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Archaeological Craftwork 2020: Ethnography of Archaeology at Suwahara Site, Hokuto City, Yamanashi 2020

John Ertl, Yasuyuki Yoshida

Introduction

This article is an overview of our ethnographic research project that examines the production of archaeological knowledge in Japan. This is the second year of our project and this article should be understood as a continuation of our previous report (Ertl and Yoshida 2020). The aim of our project is to follow the processes through which remains at a Jomon period site are excavated, analyzed, and then utilized for the purpose of reconstructing a pit house. This five-year project began with excavations at Suwahara site in Hokuto City and will end with the reconstruction of our own pit house at Umenoki Historical Park in Hokuto City.

For this report we looked at how reconstructed pit houses are designed. Original data are introduced from interviews with four current and former employees of municipal archaeological research centers. The goal of these interviews was to better understand how and why the designs of Jomon pit houses will sometimes vary greatly despite the overall similarity of Jomon period remains. This article does not focus on the designs themselves, but rather on the broader contexts that influence the decisions made by archaeologists and others working in archaeological site development and management in Japan.

Ethnography of Archaeology at a Distance

In 1946, Ruth Benedict published *Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, the classic study of Japanese culture and national character. Both revered and castigated (see Ryang 2002; Kent 1996), the one thing that most people agree with is that she made the most out of the research conditions presented to her. Namely, with the United States and Japan at war, Benedict had to “forego the most important technique of the cultural anthropologist: a field trip” (Benedict 1946: 5). Instead, Benedict developed a methodology called ethnography “at a distance” (see Mead and Metraux 1953), where she examined a range of literature and films, and interacted with people who were from Japan or who were familiar with life there. Her success in this regard has made remote research accepted in cultural anthropology, although the rite-of-passage expectation of spending a year or more “in the field” has not diminished.

2020 brought about a similar conundrum for our project. How do we conduct our ethnography of archaeology when a global pandemic has kept everyone in their homes and put unessential activities on hold?

With the pronouncement of a state of emergency on 7 April 2020, it became clear that our research could not continue as originally planned. With classes moved online, the students who planned to clean and sort the remains from Suwahara were asked to stay at home. We watched the numbers of COVID-19 cases drop over the next weeks and wondered when it will be safe to get back to work. Yet, when the second wave hit from July, the university halted any student-based research that involve overnight stays. With this, our plans for excavation at Suwahara were suspended.

We decided to jump ahead in our schedule and begin to think about how to design our pit house. More specifically, we thought it would be useful to first look at how other sites have approached design. We read and discussed texts about reconstructions and site development activities. We examined a transcript from a

two hour talk by Kobayashi Kimiaki, the previous director of Idojiri Archaeological Museum, about how he designed and built the pit house there.⁽¹⁾ We also spent considerable time to examine how the pit house has been depicted in the field of architecture history (Ji and Ertl 2020), looking at how and why the pit house came to represent the “origins” of Japanese architecture (see Sato 1990; Fujimori 2013). Our main research this year were interviews conducted with several archaeologists and museum staff about their experiences with reconstructing pit dwellings at the sites they work with.

From remains to reconstruction: How does one design a Jomon pit house?

The activities to excavate a Jomon pit house and those to make a Jomon pit house are largely unrelated. When archaeologists excavate a pit house, they scrape away layers of earth while carefully recording the location of artifacts and features. The hope is to reveal the remnants of a building and the ways it was utilized thousands of years ago. At the end of the day, excavation involves the crafting of artifact inventories, section drawings, site maps, photographs, and examining samples of soil and organic materials. These are used to make site reports that combine narrative, graphic, and tabular data to convey a record of a Jomon pit dwelling feature.

Now how does one go from these two-dimensional maps in a site report to a fully material structure that a Jomon person could have possibly built?

The answer, in short, is that one must begin by “imagining” (Sekino 1951) or “inventing” (Hansen 1959: 15) an above ground structure that matches the information in the report. To do this responsibly, one must learn about ancient

(1) This talk was held 25 November 2018 and was titled: “Exploring the life of the Jomon through the reconstructed home” (*fukugen kaoku kara Jōmonjin no kurashi wo saguru*) with the subtitle “Were there thatched roofs in the Jomon period?” (*Jōmonjidai ni kayabuki-yane wa attanoka*).

buildings and the lifestyles of people who would have built them. One may search through historical examples or contemporary cultures with the aim of finding comparable structures or architectural principles to inform one's designs. To quote from Hans-Ole Hansen, who took on the challenge of designing an ancient house from archaeological maps:

See if you can reckon from this [archaeological map] how the house must have looked or *could* have looked, which is what I had to do.... If you think your ideas are better than mine, all right, or if you feel that mine are better than yours, I won't quarrel with that either. It will just show how difficult it is to arrive at the truth, or how many possible ways there are of interpreting facts. (Hansen 1959: 18, emphasis in original)

This is the problem we chose to research this year. We compared the approaches to the design of pit houses at three Middle Jomon period sites: Togariishi-Yosukeone (Chino City, Nagano), Idojiri (Fujimi Town, Nagano), and Umenoki (Figures 1–3). We selected these sites because the reconstructed pit houses are quite distinct from each other despite their close proximity and similarity of archaeological remains. Furthermore, these sites provided an interesting comparison as they reflect different debates and trends in the postwar study of Jomon archaeology, namely Jomon settlement studies (Mizuno 1969), the Jomon plant cultivation hypothesis (Fujimori 1950), and experimental archaeology. Our thought was that because these sites all have similar archaeological remains, we can isolate the subjective elements that underlie their designs: whether they are the character of the designers, the histories of these sites, or the concerns of archaeology at the time.

We have begun to analyze the results of this investigation (Ertl and Yoshida 2021). What we have found is that the designs are underpinned by a range of



Figure 1: Reconstructed pit houses at Togariishi-Yosukeone site, Chino City, Nagano. (28 August 2020)



Figure 2: View of the reconstructed pit house and surrounding landscape at Idojiri site, Fujimi Town, Nagano. (28 August 2020)

research from fields such as architecture history, ethnology, folklore, and mythology. The pit houses at each site are more-or-less faithful to archeological remains. Yet, we learned that the underlying reasons for pursuing reconstruction are key to understanding how they took shape. At Togariishi, the current museum staff



Figure 3: View of pit houses during a visit to Umenoki site, Hokuto City, Yamanashi. (27 August 2020)

decided to honor the “academic history” (*gakushi*) of the site, choosing to reproduce the original 1949 designs by Horiguchi Sutemi despite real concerns with their accuracy. With Idojiri, we learned that three generations of pit houses have been built by the Idojiri Preservation Group (*Idojiri-iseki hozonkai*) since 1958, each vastly different in shape but built with the same motivation to “reveal our history by ourselves.” With Umenoki, the designs were based upon North American Indian pit houses and since 2017 they have framed reconstructions as ongoing experiments that work to create a site that is constantly evolving.

