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Author(s): W. Gowland

Source: *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 19 (1890), p. 64

Published by: [Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland](http://www.rai.ac.uk/)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2842536>

Accessed: 15/06/2014 09:20

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EXHIBITION of PHOTOGRAPHS of MEGALITHIC REMAINS from JAPAN.

By W. GOWLAND, ESQ., F.C.S.

MR. W. GOWLAND exhibited photographs of megalithic remains from Japan, selected from a series made during his explorations of the dolmens and tumuli of that country in connection with an investigation into their history, geographical distribution, forms and contents, conducted by him in conjunction with Mr. W. G. Aston, Japanese Secretary of the British Legation in Tokyo. The dolmens and tumuli are generally found on the low hills which bound the plains, more particularly those of the chief rivers. They also occur on the plains, but are less numerous there. The tumuli are of two chief forms: 1st. A simple approximately conical mound generally elongated in the direction of the entrance of the dolmen; occasionally with terraced slopes and surrounded by a moat. 2nd. A double form of mound which is that of the imperial tombs of a certain era, and almost always possesses terraced slopes, and a moat, and frequently contains a dolmen. The tumuli of the first class are usually about 10, 15 or 25 feet in height, and generally each contains a dolmen. Those of the second class are much larger, being usually 400, 600 or 800 feet or more in length at the base, with a breadth of about two-thirds of their lengths, and a height varying from 25 to 50 feet or more. The dolmens consist generally of rudely rectangular chambers entered through a gallery of varying length. They are usually built of undressed stones of large size rudely laid together without mortar. A few only are of hewn stones. The roof of the chamber is almost always megalithic, in some consisting of a single stone. Their dimensions are variable, the galleries ranging from a few feet to 10, 15 or 24 feet in length, reaching in one example to 60 feet, and the chambers from 9 feet, in the smaller to 16, 18 or 22 feet in the common type. Some few are longer. Their entrances almost invariably are directed southwards, in a few rare cases westwards. Their contents are human bones (fragmentary), pottery, iron swords, spear and arrow heads, horse bits and metal ornaments of horse trappings and of armour, glass, stone and metal beads and vermillion. Some contain hewn-stone sarcophagi, and a few only sarcophagi of terra-cotta.

Some of the photographs represent rock-hewn tombs containing sarcophagi cut in the rock at the end or side of the chamber; and one a tumulus without a dolmen but with a stone sarcophagus projecting from its summit.

Only the chief features of the megalithic remains were described, an account of them in detail being reserved for a future joint paper by Mr. Gowland and his co-worker, Mr. W. G. Aston.