

Jomon Period

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“Jomon Prehistoric Sites in Northern Japan” was determined to be on the list of World Heritage sites at the extended 44th session of the World Heritage Committee on July 27, 2021. The decision was made based on evaluation of the Jomon people who spent over 10 000 years of sedentary life based on gathering/fishing/hunting and developed a complex and rich spiritual culture. The news was even a brighter topic in the seemingly endless pandemic days. It is desirable that attraction of the “Jomon” will be known not only throughout Japan, but to the world.

Fiscal 2021 continued to see the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, with waves coming and going with new variants. Despite such an environment, academic conferences and study meetings were held online under a new life style, and this fiscal year saw publication of books, periodicals, and excavation reports, with several hundred research results being accumulated.

Among the varied research fields, the most abundant theses were on pottery. Many ambitious works tried to find cultural dynamics and structures by understanding relationships between individual pieces, type of vessels, pottery types and regions, on the basis of elaborate pottery chronology established nationwide through chronological study, and further approached the background of an archaeological phenomenon such as manufacturers, groups, and the social relationship surrounding them.

Development of physiochemical analysis and accumulation of research results using it were also outstanding. Especially in the field of bioarchaeology, results were yielded from joint research with not only archaeology but also with related fields such as physical anthropology, paleopathology, and genetics, reminding us of the importance of interdisciplinary research to solve archaeological phenomenon multilaterally and comprehensively. Also, results are steadily being accumulated not only from radiocarbon dating measurement, but also carbon/nitrogen isotope ratio analysis and lipid analysis, contributing to understanding of use of pottery, cooked/processed material, and diet.

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