Interviews: Approaches to Reconstruction and Site Management in the Central Highlands of Japan

To better understand the ideas that underlie these reconstructions, we decided to interview archaeologists and site managers who are familiar with the details of how they took shape. At Umenoki, we talked with Sano Takashi, who is the head of the

Hokuto Archaeology Center and has overseen the site from initial excavations to its current form. With Idojiri, we interviewed the current museum director Komatsu Takashi, who was not directly involved with the reconstruction but is knowledgeable of the people and surrounding activities. As for Togariishi, we met with Yamashina Akira, who has worked at the museum since before the current reconstructions were built. Lastly, we talked to Kunugi Tsukasa, who is familiar with all three sites. He is currently an archaeologist for the Kayagatake History and Culture Institute (*Kayagatake rekishi bunka kenkyūjo*), where he works with Sano Takashi. As a schoolboy he learned archaeology from the staff at Idojiri Museum, and as an adult Kunugi worked for many years at Togariishi Jomon Museum.

Interviews took place on two days (27–28 August 2020). The interviewers included John Ertl, Yoshida Yasuyuki, and two third-year students from Keio University, Tagi Kodai and Sakumoto Ryo.⁽²⁾ We arranged to talk with Sano and Kunugi together at the Hokuto Archaeology Center on 27 August from 13:00 to 17:00. On 28 August we met with Komatsu at Idojiri Archaeological Museum from 10:00 to 11:15 and with Yamashina at Togariishi Jomon Museum from 13:00 to 14:15. We asked each of them to share their knowledge and their experiences with the current and previous site developments. Along with that, we asked them about their backgrounds, so that we can better understand their unique views, understandings, and approaches to archaeology and site development. We also asked to look at original documents and background materials that were utilized for designing the pit dwellings. The interviews were recorded and transcribed by students with corrections were made by Yoshida. Ertl and Yoshida translated the quotes that appear in this article.

(2) Due to the pandemic at the time, the university had halted all student-based research activities. Permission was granted under specific conditions that the research would not involve long-term close contact in enclosed spaces. Furthermore, overnight stays were not permitted.

Results: A View into the Bureaucratic World of Japanese Archaeology

The interviews provided a wealth of information about the reconstructed pit dwellings located at these sites. For this article, however, we do not wish to further our comparisons of the buildings at these sites. Rather than looking into the designs themselves, here we examine the broader social conditions that influence how these people situate themselves and their work.

What we learned is that the ways these people were introduced to archaeology, as well as their specific experiences and encounters during their education, have greatly shaped their approaches to site management. They all emphasized the importance of place: explaining how the entanglement of people, culture, and history strongly weigh upon their work and decision-making. They also talked about their position as archaeologists working in a bureaucratic context. Working for municipal governments, they are pulled by various stakeholders from academia, the national government, senior colleagues, the local community, and tourists. Lastly, we found these individuals had very specific images of how pit houses could be reconstructed differently. In most cases, their images came from their specific experiences during excavations, having seen something that they felt has not been incorporated in any current designs. As a whole, these interviews were enlightening to show how various reasons why some peoples' images of the Jomon pit house come to life while others remain absent or silenced.

The mainstream and periphery: Situating the self in the field of Japanese archaeology

In our interviews, two words came up time and again: mainstream (*ōdō*) and periphery (*aryū*). These were used by our interviewees to situate their self-perceived positions within Japanese archaeology and frame their approaches to site management. Individually, each felt as if they were somewhere on the margins of

archaeology. The most obvious place that this was seen is in the relationship between the sites and their connections to academic centers.

If there is one place that represents the mainstream, it is Togariishi. Yamashina explained that the current reconstructions and displays at the museum are heavily influenced by the early history of interactions with scholars from the University of Tokyo (formerly Imperial University of Tokyo). Specifically, he talked about how Miyasaka Fusakazu,⁽³⁾ the first museum director at Togariishi, engaged outside scholars to further public interest and understanding of the site. This history of scholarship is embodied in the museum displays and any thought of changing them, it seems, would require rejecting the authority of those who worked on them.

Yamashina's explanation of Togariishi often referred back to these scholars and their impacts. Explaining how Tokyo University became so influential, he said:

I think it just kind of happened. It started with a relationship between Yawata Ichiro and Miyasaka-sensei. This occurred when Miyasaka-sensei was working for the elementary school and he went to Tokyo to ask for advice.... He took a clay figurine with him which was reported by Yawata-sensei (in a journal article). From that, when Torii Ryuzo was writing "History of Suwa" (*Suwa-shi*), he came up here with Yawata-sensei. That's when the name Togariishi was first given to the site. This relationship with Yawata-sensei only became stronger and is how the pipeline to Tokyo University was created.

(3) Miyasaka Fusakazu (1887–1975) was a primary school teacher and local archaeologist. He conducted archaeological excavation projects at Togariishi site with his family, local residents, and academic authorities (mainly from Tokyo) since the 1930s. At first, he displayed his findings at his home. This display developed into Togariishi Museum in 1951, Togariishi Archaeological Museum in 1955, and eventually the current Chino City Togariishi Museum of Jomon Archaeology in 2000.

Torii Ryuzo⁽⁴⁾ and Yawata Ichiro⁽⁵⁾ were two of the founding scholars of Japanese ethnology and archaeology. They are also credited with creating the first pit houses at the Jomon period Indate-Teranoura sites (Tomi and Komuro Cities, Nagano), with their designs based on the Ainu *toi-chise* pit houses (Ueda 1933; Sato 2017). Their interests overlapped with architecture historians with the excavations at Ubayama Shell Midden (Chiba Prefecture). Visited by Ito Chuta⁽⁶⁾ and Sekino Tadashi⁽⁷⁾ from Tokyo Imperial University (Miyasaka and Yawata 1927), they found that the “stone age” pit house remains at Ubayama did not match their earlier theories on primitive Japanese dwellings derived from Shinto-based documents. From this point on the primitive pit house was one of the main research topics for Tokyo University architecture historians. This research came to fruition in 1951 with a two-part special series on ancient dwelling reconstructions. Of note

