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Dolphin Bones in Mawaki Archaeological Site:

Holocene Paleoenvironmental Changes in Far East

SciencePG
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Published by

Science Publishing Group

548 Fashion Avenue
New York, NY 10018, U.S.A.

http://www.sciencepublishinggroup.com

ISBN: 978-1-940366-48-7

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Preface

This book presents the fruits of interdisciplinary study conducted on an early Holocene archaeological site upon the Noto Peninsula of central Japan. From the famous Mawaki archaeological site, countless dolphin bones have been excavated, which are associated with various stone artifacts (arrowheads, knives and scrapers) and ritual wood columns, indicating the presence of a longstanding fishery on the Sea of Japan coast, a fact which reflects regional sea-level and paleoenvironmental changes. Affluent information on the climatic and geologic phenomena during the Holocene time was pursued by means of stratigraphy, paleontology, geochronology and geophysics.

In Chapter 1, Itoh, Y. and others present the outline of Noto Peninsula and Toyama Bay based on geophysical, geological and geomorphological information. They provide the readers with tectonic and geological perspective of the study area. Takada, H. and Takemura, K. focus on the archaeological significance of the Mawaki site (Chapter 2). Chapter 3 by Takemura, K. and others is dedicated to describing Holocene stratigraphy around the study area putting emphasis on the occurrence and significance of dolphin bones. Chronological constraints on the paleoenvironmental discussion are given by radiocarbon dating with accelerator mass spectrometry of Holocene sediments at the Mawaki site by Nakamura, T. and Takada, H. (Chapter 4). A paleontological evaluation of the Mawaki environment is shown by Kanehara, M. and Takada, H. based on analyses of pollen and diatoms (Chapter 5). Finally, an estimate of the Holocene sea level changes on the coastal area is presented by Takemura, K. and others in Chapter 6.

Through such intensive multidisciplinary approaches, the authors attempt to describe life of the ancients on post-glacial Far East, which has never been understood in the framework of long-term environmental changes.

We thank Dr. T. Sato (Geological Survey, Japan) for inputs pertaining to the sea

level change. We are also grateful to Dr. Daisuke Ishimura (Tohoku University) and Mr. Keitaro Yamada (Kyoto University) for providing this study with figures. The drilling survey was supervised by Oyo Corporation Co., Ltd. Geoslicer coring was conducted by Fukken Co., Ltd.

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