

**Thursday, 7 June (Afternoon)**

**Venue: Community Center**

**Title of Session:**

*Theorising the Yayoi and Kofun periods: recent trends and prospects*

**Organizer:**

Koji Mizoguchi (Kyushu University)

**Session Abstract**

The Yayoi and Kofun periods of Japan have attracted less attention internationally than the Jomon period, despite the popularity abroad of areal images of the Yoshinogari settlement and gigantic keyhole-shaped tumuli, which are defining traits of the Yayoi and the Kofun periods respectively. What is known even less is that archaeological evidence from these periods has been the basis for unique theory building concerning social hierarchisation, scale increase in social integration, and the development of social complexity. These theories often uniquely draw upon Marxist frameworks and are formulated by taking advantage of detailed contextual information made available from high-quality research/rescue excavations and fine-grained chronology. Further, we are currently witnessing the emergence of new trends, advocates of which are more adventurous and interpret archaeological evidence from perspectives radically different from what has been treated as the norm—Marxist-inspired historical reconstruction of the process of social development. In such new trends, issues concerning unintended consequences of subtle changes in daily practices, various ‘powers’ generated through recursive entanglements between certain sets of symbols and acts, patterns of social formation that cannot be captured by pre-existing broad evolutionary terminology, for instance, are given special attention, and novel methodologies for handling them are being invented. This session attempts to showcase studies that exemplify such trends and explore the potential that the study of the Yayoi and Kofun periods has in making substantial contributions to the development of general theoretical archaeology.

**Timetable**

**13:30~13:40: Session introduction**

**13:40~14:00: Kunihiko Wakabayashi:** The model for formation of stratified society in Japanese early agricultural stage

**14:00~14:20: Hitoshi Fujii:** A re-examination of the kin- and social organization of the Yayoi period: a study of the position of the infant from the mortuary evidence

**14:20~14:40: Naoko Matsumoto & Mariko Sasakura:** Population movement and cultural dynamics in the Jomon and Yayoi societies: implications from demographic simulation

**14:40~15:00: Takehiko Matsugi:** Archaeological analysis of the relationship between demography and social complexity: Population increase and social stratification in the southern Kibi

**15:00~15:15 Tea & Coffee**

**15:15~15:35: Hitoshi Shimogaki:** A study of elite network systems in the Kofun period through the analysis of circulation and possession of bronze mirrors.

**15:35~15:55: Jun Mitsumoto:** Life, the social body, and power: Rethinking the Yayoi and Kofun periods

**15:55~16:15: Koji Mizoguchi:** Various uses of the dead and their resting place; or, Luhmann among the Yayoi people

**16:15~17:00: Discussion (Discussant: Gina L. Barnes)**

## **Abstracts**

*The model for formation of stratified society in Japanese early agricultural stage*

Kunihiko Wakabayashi  
(Historical Museum, Doshisha University)

The author would like to try to discuss about the model of pre-state society, especially Japanese early agricultural society-Yayoi culture.

Middle-Late Yayoi society, BC1-AD2C, had been regarded as chiefdom society in Japanese archaeology. But in fact, the aspects in each local society are varied. It is true that in plain area where we can see many huge and core settlement sites or clusters of mounded tombs, which varies in each area, does show a certain leveled stratified society. But in most of such areas, there was few buried individual with special status goods like an established chief. In the several small areas where only one huge and core settlement site can be seen, we can see simple and established hierarchy through relationship between settlements and groups, but those situations didn't continue so long. Furthermore, there were many small areas where we can't see any evidence for stratified society.

So, as a whole, Yayoi society was not a simple stratified society called chiefdom, but this lack of common structure in social stratifying was an important social factor in Middle-Late Yayoi society in Japanese archipelago. So the ladder model of "band, tribe, chiefdom and then state" in neo-evolutionism cannot be used directly for Japanese early agricultural society. And it is more important view that what kind of new idea should be given for such wide society system where various types of social structure could co-exist.

*A re-examination of the kin- and social organization of the Yayoi period: a study of the position of the infant from the mortuary evidence*

Hitosi Fujii  
(Kyoto Prefectural Board of Education)

This paper investigates the kin- and social organization of the Yayoi period, in which the process toward the emergence of the Japanese ancient state began.

A commonly-held view is that the Yayoi society can be characterized as the chiefdom stage in the neo-evolutionary stages of social development, and a model commonly applied is that large, kin-based corporate groups were gradually collapsed to

increasingly autonomous patrilineal households during the Yayoi period. However, recent researches have revealed that the process was far more complicated and corporate principles continued to play an important role in the reproduction of social organization.

In order to examine the nature and scale of the basic unit of social organization, the way infants were buried is examined. It has been revealed that the infants above three years of age were treated differently from the younger infants. Combining this information with the examination of the location of the infant burials in relation to that of the adults, it has been revealed that the social status of the infants were not necessarily determined as birth-right. Rather, their position remained unstable, suggesting that an ascribed status-based social organization was not yet achieved.

It is concluded that a framework other than neo-evolutionary framework-based ones is necessary for fully capturing the nature of the Yayoi social organization.