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- (4) Torii Ryuzo (1870–1953) studied ethnology and anthropology at the Imperial University of Tokyo under Tsuboi Shogoro, the founder of the anthropology course. He was appointed to the faculty of the university in 1905, resigned, and established a private institute in 1924. His ethnographic field research crossed vast stretches of Asia, ranging from Northeast Asia, Korean Peninsula, Japan to Southern China. He also pioneered the usage of photograph and phonograph for fieldwork (see Askew 2003).
- (5) Yawata Ichiro (1902–1987) was born in Okaya City. When he was a student at the current Suwa Seiryō high school, he supported the Torii Ryuzo’s fieldwork when writing his history of the Suwa area. He later studied anthropology and archaeology at the Imperial University of Tokyo under Torii’s supervision. He played important roles establishment and development of academic group of humanities, such as Japanese Society for Ethnology (*Nihon minzoku gakkai*) and the Japanese Archaeological Association (*Nihon kōkōgaku kyōkai*).
- (6) Ito Chuta (1867–1954) was an architect and architectural historian. He is the first-generation scholar of architecture course of University of Tokyo and established an academic discipline of architecture history. He studied Asian architecture traveling across West and East Asia, from Turkey, India, Thailand to China. As an architect, he designed a large number of public buildings including shrines, auditoriums, and public halls.
- (7) Sekino Tadashi (1868–1935) was archaeologist and architectural historian. He is recognized for the discovery of Nara Heijō-kyō, the ancient capital of Japan. He conducted architectural surveys on the Korean Peninsula and established the foundations of architectural history, the study of crafts, Korean art history, and conservation of cultural properties.

here are the designs for Jomon, Yayoi, and Kofun period pit houses by Horiguchi Sutemi,⁽⁸⁾ Sekino Masaru,⁽⁹⁾ and Fujishima Gaijiro,⁽¹⁰⁾ each of whom were founding figures from the Tokyo University architectural history program (Horiguchi 1951; Sekino 1951; Fujishima 1951).

One of our key objectives in visiting Togariishi was to look at the design plans and related documents that were referenced when building the current pit houses. Among the documents were Horiguchi's original blueprints, early models and plans for Togariishi by Sekino Masaru, and a blueprint of a Jomon period pit dwelling by Fujishima Gaijiro (Figure 4). As we wondered why this document was at Togariishi, Yamashina said:

It seems to be a drawing from 1956... so it's probably from when they were building the reconstructed dwelling at Yosukeone [Togariishi]. This plan likely exists because of the sort of competition between Sekino-

(8) Horiguchi Sutemi (1895–1984) was a well-known modernist architect and a professor of architecture history at Meiji University. His approach to modernism attempted to build upon Japanese architectural traditions. In particular, he identified Shinto shrines, farmhouses, and tea houses as containing an essence of “Japanese-ness” (Isozaki 2006: 260). He identified several Japanese architectural principles that he thought reflected Western modernism including asymmetry, modularity, lack of ornamentation, and harmony with the environment.

(9) Sekino Masaru (1909–2001) was an architecture historian at the University of Tokyo. He set the foundation for conservation techniques for cultural properties and supervised conservation work on several major heritage buildings in Japan. His research on pit dwellings began in the 1930s and by 1940 he drafted a plan for a Jomon pit house at Togariishi site. His design for the pit dwelling is rooted in Jomon archaeology, but his first actual reconstruction was for the Yayoi period site Toro, built in 1951 (see Aoyagi 2010).

(10) Fujishima Gaijiro (1899–2002) was an architecture historian and a professor at the University of Tokyo. He was involved in an inventory survey of landscape of Nakasendo, the longest ancient road through the central highlands (including Nagano prefecture) from the 1950s. His earliest design of reconstructed architecture was a “haji pottery period” (from Kofun to Nara periods) pit house at Hiraide site, Shiojiri City, Nagano. He went on to design prehistoric buildings at eleven different sites across Japan (Ertl 2021).



Figure 4: Yamashina Akira looking over blueprints for Wakamiya site (Mitake Village, Nagano) designed by Fujishima Gaijiro in 1956 (28 August 2020). These plans were published in the Wakamiya site report in 1957 (Oba et al. 1957).

sensei and Horiguchi-sensei and Fujishima-sensei with their respective pit house designs at Hiraide, Toro, and here. I suppose that they were probably talking with each other about this.

Asking about the public perception or the impacts of the reconstructions at Togariishi at the time, Yamashina explained:

I don't know exactly how much attention it garnered...but I think Toro was much more the center of the attention then. Also, it's probably not clear even if you read the diary of Miyasaka-sensei, but I think that Sekino Masaru, Horiguchi Sutemi, and Fujishima Gaijiro were competing with each other using these sites as fields for their experiments.

The inertia of the academic history at Togariishi works to counter any possible

changes relating to new research results or the individual desires of the current archaeology staff. Over the past several years, Togariishi has been planning to redo their outdoor displays. Asking how they might deal with the various critiques of Horiguchi's plan when they redo their reconstructions Yamashina stated:

I think the achievements at Goshono site (Iwate Prefecture) with their earth roofs created a great trend, and we have been advised to consider this by Mizunoe Kazutomo, former senior specialist at the Agency for Cultural Affairs. As for our site development, as we have been debating whether to replace the old houses with sod roofs or reuse the Horiguchi model.... There is still a discussion, and even if we make several reconstructions, we will make at least one based on the Horiguchi plan.

If Togariishi reflects the mainstream authority of the Tokyo-based university experts, Idojiri should be seen as having positioned itself in direct opposition. The early excavations at Idojiri include Miyasaka Fusakazu (see Fujimori 1965), yet in contrast to Miyasaka's approach of involving outsider specialists, the people at Idojiri have gone about things their own way. During our visit with Komatsu Takashi, he explained that all archaeology and site developments at Idojiri have been conducted by the Idojiri Preservation Group since 1958. The membership is mostly local residents and, at least originally, included people largely outside of the university system. Komatsu explains:

The Idojiri Archaeological Museum doesn't care about universities or academic fashion (*gakubatsu*). For example, when it comes to Jomon around here, you have Tozawa Mitsunori⁽¹¹⁾ of Meiji University who is

(11) Tozawa Mitsunori (1932–2012) was an archaeologist and a professor at Meiji University. Born in Okaya City, when he was a student at the current Suwa Seiryō high school,

from Okaya City. There are these kinds of academic cliques associated with Meiji University and Kokugakuin University. At Idojiri Archaeology Museum, we have inherited the outsider's spirit of Fujimori Eiichi,⁽¹²⁾ where the idea of getting a university education is not rejected outright, it's just that not much importance is attributed to it.

