

The objectives of the session: 100 years of Japanese Archeology

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SPECIAL SECTION: 100 YEARS OF JAPANESE ARCHAEOLOGY (Japanese Archaeological Association Symposium at The Eighth World Archaeological Congress in Kyoto, August 28, 2016)

The Eighth World Archaeological Congress (WAC-8 Kyoto) was held in Kyoto between 28 August and 2 September 2016. The Japanese Archaeological Association (JAA) co-organised the Congress with the Local Organising Committee and the World Archaeological Congress. The JAA organised the Opening Symposium that charted the history of modern archaeology in Japan since the foundation of the Department of Archaeology at Kyoto Imperial University exactly 100 years ago. This special section features the papers presented at the symposium, with Introduction by the Convenor, Professor Kazuo Miyamoto.

The objectives of the session: 100 years of Japanese archaeology

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Modern archaeology in Japan started in 1916 with the establishment of the Department of Archaeology at Kyoto Imperial University. This current year, in that sense, can be said to mark the 100th anniversary of the foundation of Japanese archaeology. In this opening session of WAC8, we would like to give an overview of the history of Japanese archaeology, which was introduced via modern archaeology from Europe and America. However, Japanese archaeology has own particular academic focuses and forms of heritage management for cultural properties. In addition, Japanese archaeology faces a unique set of issues surrounding natural disasters and the indigenous Ainu peoples. Here, we would like to discuss Japanese archaeology in terms of its history, heritage management and other key issues.

We will begin by introducing the history of Japanese archaeology before World War

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Two. This period marks the beginnings of modern archaeology in Japan. In addition, colonial archaeology was also conducted in Korea and China. Although there were very few archeologists in Japan at that time, some independent researchers had already started studying archeological materials.

After World War Two, Japan shifted from imperialism to democracy. As part of this democratic movement, archaeology played an important role in helping people recover their history. In 1948, the Japanese Archaeological Association was established on the initiative of Japanese archeologists. We will provide an overview of this society's activities and significance later on.

Now that Japan had become a democratic nation, its people began to pay much more attention to archeological sites in their local areas. By the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s, Japan had established the most organized system for protecting cultural properties in the world. Today, we would like to talk about the heritage management of Japanese cultural properties.

The Ainu are an indigenous people of Japan. As with the indigenous peoples of America and Australia, Ainu archaeology is an important issue. As such, we will discuss current issues in Ainu archaeology.

In the past two decades, Japan has experienced two major natural disasters: the first in Kobe in 1995, and the second in the Tohoku region in 2011. And then, in 2016 the Kumamoto area of Kyushu was hit by a series of powerful earthquakes. These disasters caused not only a great loss of life along with damage to infrastructures and buildings, but also affected cultural properties. In the course of regenerating cities, we have been faced with the need for unparalleled rescue archaeology operations. Today, therefore, we will also make mention of the challenges presented to Japanese archaeology by natural disasters.