

# Report on the 80<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Japanese Archaeological Association

TANAKA Kazuhiko<sup>1</sup>

## ABSTRACT

*This short essay reports the proceedings and some highlights of the 80<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Japanese Archaeological Association, held on May 17 and 18, 2014, at the College of Humanities and Sciences, Nihon University.*

**KEYWORDS:** 80<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, Japanese Archaeological Association

The 80<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Japanese Archaeological Association was held on May 17 and 18, 2014, at the College of Humanities and Sciences, Nihon University. The Organising Committee Chair, Professor Shinsuke Hamada, on behalf of the alumni and current students of the university, welcomed the delegates. This was the third time after an eleven-year gap that the university hosted the Association's Annual Meeting. A total of 972 members participated over the two days, and after the proceeding of the first day, a party was held in the main hall of the Centenary Anniversary Building. It was attended by a number of people, including Professor Hamada, and the delegates had an enjoyable time together. A total of 1440 people attended the two-day meeting, including 468 non-members.

The Annual General Meeting, which took place in the morning on the first day, was opened by President Yoshiyuki Tanaka, who looked back on his two-year term. He pointed out that while three years had passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake, support for recovery was still on-going, and there was no resolution to the problem of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. He also reported on several issues. (1) The specialist committee on the Association's library had decided to make a large donation of books, and the institution that would receive these books would be announced at the meeting. (2) In order to make the Article of the Association easier to understand by non-members, revisions were planned, which would then be discussed at the meeting. (3) On the issue of internationalisation, the official English-language journal of the Association was established in 2013. After the President's report, the chair confirmed that the meeting satisfied the quorum. After electing the chairpersons and secretaries, the agenda items (report and discussion items) were discussed. Below is the summary of those discussions.

<sup>1</sup> *Committee Member (General Affairs), The Japanese Archaeological Association, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, 5-15-5 Hirai, Edogawa Ward, Tokyo 132-0035, Japan (jjarch@archaeology.jp)*  
*Category: Report(solicited) Received: 21 October 2014*

## *Report on the 80<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting*

The first report was the announcement of the recipients of the Fourth Japanese Archaeological Association Prizes. The grand prize went to Dr Yoshinori Tajiri, and the two runners-up were Dr Kazutomo Mizunoe and Mr Hirohiko Saino. Each winner received a certificate and memento. Mr Hirohiko Saino is the first member to win a prize for a research paper. We would like to encourage members to enter their research papers in the competition in the future. After a report on the Association's activities for 2013, a report on membership applications was delivered, which confirmed that out of 61 applicants, 58 satisfied the membership criteria. Their membership applications were thus approved. On behalf of the new members, Mr Yoshiaki Ootsuka (Hokkaido) spoke of his resolution and aspiration. The number of members who passed away was 23, and 62 members left the Association in 2013. As of the end of March 2014, the total number of members was 4142.

As 2014 was the year to re-elect the board, Professor Taketsugu Iijima, Chair of the Election Committee, reported that an election was conducted to nominate 23 members of the 24-member board excluding one permanent member. There were 23 candidates after the election announcement was made, and they were duly elected. Professor Masahiko Matsuo, Chair of the Special sub-Committee on the Association's Library, gave a report on the selected recipient of the Association's library donation. He said there were two applications and that Nara University's library was selected for the following three reasons: (1) it has good organisational capacity for maintaining the necessary administrative work after receiving the donated books; (2) it was prepared to receive the books and had more capacity to store, maintain, and use them; and (3) because it offered off-site lending and photocopying services, the Association's members and researchers could better utilise the interlibrary loan system. As for the revised Article about the Association and Regulations, Professor Hiroaki Takakura, the Vice President, led the work with input from the members. Drafts of the revised Article and Regulations of the Japanese Archaeological Association were presented and reported at the meeting.

The discussion items were then addressed and the plan for activities in 2014 was presented and accepted. Professor Matsuo presented a report on the recipient of the Association's library donation, as discussed above. Afterwards, Professor Takakura proposed postponing a discussion on the minor revision to the Association's Article until 12:10 on May 18, the following day, to ensure that the quorum would be achieved including proxy votes, which was accepted. Mr Sakae Taniguchi, a board member on the Committee on Social Studies and Textbooks presented a statement on the revisions to the Ministry of Education's guidelines for primary school teaching, and it was adopted as proposed. As an AOB, a report on the issue of looted cultural properties—which was raised by a members at the 2013 Annual Meeting—was discussed. Mr Kazuhiko Tanaka, a board member, reported that other board members had started to investigate the issue

and were now engaged with information gathering. Immediately after concluding the report and discussion for May 17, a meeting of the newly elected board members was convened, and the new President was elected. Professor Takakura, a board member, was elected as President, while Professors Hideshi Ishikawa and Hiroyuki Shiraishi, both board members, were elected Vice Presidents. Portfolios were distributed to the new board members, thus completing the formation of the new board.

The Annual Meeting reconvened at 12:10 on May 18. On revising the Articles and Regulations of the Association, the President of the Association, Professor Takakura, reported that the number of members attending the meeting was two-thirds of the total number of members (the quorum), and the draft was adopted as presented. Subsequently, the new President addressed the meeting to present his vision for the Association. The Annual Meeting, which lasted for two days, was then formally concluded.

