

The Committee for the Protection of Buried Cultural Properties

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The most outstanding topic of fiscal 2014 regarding protection of buried cultural properties was various problems related to excavation research at reconstruction projects for the Great East Japan Earthquake. Although progress was seen in excavation itself, there is a severe conflict between promotion of reconstruction related projects such as housing reconstruction, and protection of archaeological sites. While the deadline for reconstruction related excavation research is imminent in fiscal 2015, the environment surrounding the excavation, such as physical support, is still not sufficient, and the structure after 2015 is opaque. These are problems that were anticipated from the beginning and are now becoming real.

An alarming situation in recent years is that as so called baby boomers are retiring in huge numbers, new hires are not adequate. Even if sufficient staffs are hired, they are often temporary or part-time employees with a limited employment period. It is undeniable that cultural properties administration is somewhat neglected within municipalities. This situation will create a blank space between generations which will become a big obstacle in the continuity of work and deepening of regional history studies. Also, a more serious problem is that the ratios of the number of students who major in archaeology to get a job as a specialist after graduation tend to be dropping. This means that the fascination of archaeology is not being conveyed to the students, and each of us who engages in archaeology should take this fact seriously.

Activities of the Committee for the Protection of Buried Cultural Properties consist of a monthly director meeting, a national member meeting and a poster session at the general meeting of the Archaeological Association in spring, an information exchange session at the Association convention in fall, and regional meetings dividing the country into several groups.

The fiscal 2014 national spring meeting was held on May 16 (Fri.) from 14:00 to 17:00 at Nihon University, and it was attended by 32 committee members and responsible directors. Due to reelection of members, YAJIMA Kunio was appointed as the new committee chairman, and FUJISAWA Atsushi and FUJINO Tsugifumi were appointed

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committee vice chairmen. Also 117 new committee members were approved at the board of directors. Also discussions were held on the position of cultural properties within local culture, reconfirmation of the original significance of preserving records, promotion of data utilization, the increase of business due to the elimination and consolidation of museums, the fading of cultural properties rescue in disaster areas, and so on. Also it was confirmed that since fiscal 2014 is the 10th year since the Committee started conducting prefectural questionnaires on the status of buried cultural properties administration, the process of summarization will be started.

The fiscal 2014 information exchange session was held on Oct. 12 (Sun.) at the time of the Date convention and was joined by a responsible director and five committee members and association members. They exchanged opinions and discussed protection of buried cultural properties in Hokkaido, excavation research on the Hokkaido University campus, Jomon sites in Tohoku and so on.

The poster sessions at the general meeting and the convention were on “Situations of Excavation Research for Reconstruction Projects of the Great East Japan Earthquake.” A talk was held with the Cultural Agency on March 3, 2015, confirming the position of the Agency toward the preservation problem of Irinosawa site, Kurihara City, Miyagi Prefecture and so on.