

Editorial

As our Editor-in-Chief notes in his brief comment at the start of the major original contribution to this issue, a thought-provoking paper by one of the grandees of Euro-American archaeological thinking, Professor Sander van der Leeuw, *Japanese Journal of Archaeology*, is marking its fifth anniversary. In Japan, the life history of children is marked in particular on their third, fifth and seventh birthdays, with the festival of *shichi-go-san*, involving special visits to Shinto shrines dressed up in spectacular formal clothes. It is one of Japan's cutest festivals, and also, in this age of decreasing population numbers in Japan, an increasingly poignant expression of the hopes and dreams placed upon the next generations.

Over the past five years *Japanese Journal of Archaeology* has been proud to introduce new voices in Japanese archaeology along with studies by more established figures, to showcase the most excellent examples of innovative, collaborative and international research of relevance to Japanese archaeology. At our recent Editorial Board Meeting there was considerable discussion over the mission statement of the Journal, in particular in regard to what is pertinent to Japanese archaeology today, and into the future. *Japanese Journal of Archaeology* is precisely what its title proclaims: it aims to publish 1) archaeological studies of the Japanese archipelago, and 2) archaeological studies of other regions relevant to the Japanese Archaeological Association. In this age of ever-increasing globalization, archaeology as a whole, wherever and by whomever it is practiced, has the potential to be relevant to the Japanese Archaeological Association. Celebrating our fifth birthday, it is instructive to review the words of the Editor-in Chief when the journal was inaugurated, http://www.jjarchaeology.jp/contents/wf_editor.html, in characteristic form questioning the very notion of 'Japanese archaeology' at all.

In 2018 the Japanese Archaeological Association will celebrate a significant milestone of its own: its 70th birthday. Established in the aftermath of the disaster of the mid-20th century, with a membership of just 81, the Association now boasts over 4000 members. The second part of this issue, which presents the major accomplishments of Japanese archaeology in the previous year, as reviewed by the Association, provides a timely snapshot of the tremendous diversity and scope of archaeology as practiced in Japan. Professor van der Leeuw celebrates the 'undisciplined' nature of our discipline and reiterates one of the core reasons for continuing to dig up the material vestiges of the past: no two excavations are the same. The Japanese Archaeological Association has demonstrated over the decades how a degree of order can be brought to archaeology

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through the actions of its practitioners, and its reports are testimony to the continued, indeed enhanced, significance and relevance of expertise borne of experience in this post-truth world. The fruits of the multitude of unrepeatable experiments with the fragile and finite traces of past human activity that comprises the archaeological process requires the greatest sophistication of methodology and interpretation on the part of the archaeologist. It is the hope of all of those involved in the *Japanese Journal of Archaeology* that as we look forward to more milestones in the future, the Journal will continue to attract and inspire contributors and readers wanting to expand the all the frontiers of 'Japanese' archaeology, wherever and whomever by it is practiced.

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Co-Editor
Norwich, March 2018