

DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY

Archaeology is a discipline that pursues a historical vision through material evidence (archaeological artifacts) obtained primarily through excavations. In 1916, Kōsaku Hamada was appointed to the first university professorship devoted to archaeology in Japan; an appointment that laid the foundation for the present department. Ever since, an emphasis on detailed observation and analysis of artifacts has characterized its work. The object of archaeological study can be any period or location as long as there remains something made by people who lived in the past or vestiges of their lives. Archaeologists obtain material evidence containing various kinds of historical data through excavation, recognize a material culture based on this evidence, and decipher the spiritual culture behind it. Interpreting archaeological artifacts, about which no testimony from the creators or the users is available, requires a level of concentration that would never overlook the subtlest detail, as well as a broad knowledge of other human and social sciences such as cultural anthropology. Furthermore, in

modern archaeology, micro-scientific analysis of, for example, genetic material from animal and plant remains also contributes to the restoration of a historical vision. Even though students themselves are not required to perform such analysis, they need to be aware of the kinds of data that analytical technologies from the natural sciences can provide and to maintain serious interest in them. Progress in our research also relies on results of excavations conducted by other universities, research institutions, prefectures and municipalities and their collections. Thus, we must pay great respect in cooperating with these institutions.

Believing that a museum was essential for the study of archaeology, the first professor of Archaeology Kōsaku Hamada opened an exhibition room for archaeological materials in what is now the Faculty of Letters Exhibition Hall.

Part of the Exhibition Hall has been registered as an Important Cultural Asset by the national government and continues to be utilized as a site of faculty research and education activities.

考古学専修



PHOTO : Excavation of Shikin-zan mounded tomb, Osaka (2003)