Kyosei-no-koukogaku: Coexistence in the Past - Dialogues in the Present

12 - 15 January 2006
Osaka, Japan

Wac Osaka site

The Inter-Congress theme, *Kyosei-no-koukogaku: Coexisting in the Past and Present,* will provide a forum for examining a range of issues relating to the study and practices of archaeology in the past and present. There will be three main areas of focus:

- Learning from the past.
- Public archaeology.
- Cultural heritage management.

There will be opportunities for archaeologists to explore questions such as:

- How do Indigenous peoples and immigrant/colonial powers coexist in a single society?
- How do we develop practices to allow cultural heritage to be preserved for study in the present (and the future)?
- Are there ways that the past and present can comfortably coexist in our archaeological practices?
- How do we 'teach' coexistence?

We are confronted now with the issue of how archaeologists can approach this problem:

- In the present, another question we should tackle is how we can and/or should live together with the cultural heritage of past people. What have archaeologists done and how can and/or should they do for the coexistence of the "Past" and the "Present"?
- Through *Kyosei-no-koukogaku: Coexisting in the Past and Present* archaeologists will address the issues of cultural symbiosis in the past and it's implications for how to coexist with the cultural heritage around us in a fruitful and productive manner so that all people can better learn to appreciate the strength gained through mutual expression of differences and so that cultural heritage is preserved for future generations.

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The Review of WAC Inter-congress in Osaka 2006

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- World Archaeological Congress Inter-Congress: Osaka, 2006 Kyosei-no-Koukogaku: Coexistence in the Past-Dialogues in the Present -

On 12-15 January 2006 the Inter-Congress of the World Archaeological Congress (WAC) was held at in Osaka Museum of History, Osaka, Japan. Approximately 400 researchers from archaeology and other related fields had discussions on the theme 'Kyosei-no-Koukogaku: Coexistence in the Past-Dialogues in the Present' for three days. Indeed, a total of 23 sessions provided the broad topics regarding current issues in archaeological research, such as ethical problems involved with conducting research in other people's land, archaeological surveys within different cultures, and management of cultural heritage for the next generation. The review examines the meaning of the congress from the view of my career as a maritime archaeologist studying in Australia.

The conference was successful in terms of its importance as the first WAC congress to take place in an Asian country and in overcoming the inherent issues of language difficulties. Although the linguistic matter itself is not the focal point to evaluate the congress, information that has been produced in different language systems from overseas present barriers to sharing archaeological research. Moreover, it is currently indispensable to share particular information among overseas researchers due to the progress of ramification, development of specialty and

the growth of sub-disciplines in archaeology. One of the purposes of the WAC is to create an internationally open space for all archaeologists to share their knowledge and ideas. Despite the language difficulties, this was achieved in the WAC Osaka where in addition to employing translations systems, many young researchers chaired several sessions using English fluently. Japanese researchers made inroads into demonstrating achievement of Japan's archaeology including recent innovative research and past pioneering work, enabling foreign researchers from 26 countries to understand the current state of Japan's archaeology. As many foreign archaeologists have pointed out, archaeology in Japan excels in the techniques of survey and excavation conducted by local governments due to the growth of rescue archaeology for past forty decades with the economic development. At present, the most important theme of Japanese archaeology, however, moves to the issues of site management including conservation, post site research, and contribution to the public. In the WAC Osaka, Japanese researchers including local government agencies highlighted the modern themes where the potential of Japanese archaeology was evaluated in terms of not only technical aspects but also the other academic aspects.

With regard to the issue of underwater and maritime archaeology, there were a few presentations dealing with the study of shipwrecks and underwater cultural heritage. The field of underwater and maritime archaeology in Japan has not been sufficiently established like Europe, the United States, and other East Asian countries, but at least Japanese archaeologists have concerned about the protection of maritime sites, and researcher's awareness of their responsibility for management of underwater cultural heritages is currently growing. My presentation that deals with the issue regarding the management of underwater cultural heritage in Japan received affirmative evaluations from many Japanese archaeologists and cultural heritage agencies. To build up an individual network with new researchers resulted from the presentation in the conference, so that I am currently in good contact with them. After the conference, some of the researchers contributed to taking place a small seminar about the maritime archaeology in Japan, others provided useful advice for my ongoing project. The WAC Osaka was certainly the one of the biggest archaeological conference in Japan, and the internationally organized conference resulted in the establishment of new networks among researchers form different fields and different countries.

Many participants at the congress dealt with issues regarding closed academic research, and the exclusive possession of the resultant knowledge by specific archaeologists. Using the analogy of exploitation of natural resources, archaeologists at WAC called for the cessation of cultural resources exploitation in other nations, particularly by archaeologists from the more advanced countries. In other word, archaeologists highlight the issue of abandonment of academic imperialism and exclusive possession of knowledge to the public's detriment. This raises the question of to how archaeologists should establish public access to archaeological research and its outcomes. Sharing knowledge of cultural properties with the public ideally yields people's awareness of their responsibility for management of cultural heritages. Maritime archaeologists in Australia have adapted, through communication with stakeholders such as scuba divers, a strategy of sharing responsibility with the public in order to protect, manage, and preserve underwater cultural remains. Sharing responsibility for the administration of cultural heritage must focus on the key issue of durable and responsible activity by the public, rather than simply generating public consciousness. The WAC Osaka was a scholarly opportunity to

identify effective ways for a durable coexistence between archaeology and the public through the analysis of case studies from other countries, rather than an ad hoc rally to insist on the importance of relationships between archaeology and the public.

The topics dealing with a link between archaeological study and the several problems of modern age were impressive. More recently, each archaeologist pursues his/her own research strategies in the relationship with the modern society that is faced with various problems including poverty and conflicts. Researchers often need to show positive answer about the issue of modern human behavior based on the result of archaeological analysis of past human activities. The topics in modern archaeology are diverse and people's senses of value are different, but Archaeologists are required to show a common answer against a question how archaeology will improve our lifestyle and contribute the development of modern society. In my opinion, to answer this sort of broad questions should be internationally discussed in the place, and therefore the WAC may be the suitable place to take charge of discussing more global theme.

Each session in the WAC Osaka 2006 provided on a considerable diversity and complexity of current archaeological themes that derived from different social, historical, economic, political, and cultural backgrounds. In addition, archaeologists demonstrated that the issue of coexistence in archaeological research occurs in the various levels of human involvement, such as, individuals, groups, and nations. With a significant role and contribution to society, archaeologists have started to take into consideration these factors. An archaeologist must have an insight into the consistent balance between their own specialties, and surrounding factors, so that through the participation of the WAC congress researchers can identify the developments and current progress of archaeology. Finally, I would like to comment the fact that this conference was really enjoyable and allowed me to demonstrate candidly my own opinion. I appreciate all staffs who well organized WAC Osaka and can take proud of the dignified atmosphere of this conference as a Japanese researcher.