On May 17, following the Annual General Meeting, a public lecture was held. Professor Tanaka, the President, opened the function, and Dr Takafumi Yamamoto introduced the speaker, Professor Hamada of Nihon University. Professor Hamada then delivered a lecture entitled 'Archaeological Investigation in Japan from the Outbreak to the End of the Pacific War: Activities of the Archaeological Society of Nihon University.' In the lecture, Professor Hamada divided the history of archaeological study at Nihon University into three periods and focussed on the first period (1929–1947). Professor Hamada examined archaeological material from that period that had been stored by Nihon University and not yet open to the public. He mounted a detailed search for related material and re-evaluated archaeological work undertaken by Nihon University. The lecture reflected Professor Hamada's long-standing efforts to make unpublished material available to the public at the museum. An added bonus was that the materials discussed in Professor Hamada's lecture were on display at the exhibition by the College of Humanities and Sciences, Nihon University, entitled 'Nihon University: The Development of its Archaeological Research.'

Following the public lecture, a session entitled 'Prospects for Modern Archaeology', organised by Nihon University, was held. The session consisted of three parts: investigation, research, and utilisation. After introducing the session's aim and outlining the history of archaeological research, two presentations on investigation, two on research, and three on utilisation were given. The session ended with a concluding discussion. One of the three presentations on utilisation was about Gifu Castle in Gifu City. It was reported that public archaeological excavations were conducted as one of the objectives of the project, under the concept of 'making archaeological excavations a tourist attraction.' A number of ideas pursued in the case study, including excavations on public holidays, would serve as the model for other archaeological sites in their efforts to make the most of their resources. In the presentation on Hirado, it was pointed out

## *Report on the 80<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting*

that the emphasis on trade with Holland distorted Hirado as characteristic as a port city with strong relationships with Britain, Portugal, China, and Korea. The presentation also emphasised the danger in overplaying ‘the historical highlights’ to obscure what was actually there. Both points were well taken.

On May 18, 36 presentations were made across four venues, and four sessions were held in two venues. There were five presentations in Session 2 devoted to ‘Jomon people of the coastal area of the Sea of Japan: Focusing on Otake Shell Mound, Toyama Prefecture.’ These presentations focused on the findings from excavations at the Otake Shell Mound in Toyama Prefecture, which was discovered during the construction of the Hokuriku Shinkansen in 2009 and 2010; the skeletons of 91 individuals dating from the beginning to the end of the Early Jomon Period and other artefacts were found at this site. The presentations shed light on gender differences in accessories and burial goods, the existence of a male with a height of more than 165 cm, differences among individuals relating to diet, and the utilisation of birds (*Anseres* and *Podicipedidae*) and otters that lived in the nearby estuary and freshwater areas.

In Session 3, entitled ‘The formation of the state in the periphery in the keyhole-shaped tumuli regime: The case of Zenkojidaira’, the audience heard results from excavations at the Oomuro Burial Mound Group in Zenkojidaira, Nagano Prefecture, which consisted of about 500 mounds. Excavations have been conducted by the Archaeology Department of Meiji University since 1984. They reported that the burial mound group could be divided into the ‘old-style mound group’ (latter half of the fifth century and first half of the sixth century), consisting of cairns and chambers with rafted roofs, and the ‘new-style mound group’ (latter half of the sixth century to the end of the seventh century), consisting of mounds made from rocks, soil and horizontal stone chambers. Mirrors, iron weapons, and harnesses were found in the small round mounds. This reflects the likelihood that since the mid-Middle Kofun Period, powerful clans of Zenkojidaira did not consider the shapes and sizes of the keyhole-shaped burial mounds as symbols of social status. Based on findings from excavations of the burial mound group and discovery of items from Korea and China in Zenkojidaira since the Late Yayoi Period, it is likely that Zenkojidaira clans buried in the Oomuro Burial Mound Group were in direct contact with clans from the southern Korean Peninsula, without mediation by the Yamato polity.

In Session 4, called ‘The progress of recovery investigation after the Great East Japan Earthquake and future challenges,’ the audience heard reports from the special committee (which also introduced the aim of the session) and from three prefectures: Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima. The special committee reported that in 2013, it focused on publishing findings from investigations that accompanied recovery projects, and that it held public reporting sessions in Morioka and Sendai. Future challenges that were identified include

the culmination of the recovery project grant at the end of 2015, issues in recording the findings from the investigation and developing a transfer mechanism, maintaining the investigation by sending out additional personnel, and the problems in handling cultural properties in areas where access was restricted due to the nuclear accident. The report from Iwate described that locally held public sessions always attracted more than 100 participants, including those living in temporary accommodation. It concluded that ‘the high degree of interest in local archaeological sites can be partly attributed to the fact that the sense of familial ties and local identity has been heightened because a large number of personal belongings and local community properties were lost in the tsunami.’ This is an important point.

Session 5 on ‘The role of studies of history and archaeology in primary and junior high schools: How to deal with the Paleolithic Period on the Japanese Archipelago’ discussed the fact that the Paleolithic in Japan is not properly covered during compulsory education. Professor Hatsushige Otsuka delivered a keynote speech titled ‘The history of the Japanese Archaeological Association and history education’ and Mr Akira Oshita delivered a keynote presentation, ‘The current situation of social studies (history) textbooks in compulsory education and future challenges.’ This was followed by a discussion with five panellists.

In addition, there were 23 entries for the poster session, in which participants and exhibitors engaged in enthusiastic discussions.

The 80<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting was thus concluded successfully, with many participants. This was because of the hard work by Nihon University and the organising committee led by Professor Hamada, as well as generous help provided by 80 alumni and current archaeology students. On behalf of the members, I would like to thank them from the bottom of my heart.