Preface

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This issue is dedicated to the memory of my late husband Nishimura Masanari, or Nixi, as he was affectionately known by his Vietnamese colleagues. On June 9, 2013, he went out to inspect an excavation at the Dam Temple, Bac Ninh Province, on his motorbike. He was killed in a traffic accident on the way to the temple. At this point in his career, he had completed some projects related to his Vietnamese area studies and was busy working on various research topics. His sudden death gave us grief and left us with a large number of unfinished works.

FIGURE 1 *Dr. Nishimura Masanari.*

Nixi's research can be described as area studies based on archaeology that endeavor to explain Vietnamese regional history and the formation of its culture using an interdisciplinary approach. Around Christmas 1995, when Nixi had just started his area studies, he was provoked by a comment made by the late Professor Sakurai Yumio: "An archaeologist who studies Vietnamese history based on conventional historical periods such as Phung Nguyen or Go Mun is boring." Nixi later recalled that Professor Sakurai's comment made him jump into Vietnamese archaeology. He was also strongly influenced by the interdisciplinary approach of "ancient studies" introduced by a well-known Japanese archaeologist, Mori Koichi. Professor Mori argued that archaeology should collaborate with other disciplines such as literature, history, ethnology, and anthropology to investigate the past.

Nixi believed that archaeological relics would have less value if they were removed from archaeological sites, becoming mere antiques. Therefore, he argued that archaeological relics must be studied in relation to the sites where they were discovered, and he perceived that archaeological sites themselves are the ultimate subject of archaeological studies. He carefully excavated sites layer by layer and recorded detailed information on each stratum where relics were found. His chronological studies of relics based on strata were executed with great detail and precision. His extraordinary hypothesis that the prosperity of Chinese Buddhism was related to the Lung Khe area is based on such detailed studies of small fragments of relics.

FIGURE 2

Dr. Nishimura Masanari taking a photograph at the Go Thap site.

FIGURE 3 *Dr. Nishimura Masanari and his teachers and colleagues at the Lung Khe citadel site.*

We remember him for his flashy shirts and loud laughter, but he was a steady and energetic researcher. Sometimes he forgot his daily necessities because of his studies. Such focus and dedication enabled him to research from the Stone Age to the present and from northern through central to southern Vietnam. I am sure that he would wish to continue his work and thoroughly study the history of Vietnam. Some of the results of his research were published in a book titled *Archaeology and Ancient History of Vietnam*, which received a prize from the Japan Society for Southeast Asian Studies shortly before his departure.

I am deeply grateful to Professor Momoki Shiro of Osaka University for his idea to form a panel at the Third Asian Association of World Historians Congress to commemorate Nixi's work. I would like to thank Prof. Rila Mukherjee and Prof. Momoki for giving us the opportunity to publish the papers from that panel in this issue. I also thank Dr. Seohyung and Dr. Bin Yang for supporting our publication. Special thanks go to Professor John Miksic, who acted as the chair of our session and kindly provided the introduction to this issue. Out of Nixi's broad range of interests, four main topics are highlighted here: Lung Khe, Champa, shipwrecks, and village studies. In this issue, they are presented in an interdisciplinary manner through the collaboration of historians and archaeologists. Here, I would like to express my gratitude toward all our colleagues who have been continuing the work of Nixi and his contributions to

Vietnamese archaeology. I also would like to show my greatest appreciation to Professor Aoyama Toru and Ms. Suzuki Tomomi, who edited the manuscripts for our study team.

It has already been three years since his death, but I am hoping that Nixi's legacy will live on through his colleagues' works.