

North America

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This article introduces trends of North American archaeology from fiscal 2018 to 2021, mainly on major excavation research and overseas publications on Mesoamerica, one of the world's four primary civilizations. Mesoamerican civilization is a primary civilization that independently emerged without existence of any civilization around, along with Andes civilization in South America, as well as Mesopotamia and Ancient China in Eurasia. The indigenous people in Mesoamerica built up “an urban civilization based on stone tools” without using iron tools and large domesticated animals, and developed writing, a calendar and astronomy. The Mesoamerican civilization that independently developed is quite significant in order to learn the origin and formation of human civilization.

Japanese researchers conducted excavation research at a large urban site of Teotihuacan in the Central Mexican Highlands, Tlalancaleca site and the Toluca Valley, Estero Rabon site in Veracruz on the southern Gulf of Mexico, and Los Agaves in Jalisco in western Mexico.

Japanese scholars also researched ancient Maya sites, such as Aguada Fénix site in Tabasco in southeastern Mexico, El Palmar site in Campeche, Ceibal site, Tikal site and Nixtun-Ch'ich' site in Guatemala, and Copan site in Honduras. In southeastern Mesoamerica, research was also conducted at Chalchuapa and San Andres sites in El Salvador. In addition, archaeological research was conducted in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Panama.

Several books in English edited by Japanese researchers were published in the United States. Many Japanese researchers have published their research results on international journals in the West such as *PLoS One* (Public Library of Science), *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* of the USA, *Latin American Antiquity* (Society for American Archaeology) in the U.S., *Antiquity* and *Journal of Field Archaeology* in the U.K., *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* and *Journal of Archaeological Science* in Netherland, and *Mexicon* in Germany. Research results on Mesoamerican archaeology by Japanese researchers were published in Spanish where the research has been conducted, giving back to the host countries and local communities.

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Study on Mesoamerican civilization that developed independently without any interaction with the Eurasia continent provides viewpoints and knowledge on similarity and diversity of human society and culture, that could not be acquired in a study of a society after contact with Eurasian society or western civilization. Japanese researchers were not able to conduct field work in fiscal 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but it is gradually being resumed in fiscal 2022.