This reluctance to fall under the umbrella of dominant academic trends was vividly introduced when Komatsu talked about his own background. He said that he was raised in Okaya City in Nagano and pursued his university education at Kanazawa University. While the archaeology program at Kanazawa is highly regarded, none of the faculty does research on Jomon archaeology, which meant that Komatsu was left to learn largely on his own. He told us that his education was part of the reason he received his job:

Or rather, “if you had graduated from Meiji or Kokugakuin,” Kobayashi-san⁽¹³⁾ [the former director of Idojiri Museum] said to me, “If you went to

he joined the activities of the grassroots, Suwa Institute for Archaeology (*Suwa kōkōgaku kenkyūjo*) established by Fujimori Eiichi. He went on to study archaeology at Meiji University. As a scholar, he advocated for community-based archaeology, calling for an “archaeology of, for, and by local residents” (*shimin no kōkōgaku*) (Tozawa 2014).

(12) Fujimori Eiichi (1911–1973) was an archaeologist based in the Suwa region. He is known for his skepticism toward the widely accepted idea of Jomon as hunter-gathers, promoting his “Jomon plant cultivation hypothesis” (*Jōmon nōkō-ron*) in the 1950s (Fujimori 1950). Fujimori was an independent scholar who was not affiliated with an academic institution. During his life, no concrete archaeological evidence of cultivated plants was discovered. Currently, however, developments in the archaeological sciences have revealed the existence of various cultivated plants in the Jomon period (see Nakayama 2018), shedding light upon his foresight.

(13) Kobayashi Kimiaki worked as the second director of Idojiri Archaeological Museum, following Muto Yuroku and preceding Komatsu Takashi. He is responsible for the unique interpretations of remains at the museum, including readings of pottery patterns based in mythology and identifications of stone tools premised upon Fujimori Eiichi's

Meiji, I never would have reached out to you. I hired you because you went to a university that doesn't have anything to do with Japanese Jomon culture.”

Similarly, Kunugi Tsukasa talked about the disinterest in university education at Idojiri, explaining that:

Muto-san⁽¹⁴⁾ and Kobayashi-san are both the same, none of the people [at Idojiri] went to the university. The first and second generation [museum directors] were junior high school graduates, they had no formal education in archaeology.

His observation, however, is by no means meant to dismiss their research achievements. In fact, Kunugi explains that their grassroots approach was underpinned by proper archaeological methodology and has, in its own right, become a prevailing orthodoxy (*ōdō*) in Jomon archaeology.

What's amazing about Idojiri, they set the standard for research on pottery chronology and the chronology of residences, where they were able to arrange them in proper chronology based on the analysis of

Jomon plant cultivation hypothesis. The current pit house at Idojiri site was designed by Kobayashi and built with help from the Idojiri Preservation Group. <https://www.oraho-fujimi.jp/people/kobayashikimiaki.html> (accessed 17 March 2021)

(14) Muto Yuroku (1930–) is a historian from Fujimi Town famous for artisanry of stone tool making and pottery restoration. He is an elementary school graduate and has no formal education at an archaeological institute. He was encouraged by Fujimori Eiichi to excavate Idojiri site and establish a local study group. He is recognized for setting the direction of the current displays at Idojiri Archaeological Museum and the organization of archaeological site management in Fujimi Town. <https://www.oraho-fujimi.jp/people/mutoh.html> (accessed 17 March 2021)

excavated remains. That to me is the significance of Idojiri. It's in this regard they are mainstream. It was non-academics that put this together. They were free in their thinking.

Talking with Kunugi, he expressed mixed feelings about his own educational background. As a graduate from Meiji University, he came out of the “mainstream” of Japanese archaeology. Yet as a university student he decided to focus on lithics, which are relatively minor in comparison to research on pottery chronology. His conflict as an academically trained archaeologist extended into his work while at Togariishi:

If there was one good aspect of the orthodoxy [at Meiji University], it was something Tozawa-sensei said to me. He said, “don't listen only to what scholars say, your job is to allow the public to make and realize their own dreams, your job is to provide the academic foundation for them to do so.” As I still think about it today, that was such a completely unreasonable demand. It was so hard to do [at Togariishi] but it was also motivating. Tozawa-sensei said, “It is your job to explain to those people, so you have to explain in a way that they will be able to understand.” I wish I could have done it. It was so difficult.

For Kunugi, being framed as within the mainstream has been a source of doubt and uneasiness throughout his career. In contrast, Sano Takashi, having come from the margins of Japanese archaeology was liberating. Sano talked to us at length about the benefits of his education at Keio University (Figure 5):

Normally, if you want to properly study archaeology in Japan, you go to the University of Tokyo, Meiji [University] or Kokugakuin University.



Figure 5: Interviews with Sano Takashi (right) and Kunugi Tsukasa (left). On the table are Sano's notes and the ethnographic resources he utilized when designing the pit dwellings at Umenoki site. (27 August 2020)

Kunugi-san, for example, is from Meiji. Ah, and Kyoto University too. As for Keio, in regard to archaeology, they are absolutely on the periphery (*aryū desu*). However, I am glad I went to Keio because at the department of archaeology and ethnology...ethnology and archaeology are treated equally. Since you take classes in both, you learn not just archaeology or just ethnology, but you learn the knowledge and way people think in both disciplines. The result [of this education] is that I am glad to have gone to Keio.

In archaeology, the research on Jomon pottery or observations of stone tools are quite sophisticated, but why is it that [an archaeology student] does not receive any background knowledge from ethnology and cultural anthropology? In that regard [Keio University] was good.

As the above quotes shows, the people we interviewed were hesitant to



Figure 6: Yoshida Yasuyuki reading the information panel at Tonomura site in Shimosuwa Town, Nagano. The signpost explains that the design was taken from the Horiguchi plan at Togariishi site in neighboring Chino City. (26 August 2020)

affiliate themselves with the mainstream of archaeology. In terms of their careers, each of them has been extremely successful and been within the dominant bureaucratic archaeological system in Japan. Yet for these people, they found that the mainstream was not a stable source of authority, but rather they described as more of an obstacle that one must try to overcome.

The importance of place and entanglements of history

Explained above, one of the reasons these three sites were selected is their close proximity to each other. They are located within a 15-kilometer radius and one may drive to each in the span of an hour. Under different circumstances, this closeness could have led to copying the pit house designs. For example, the pit dwelling at Tonomura site, located just 30 minutes from Togariishi to the north, has a pit house that used the Horiguchi plan (Figure 6). Explaining why designs at these three sites differed, each of our interviewees emphasized the unique history and characteristics

of the places they are built.

