severely tested the robustness of the

EDITORIAL

above mentioned public office-based system.

Such contributions to the JJA hopefully offer our readership not only insights into the current state of Japanese archaeology, but also sources for re-examining the ways in which they conduct their daily archaeological practices. As the Editor-in-Chief, I look forward to contributions from our overseas colleagues to compare the characteristics of Japanese archaeology and their own, and to propose ways to better conduct archaeological practices deriving from the outcomes of such comparison.

Koji Mizoguchi
Chief Editor