

The Committee for the Protection of Buried Cultural Properties

OGASAWARA Nagataka¹

Excavation research due to reconstruction projects of the Great East Japan Earthquake in fiscal 2015 showed outstanding progress overall, however, regional differences are becoming evident. It should be noted that reconstruction projects continued to be withheld within the affected area of the nuclear power plant disaster in Fukushima Prefecture. As for the expense to publish excavation reports of the excavation research, time constraints were lifted significantly due to the flexible response of the government on reconstruction grants. However, the staff shortage is still serious compared to the enormous number of projects, and personnel engaging in excavations are bearing a heavy burden. It is needless to say that further support is desirable. The Japanese Archaeological Association is working hard to collect information and take measures mainly by the Special Committee for the Great East Japan Earthquake.

This article overviewed activities of the Committee for the Protection of Buried Cultural Properties in fiscal 2015. It consisted of a national meeting (May 22, Teikyo University), director meetings (in principle held monthly), an information exchange (Oct. 18, Nara University), a conference with the Agency for Cultural Affairs (March 10, Agency for Cultural Affairs), and so on. In addition, the Committee has submitted site preservation requests for Irinosawa site in Kurihara City, Miyagi Prefecture; the remains of Nagagusukuudoun (residence for the crown prince) at Shuri High School in Naha City, Okinawa Prefecture; Jono site in Kitakyushu City, Fukuoka Prefecture; and for Warei Stone Buddha in Mihara City, Hiroshima Prefecture. It should also be noted that a statement of the Association chairman was issued at the May general meeting regarding Takaosan mounded tomb in Numazu City, Shizuoka Prefecture. A liaison group was newly formed in the Kyushu/Okinawa district where big problems rose consecutively.

Other than sites mentioned above, preservation was discussed in fiscal 2015 for Kassenhara site in Yamamoto Town, Miyagi Prefecture; Nishihiranai I site in Hirono Town, Iwate Prefecture, Enkakuji Keidai Nishigawa Kekkai Iko (west side boundary marker of Enkakuji Temple) in Kamakura City, Kanagawa Prefecture; Kinyahonmachi

¹ c/o The Committee for the Protection of Buried Cultural Properties, The Japanese Archaeological Association, 4th Floor, 5-15-5 Hirai, Edogawa Ward, Tokyo 132-0035, Japan (jjarch@archaeology.jp)

TRENDS IN ARCHAEOLOGY IN JAPAN

site in Hirakata City, Osaka Prefecture, remains of Urado Castle in Kochi City, Kochi Prefecture; Sugu-Takauta site in Kasuga City, Fukuoka Prefecture; and so on. Unfortunately, there were many sites that have not been preserved and some cases with prolonged problems. Factors regarding preservation problems are becoming more various.

Since it has been ten years since the Committee started conducting its “questionnaire regarding protection of buried cultural properties,” a summary was reported at a session in the May general meeting. The Committee plans to publish the report with added analysis. During the past ten years, using private research institutions in excavation research became normal, and baby boomers retired in large numbers, creating a new generation of specialized staff. This fiscal year could be evaluated as a year of drastic change in preservation of cultural properties. Diversification is true not only for site preservation problems or utilization of preserved sites, but also for problems regarding research systems and research technologies, with new issues arising. In order for the Association to take measures against such problems, it is strongly desired for the Committee to reorganize our system according to the current changes.