As for Togariishi, the above section introduced the weight of the Horiguchi design, which is backed by the discipline of architectural history and the authority attributed to the University of Tokyo. Separate from that authority is the influence of the local history about when Togariishi was discovered, excavated, and preserved. Yamashina described how the achievements of Miyasaka Fusakazu are essential for telling the story of Togariishi:

When it comes to the reconstructed houses here, we have been thinking about how to pass on to future generations that which Miyasaka dug up. During the war in 1942, Togariishi was designated a Historical Site thanks to Saito Chu [Tadashi] at the Agency for Cultural Affairs. According to Saito-sensei, this was the best way to preserve the site. After the war, Miyasaka took aim at the neighboring site Yosukeone (where the reconstructed pit dwellings were built) and excavated there with many junior high and high school students.

Continuing, he explained that these students at this time helped build the first pit dwellings based on Horiguchi's plans. These activities directed by Miyasaka may also be behind the designation of Togariishi-Yosukeone site as a "special historic site" (*tokubetsu-shiseki*) in 1952, the first Jomon site to be awarded such status.

As we talked with Yamashina, it seemed to us that the more site development strategies at Togariishi have focused on commemorating the history of the site, it has become more exclusive in its approach. In contrast to Miyasaka, who was willing to bring in outsider experts and amateur enthusiasts alike, the current museum staff seems focused on furthering community engagement with the site. For as much as the story told at Togariishi is about the Jomon period people and culture, it seems to be equally centered on telling the story of Miyasaka and Chino

City and their unique place in postwar history of Japan and Japanese archaeology.

In contrast to Tōgariishi which cemented its status in relation to outsiders, Idojiri has from the outset been doing archaeology on its own. Komatsu explained that the archaeology at Idojiri has been inclusive, inviting locals to participate in excavations and site management no matter their background. From his personal experiences, Kunugi similarly talked about how the Idojiri museum was a place where, as a schoolboy, he would walk in and ask Muto-sensei about potsherds and stone tools that he found in the surrounding fields. This inclusion at Idojiri, however, has been centered on the municipality,⁽¹⁵⁾ as they have rejected input from the outside, especially centers of archaeological authority. The independent spirit at Idojiri was explained by Komatsu as follows:

The key phrase that underlies our activities at Idojiri Archaeological Museum is, “Our village history will be revealed (made) by our own hands.” This is our slogan, or rather our conviction. Therefore, we have never had a university laboratory come to investigate here. Rather, the local peasants and high school students have led the excavations and continuing research here. The word I used “*orātō*” is the local dialect for “we” (lads like us). Our village history will be revealed by our own hands. This is the spirit we inherited from our forebearers.

This spirit of doing archaeology “on our own” at Idojiri is extended to doing archaeology “in our own way” (Figure 7). Explaining their approach, Komatsu said:

(15) During our interview with Komatsu Takashi, we learned that the history of excavations at Idojiri corresponds to the “great Showa amalgamation” (*Shōwa no daigappai*), where four villages merged to create Fujimi Town in 1955. Idojiri is located in the former Sakai Village and part of the local-centered approach to archaeology is, at least in part, a reaction against the loss of autonomy due to the municipal restructuring at the time.



Figure 7: A pair of photographs framed on the wall of the administrative office at Idojiri Archaeological Museum. The top image is an Idojiri style pot and the lower image is the Kitazawa “great stone rod” (*dai-sekibō*) located in Sakuho Town, Nagano. This pairing is illustrative of the interests in iconography, mythology, and folklore by the archaeology staff at Idojiri. (28 August 2020)

I believe the history of Idojiri and its spirit of *orātō* is important to pass on. This includes our distinctive style of research too. For example, the Jomon plant cultivation hypothesis (*nōkōron*) is one, and what we call iconography (interpretation of pottery motifs) is another. Our style has many aspects to it that, from the perspective of archaeology, have been dismissed or looked down upon. On the other hand, one can say we have been leading Jomon studies in mobilizing methods from folklore, cultural anthropology, and mythology, and these have opened new views into the Jomon world.

Ultimately, we just want to know about the Jomon people. If you want to stand at the peak of Mount Fuji you can get there by taking the Subashiri trail or, if you prefer, you can climb the Yoshidaguchi trail. Whatever you like is fine. Yet if you limit yourself to only one way, you will never see the landscape from more than perspective. At Idojiri Museum, we wish to remain a place where it’s possible to open up these new paths (that other

archaeologists may not take).

One of the benefits of the local-centered approach at Idojiri is that they have had great success in preserving the site and its surrounding agricultural landscape. Komatsu explained that much of his work as museum director is to continue to collaborate with residents to mitigate any possible developments that could damage the site. This is increasingly challenging as the residents age and new opportunities like solar farming become ever more lucrative.

Crossing into Yamanashi Prefecture, this spirit of collective ownership in archaeological heritage is largely absent. Talking about the differences between Nagano and Yamanashi, Sano explained:

Traditionally, Nagano has been education-minded and takes great care of its cultural properties. That is why they have local scholars such as Miyasaka Fusakazu at Togariishi and Fujimori Eiichi from Suwa. From early on, there were many sites like Hiraide in Shiojiri City that have been preserved as national historic sites. This is the background for why the earliest reconstructed pit houses in Japan were built in Nagano.

Meanwhile, Yamanashi is far more pragmatic. This can be seen in the tradition of Koshu merchants, where people here think, “What do I care about cultural properties, they don’t provide any money to eat.” For example, at the same time that Miyasaka Fusakazu was at Togariishi, there was a local historian named Shimura Takizo⁽¹⁶⁾ who was

(16) Shimura Takizo (1901–1971) was a pioneer of archaeology in Yamanashi Prefecture. He engaged in excavations at Sakai site in Nirasaki City for several decades, during which time he received support from Yawata Ichiro. Eventually he established a semi-private museum, Sakai Archaeology Museum, in a storehouse next to his home. The museum is today operated by Nirasaki City. http://www.museum.pref.yamanashi.jp/3nd_link_06.html (accessed 17 March 2021)

enthusiastically excavating Sakai site in Nirasaki City (Yamanashi). In many ways he was just like Miyasaka and the two even knew each other. Yet as one (Togariishi) became a national historic site, there was little interest in the other (Sakai), and it was soon forgotten.

If one looks at the numbers of Jomon sites that currently have reconstructed buildings, there are some twenty sites in Nagano to only three in Yamanashi (Ertl 2021). This disparity may lead one to conclude that the Jomon culture was far more prevalent in Nagano than Yamanashi. To understand the gap, however, one must be aware of the historical conditions by which sites are excavated, as well as the broader social-economic elements that might impact decisions to preserve a site. Sano explained that officials in Yamanashi Prefecture wanted their own Middle Jomon national historic site for many years and that they even had several opportunities. Sano said:

There were excavations of (Middle Jomon) circular settlements at Shakado, or Sakenomiba, and Haramachi Nogyokoko-mae sites. These were excavated by the prefectural board of education. But the prefecture-level institution was unable to preserve these sites because they had no real contact with local residents. Yamanashi had many missed opportunities over the years until we came upon Umenoki site. Umenoki was excavated by the Hokuto City board of education, not the prefecture, meaning that our connection to the residents, among a variety of other reasons and circumstances, positively influenced the process of preservation (as a national historic site).

