

Editorial

In the year since I wrote my last Editorial, the world has changed in ways that seemed unimaginable to many, but which will doubtless impinge on archaeology, even in Japan. Globalisation is under scrutiny perhaps as never before as we adjust to ‘post-truth’ politics in many countries, and the authority of expertise is under suspicion as much of humanity now apparently prefers to gain its wisdom from instant, and unverified, social media. Under such conditions, there is arguably an ever-greater need for outlets such as *Japanese Journal of Archaeology*, providing considered and reliable accounts of the past.

Most of the papers in this issue originate in a special session at the 8th World Archaeological Congress, held in Kyoto in late August and early September 2016. Coinciding with the centenary of the establishment of the first Department of Archaeology in Japan, at Kyoto University, this session provided an overview of the history of Japanese archaeology. The Congress itself was a milestone in the history of Japanese archaeology: 1800 participants from 45 countries, with multiple parallel sessions on a tremendous range of subjects, and some fascinating additional activities, notably around the interface of Art and Archaeology. Taken as a snapshot of the state of ‘world archaeology’ it demonstrated beyond doubt the enduring interest in, and relevance of, archaeology around our planet.

A full history of Japanese archaeology still has yet to appear in a western language, but the multiplicity of themes covered in these papers demonstrates what a fertile field of research this is, and how so much of what has happened in the last century in Japanese archaeology is of much wider interest than just to Japanese archaeologists themselves.

It is significant that two of the papers in this issue deal with Ainu archaeology. Recognised as a UNESCO designated Indigenous People of Japan in 2008, the Ainu have suffered the privations endured by so many ethnic minorities in the face of colonialism, many of these privations inflicted in the name of academic research and objective science. Working with the Ainu themselves, archaeology now has an important role to play in re-establishing the historical identity of these peoples and ensuring a long overdue appreciation of their place in the history of northeast Asia.

Reassessing the history of archaeology offers the opportunity to revisit the contribution to earlier generations Japanese archaeologists on the international stage, which resulted in the accumulation of collections held in many Japanese universities and museums in

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the earlier 20th century during Japan's own engagement with colonialism. The internal repatriation of Ainu ancestral remains detailed in the paper by Kato provides possibly the most poignant example of the fruits of such reassessment, while Fukasawa's detailed analysis of Ainu material culture demonstrates how archaeology and anthropology do have continuing relevance for understanding the Ainu.

I hope you enjoy this issue.

Simon Kaner
Co-Editor
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