*Population movement and cultural dynamics in the Jomon and Yayoi societies: implications from demographic simulation*

Naoko Matsumoto

(Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Okayama University)

Mariko Sasakura

(Department of Computer Science, Okayama University)

Based on the number of archaeological sites or pit houses, local population changes and possibility of migrations have long been estimated, but the mechanism of the demographic changes and its relationship with cultural changes have not yet fully investigated. With the aid of agent-based simulation, I will examine long-term consequences with varying parameters such as population size, fertility, mortality, incest rule and the rate of migration, and discuss their implications for understanding demographic and cultural dynamics in the Jomon and Yayoi societies.

*Archaeological analysis of the relationship between demography and social complexity: Population increase and social stratification in the southern Kibi*

Takehiko Matsugi

(Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Okayama University)

This paper examines the relationship between population change and the emergent social complexity in the southern Kibi (current southern coastal area of Okayama prefecture) from the early Yayoi period to the early Kofun period (from the sixth century BC to the third century AD) as has been recognized in the formation of chiefly burial mounds. The number of identified pit houses is used as a basis for estimating the past population. The result indicates that the sparse population of this area suddenly increased in the second century BC, leading to the increase of the number of

competitive villages and the detachment of cemetery from the village. Further population increase and the development of large villages on the plains seem to be linked to the emergence of chiefly burial mounds in the cemetery. It is concluded that the most basic driving factor of social stratification from the late Yayoi period to the early Kofun period was a population increase.

*A study of elite network system in the Kofun period through the analysis of circulation and possession of bronze mirrors.*

Hitoshi Shimogaki  
(Ritsumeikan University)

As has been pointed out repeatedly, it is characteristic of Japanese archaeological studies that they are based on accurate chronological system of remains through the meticulous typological investigation. By this, Japanese archaeologist enjoys the advantages of being able to relative-date important goods such as metal goods to such an accurately which physical-chemical dating — radiocarbon dating or so on — cannot allow, and also to investigate the mode of possession and the accumulation of symbolic meaning-based values by the long-term possession of the things through measuring of time gaps between its manufacture, acquirement, and deposition.

In this paper, I intend to investigate the internal constitution and the interrelationship of elite groups in the Kofun period through the analysis of bronze mirrors which were the most crucial item in the investigation of this period. In particular, I analyze A) the Centre-Periphery relationships between the centre of the Kinai region which controlled over the Chinese and domestic mirrors(e.g import, manufacture and distribution) and many areas in Japanese archipelago, B) the long-term possession and use of mirrors in the elite groups in these areas, C) the social/political significance of mirrors in this period.

The paper will conclude that the because bronze mirrors played a crucial role in the self-identification of the elite groups, and also were mobilised as the means of hierarchisation between these groups, the centre of the Kinai region which controlled over the distribution of mirrors could get a preferred, higher positioning in the emergent hierarchical structure increasingly.

*Life, the social body, and power: Rethinking the Yayoi and Kofun periods*

Jun Mitsumoto  
(Archaeological Research Center, Okayama University)

This paper will present a new perspective on power in the Yayoi and Kofun periods in Japan in light of two theoretical frameworks of power in Japanese archaeologies.

The Yayoi and Kofun periods, most Japanese archaeologists recognize, were marked by the emergence of those in power, specifically the emergence of the Emperor. This traditional image of power, characterized by sovereignty, has been used as the

theoretical basis of Marxist archaeology or the state formation theory as connected to processual archaeology. I consider this type of power as simply another part of a long history of power, as a type of ancient power, with the accompanying risk that it is cut off from the contemporary world.

An alternative image of power has been recently proposed. This theory regards power not as a possession but as minute and plural networks, and it attaches importance to the social technologies inherent in the relationship between life and social bodies as the field of power. The theoretical background of this theory derives from the “bio-power” that Michel Foucault described in the modern age, or the actuality of power in the contemporary world. This framework can be related mainly to post-processual archaeology: the archaeology of personhood, embodied archaeology, third-wave feminist archaeology, queer archaeology, and so on.

I argue that it is important to reexamine power in the Yayoi and Kofun periods, and to reconsider the contemporary significance of the archaeological discussion about power, not only in light of the first type of power but also according to the second type. Additionally, I will present arguments for the existence of the latter type—of immanent power inside the societies—in the Yayoi and Kofun periods, which may be regarded as phases of the social technologies that are part of transforming life to social bodies.

*Various uses of the dead and their resting place; or, Luhmann among the Yayoi people*

Koji Mizoguchi  
(Kyushu University)

This paper argues that the trajectory of social and material transformations toward the emergence of the mode of social formation characterized as the early state can be understood as a sequence of episodes in which new sets of difficulties for the reproduction of discourses/communications emerged and were overcome by the adoption/invention of new strategies.

Such episodes left behind various material traces, amongst which the traces of mortuary practices offer us a particularly valuable evidence for their investigation; cemeteries were locales whose material settings embodied strategies to overcome general communicational difficulties through mediating mortuary discourses/communications.

By examining the mortuary evidence of the Yayoi and the Initial Kofun periods of Japan, and comparing them with outcomes of formal network analyses applied to data from northern Kyushu and western Japan, it will be revealed that the constitutive characteristic of the cemetery shifted from the locale structuring a certain mode of bodily act-based communications to the node of the symbolic representations of the ‘world’ in response to changing scale and structure of communications.