It doesn't matter how important an archaeologist says a site is, it's no use if the local residents take no notice of it, like at Sakai site. Site preservation is only possible when the local residents show their desire

and get behind it.

Talking with Sano, Kunugi, and Komatsu, each discussed the differences they see in approaches to archaeology between Yamanashi and Nagano prefectures. From these conversations, in our final interview we asked Yamashina what he thought. Hesitantly, he deflected the question:

I don't think that a person like myself, who is from Hokkaido and was picked up (salvaged) mid-career [by Chino City], should say anything about the prefectural characteristics of Nagano Prefecture archaeology. Instead, you should ask, say, Mr. Koike who was born and raised in Chino City and who is in charge of site management at Togariishi, although he happens to be in a meeting at the moment. It's better you talk to Mr. Koike, yeah...

We can only imagine why he did not want to be asked this question. Our assumption was that he did not want to describe traits of his colleagues who happened to be within earshot in the next room. By sharp contrast, his former colleague Kunugi was surprisingly frank. Kunugi, who was born in and lives in Nagano and currently works in Yamanashi, said:

Every day I am commuting across the border.

I feel such a change in the atmosphere of the archaeological community just by crossing the prefectural border.

My sense is that Idojiri and Togariishi are entangled in tightly restricted systems. So, both of them, Yamashina-san and Komatsu-san, might struggling with that.

In the end, the contrasts that were raised between places and how they impact archaeology and site development activities are useful for understanding how these different site managers view their activities in comparison to each other. They should not, however, be used to generalize about a “prefectural character” of archaeologists in a way that might mirror Ruth Benedict’s (1946) analysis of Japanese national character.

If anything, perhaps, the influence of “place” that was described to us is not cultural in nature but rather a result of the unique histories at these sites. From our conversations, Togariishi and Idojiri seem constrained by their pasts, as any site developments are rooted in the legacies of the great figures who built them up. For example, Kunugi mentioned that he would be surprised if any major changes were made to the museum or the pit house at Idojiri as long as the previous directors Muto Yuroku and Kobayashi Kimiaki are still living in the neighborhood. By contrast, Sano Takashi at Umenoki is largely able to approach development with a blank slate, as Yamanashi has no previous examples of major site development projects. It is perhaps this freedom from the recent past (this postwar history of Japanese archaeology) that Kunugi finds so relieving as he crosses from Nagano to Yamanashi each morning.

Navigating the terrain of archaeological bureaucracy

Our interviews showed that the decisions that go into the design of a pit house are rarely realized by the will of a single individual. Each of our interviewees have been involved in archaeological heritage management as a municipal employee in their cultural property sections. As such, they are entangled in the pyramidal structure of Japanese bureaucracy. They are pulled in one direction by disciplinary expectations of archaeology to accurately represent and protect the cultural heritage. At the same time, they are encouraged by city assembly members or the planning division to create cultural resources that may be used for civic pride and

tourist income. As civil servants, their primary responsibility is to local residents, but they are also expected to heed the suggestions from the Agency for Cultural Affairs, the national body in charge of cultural properties. Pulled in multiple directions by various stakeholders, compromises are inevitably made.

At Idojiri, excluding outside specialists has largely simplified the net of relations that Komatsu Takashi deals with. He said that his current challenge is to negotiate with residents to keep solar panel farms from damaging the site and ruining the pristine landscape. Having kept university laboratories and other specialists at bay, they are relatively free to manage and maintain their site and museum as they see fit.

An interesting discussion came up during our interview about the decision to cover the Idojiri pit house with thatch roofing. According to a talk by Kobayashi Kimiaki, a large piece of charred thatch was excavated from one of the pit houses. He further explained that photographs of this thatch unfortunately failed to develop, but the original was placed in storage. We asked Komatsu if they had ever taken this thatch out to analyze it. The implications of this charred thatch are great, as it could amount to the first positive evidence of Middle Jomon Period pit houses covered in thatch. Well aware of its importance to Jomon archaeology, Komatsu simply told us that it is probably among the boxes of charred remains in storage, but he has never looked at it himself, and they have no plans to try and analyze it. In this, Komatsu reemphasized how their policy of doing archaeology “on our own” and “in our own way” takes precedence over the interests and concerns of outsiders.

At Togariishi, Yamashina Akira is primarily responsible for coordinating with the local community, in particular negotiating leases with landowners. In contrast to Komatsu at Idojiri, Yamashina seemed to be struggling with the multiple organizations and people who had an interest in how Togariishi took shape. Speaking about the Agency for Cultural Affairs, Yamashina said:

I heard that the Mizunoe (former senior specialist of the Agency for Cultural Affairs) had repeatedly pushed for reconstructions with sod roofs when they were rebuilding the pit houses at Mizuko Shell Midden park. Mizuko Shell Midden has a similar rich academic history relating to its reconstructions and that is why they eventually determined to follow their previous designs. Even though I do not work directly with Mizunoe, we had a chat during a drinking party where he said, “you really need to think about sod roofs.” This left a deep impression on me.

Yamashina also mentioned the pressure from assembly members and other city representatives. For example, they ask Togariishi Jomon Museum to make utilization plans for the site park, such a camping at the pit houses and other “primitive life” experiences. Their concerns, it seems, are to set an agenda for Togariishi focused on the local population and, ideally, managed by local residents. We mentioned this seems to contrast with Umenoki, where Sano has welcomed various people from outside the city to support their activities. Yamashina simply replied:

Ah, they are recruiting foreign mercenaries (*gaijin butai desune*).

Kunugi talked about the process of revising the plan for site renovations at Togariishi. He mentioned that he tried to bring in new archeological evidence like the sod roofs from Goshono site in Ichinohe Town, Iwate. Trying to do so, he found himself butting heads with the museum staff and others as he proposed alternate designs. At the same time, he was motivated by the community-based archaeology principles imparted by his mentor, Tozawa Mitsunori. Ultimately, the pressures led him to resign from Chino City. He explained:

I lost faith. I know that is only an excuse, but I was tired. We were recruiting volunteer staff from the local residents, we were making a Jomon museum and site park that they could easily understand, we were realizing these ideals. Then we were tasked to make a renovation plan that involved concrete discussions at the citizen level. I was told to do it, but it was so difficult. There were so many opinions and I couldn't listen only to the residents. The final plan also had to reflect ideas from the Agency for Cultural Affairs, university professors, and the voices of various researchers. To be honest, the burden was too great to bear.

By contrast, Sano Takashi seems to have deftly created alliances that allow him to guide the site developments at Umenoki with fewer constraints. On the one hand, there is little intervention from the local government, as Sano is not only the head of the Hokuto Archaeological Center, but his efforts to receive government grants have brought in yearly budget of around 100 million yen. As for the Agency for Cultural Affairs, his early decision to experiment with sod roofs tied into the interests of the senior specialists there, thus deflecting any potential pressures. Also, as just mentioned, he has opened the site to locals and outsiders alike, to participate in experiments, research, and other events that have brought positive feedback. In fact, Komatsu at Idojiri and Yamashina at Togariishi went out of their way to praise Sano's approach to pit house reconstruction and site development.

Sano's deftness at working within the bureaucratic archaeology system can best be seen in how he has funded the pit house making experiments since 2017. Developments at most national historic sites are funded by the government. This requires receiving approval for plans and using funds according to specific regulations, timelines, and public bidding procedures. This usually means contracting out construction (and sometimes design) to local construction firms that will build using modern materials and techniques. Umenoki has been unique in that



Figure 8: Kuroda (pictured left) guiding visitors inside one of pit dwellings at Umenoki site. (16 September 2019)

it has hired someone to work as a kind of live-in guide who also builds the houses and meet with visitors (Figure 8). Sano explained:

Mr. Kuroda at Kuma Landscape Gardening is a graduate from art school. He loves the Jomon, he is skillful, and when he heard that he could do this for his business, he excitedly applied. Also, he works freelance and is light-footed. So, working together we placed an order with Kuroda to build our pit houses.

First, we hired a consultant to design the entire site, making plans based on (sod roof dwellings) from Goshono and Kitadai sites (Toyama Prefecture). We added a special condition to not use modern tools or hardware, but to use materials, tools, and technology of the Jomon period. For the public bidding, we set the maximum budget to 22 million yen. There is another side to this, which is the problem if no one makes a

proposal that fits these conditions.

In fact, before the bidding I became acquainted with Kuroda...and talked with him about the conditions. He said he was interested, and this allowed me to place the proposal with confidence.

Excavation experiences, embodied knowledge, and unrealized designs of the Jomon pit house

During our interviews, we asked how they would design the reconstructions at their respective sites if they were free to do so. Except for Yamashina, who has little experience in the field, each talked about their individual experiences during excavations that made them question pre-existing reconstructions.

Sano talked to us about two issues. The first was a gap between the plans for North American open-roof sod pit houses and the pit house remains that they have excavated at Umenoki. Apparently, they have only excavated a handful of the 150 pit dwelling features at Umenoki and the specific remains he intended to reproduce had 5 pillars, or one more than his ethnographic example. He mentioned that the four pillars make an almost perfect square and the fifth turns it an irregular pentagon. The problem with that, he explained, is that one needs an awkward above-ground structure of posts and beams to be able to lay a circular pattern of roof rafters. One alternate solution to the problem is to view the fifth pillar as symbolic rather than structural, as is the case with the totem pole-like fifth pillar that can be seen at Ofune site, Hakodate City, Hokkaido (Figure 9).

The second problem, which Sano has yet to settle, is how to design a post-in-hole pillar building based on remains found at sites in Hokuto City. Specifically, he pointed to remains of these pillar buildings that contain a stone hearth in the center. His current thought is that such buildings are storehouses, and these hearths would have been used for smoking food and removing pests. This idea aligns with his interest in the Jomon plant cultivation hypothesis, but he has yet to reconcile his



Figure 9: Image of the symbolic fifth pillar located opposite the entrance at Ofune site, Hakodate City, Hokkaido. (19 November 2020)

interpretation with an ethnographic example that would fit his imagined design.

Kunugi was involved many rescue excavations over the years in Chino City and his experiences informed his desire to rethink the pit houses at Togariishi. As a specific example, he mentioned:

So, when it comes to the depth of pit dwellings, we did not have concrete data, right. At the time there just wasn't much data on how far pit floors were dug down from the ground surface. However, at one site I found it was deeper than I had thought, certainly 1.3 meters deep. I am 1.6 meters, that means 1.3 meters is about shoulder depth. I thought that is must be a standard depth for pit houses (in the area). Yet at the time, there were no such reconstruction plans. They might be 70 to 80 centimeters deep at best. Having confirmed a depth of over a meter, I wanted to dig that much (for the reconstructions at Togariishi).

Unfortunately, his experiences and suggestions fell on deaf ears. The Horiguchi blueprint shows a rather shallow pit, although its depth is not specified. The current pit houses at Togariishi have gone in the opposite direction from Kunugi's vision and, in fact, are built directly on the ground with no pit at all. While we never asked why, this is likely a decision intended to simplify the maintenance of the buildings.

Komatsu described an alternative image on the Jomon pit house based on his experiences excavating at Hinata site, a site from the Early Jomon Period located next to Idojiri. Specifically, he questioned the practice of building splendid and solidly built reconstructions. Comparing the typical models of reconstructed building to his experiences, he said:

That's not the case with the sites that I have excavated. The thickness and depth of postholes varied greatly, which makes me think they were using the wood they had on hand. These random depths were their way of making adjustments. From my experience at Hinata site...I found a settlement with buildings that was dug into a steep slope.

Digging on the slope, we found the floor was semicircular (*kamabokogata*). It wasn't a circle. As a matter of course it rained, and when it did the water flowed right into the pit. Of course, (Jomon people) must have done something to prevent that. But there was no evidence of a drainage ditch.

With this in mind, I eventually came across the remains of a burnt house. There was burnt soil on the cross section of the pit and along the upper slope side.... When I saw this, I thought they must have covered the roof with the soil they dug up. As the buildings of the (Early Jomon) era were not solid in the first place, with random pillars and many small holes, it seemed that the roof was just lifted into place. In short, the image here was that of a basic "lean-to."

Indeed, Komatsu's image of a shabby lean-to structure has never truly been realized at Jomon period sites. There are some sites that have built pit houses without roofs, a few that have tent-like structures without solid foundations, and some that chosen to leave decayed or burnt dwellings in place. This is a dilemma that has existed from the first pit houses designed and built by Sekino Masaru, who chose to tell a "small lie" to the public by making such a neat thatch roof at Toro, even though he knew the Yayoi people probably couldn't make it. His rationale was that to create a new image of Japanese architectural origins, he needed to make one that people might find attractive (Fujimori 2013: 68).

Conclusion

In the beginning of this article, we quoted from Hans-Ole Hansen (1959) on the difficulty in designing a Stone Age dwelling from archaeological site reports. The difficulty in designing the house, however, was only the beginning. He goes on to write about making stone axes to fell trees, the problem of selecting a site, and trying to acquire enough thatch and clay. Figuring out how to transport materials was just as challenging as feeding his friends who volunteered. He writes about how they injured their hands as they stripped bark and the pain when they cut their feet kneading clay with flint shards in it. As they built their Stone Age house, they adapted their ideal design to the realities of the environment, the limitations of their physical strength, and the obduracy of the material world. Their joy at completing their house was matched by their bitterness and regret as they watched it accidentally burn down soon after. The experiences detailed in this report also speak to the fact that the design of a pit house is simply one in an overlapping orchestra of elements that influence what shape it finally takes.

As our project moves into its third year, one thing that has become clear is that archaeological knowledge (such as a reconstructed Jomon pit house) is not formed through a clear linear pattern from excavation, to analysis, and ending with

interpretations. For us this year, the ongoing pandemic forced us to “skip ahead” and consider different approaches to design that might help inform the design to own pit house. Of course, even without the current restrictions, this kind of skipping forward and backward is an inevitable aspect of archaeological knowledge production.

The interviews introduced in this article similarly show this non-linear aspect of archaeology in the design of pit houses. With Togariishi, for example, we saw the weight of history and authority, where designs made seventy years ago were reproduced despite new information from excavations and revealing developments in Jomon archaeology as a whole. At Idojiri, we learned that the first pit house was built in the midst of excavations in 1958, if for no other reason than to commemorate the monumental undertaking. Now on the third-generation pit house, each reconstruction and major repair are made to reinforce the spirit of “revealing our history by ourselves.” Umenoki, as of 2021, has built four different pit houses before ever fully excavating the site. Their experimental approach to site development has meant that the buildings are never intended to be “complete.”

Postscript: Putting Suwahara to rest and how the past is silenced

Unable to excavate at Suwahara in 2020 as originally planned, we needed to decide what to do with the site itself. We left the site at the end of our 2019 excavation season covered in two layers of “blue sheet” waterproof poly tarp. When we decided to do this, Sano Takashi presented it as the most reasonable of two options. The other was to return the sand and soil that had previously been atop the site, which would require hiring an excavator as well as spending considerable effort to remove it next summer. Leaving the site covered in blue sheets has its own concerns, as it provides little protection to the site from the potential effects of freezing and thawing. Sano was sure this would not cause major damage and suggested it as the better choice.



Figure 10: Overhead view of Suwahara site covered with blue sheets for protection. (27 August 2020)

The blue sheets have one major nemesis, the sun. Even the heavy-duty tarps we used only last between nine and twelve months. Even double layered, we couldn't reasonably leave the site exposed like this for another year.

We visited Suwahara in the late afternoon of 27 August 2020, after our interviews with Sano Takashi and Kunugi Tsukasa. The site itself had begun to settle. The walls of had slightly caved in from the wind and rain. There was evidence that animals had entered the site. Many of the bags of soil holding down the blue sheet had disintegrated. The piles of excavated earth and sand surrounding the site were largely the same, although time had revealed a few pieces of pottery we previously missed. Other than the dried grass from a recent mowing, there were no signs anyone had entered the site or surrounding fields. Having wanted to get an overhead shot of the site since our final day of excavation in 2019, we pulled out our new drone to get a view (Figure 10). We even contemplated removing the blue sheets for a moment.

Coordinating with Kunugi Tsukasa, we decided to rebury Suwahara on November 19–20. Driving up in the early morning, I (John Ertl) could see that the excavator and operator were already at the site and Kunugi arrived only a few



Figure 11: Kunugi Tsukasa at Suwahara site communicating with the operator of the excavator as they refill the site. (19 November 2020)

seconds later. The three of us exchanged greetings and after a quick conversation to confirm which of mounds were sand and which were soil, the operator went straight to work. Kunugi and I went into the pit to remove the bags of sand.

As the operator was refilling the pit with sand, Kunugi jumped in with his gloves, garden hoe (*joren*), and helmet to help even out the sand (Figure 11). Thinking to join him, I asked if there was any particular method to this. Laughing, he said “I’m just spreading it around. There is no real point to it (*fukai imi ga nai*). I get restless when I stand around, that’s all. Really, the excavator does a great job and really doesn’t need any help.” Restless myself, I borrowed a hoe and jumped in.

During a break, we talked about the excavation and the possible role of Kayabun in working with us next year. Kunugi explained there were quite a few things that Kayabun could assist with, from training the students or even providing labor if needed. Talking about how our project will continue for several more years, Kunugi said:

I have really wanted to be able to spend the time to excavate, even just one pit house from start to finish. What kinds of new archaeological

information can be garnered from doing so and, in the end, how can that knowledge be utilized? Such things were impossible to do when I was working for the government. All our work had to fit into the framework of the site report. I want to do archaeology taking the time to think about such things.

His comment speaks to the pessimism that many have expressed toward the administrative archaeology system in Japan (see Yoshida and Ertl, ed. 2017). This system may be seen as producing of an abundance of archaeological knowledge that is recorded in many high-quality site reports, but it does so by restricting the work of the individuals who make them, as Kunugi says, “into predetermined molds” (*kata ni hamatta mono*). Kunugi was also referring to the hierarchy of labor in this system, where he and the others employed by Kayabun do the physical work in the field that will be used by others who do the intellectual analysis in the office. Being asked to produce specific kinds of data from a site, he is unable to spend the time engaging with a site or particular feature in a way that satisfies his intellectual curiosity.

One unfortunate result of the administrative archaeology system, it seems, is that it silences the experiences, embodied knowledge, and perspectives of archaeologists like Kunugi. This system works to “silence the past” (see Trouillot 1995) and trying to understand just what kinds of knowledge are left unheard is one of our aims in this ethnography of archaeology. As we explained in our report last year (Ertl and Yoshida 2020), much of the knowledge archaeologists have is never recorded in site reports or school textbooks, nor does it appear in the designs of pit houses or museum displays. Learning where such hidden knowledge is located and developing the tools to cultivate these resources are, inevitably, the aim of this ethnography of archaeology.

By the late afternoon of November 19, Suwahara site was returned to a field



Figure 12: Overhead view of Suwahara site as excavator finishes returning the sand and soil to the excavated pit. (19 November 2020)

(Figure 12). We hammered a few posts into the ground to mark the corners of the site and we gathered all the bags of soil to one pile to be disposed of later. And with that, the 2020 excavations at Suwahara ended before they even began.

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