

Kofun Period

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In recent years, society and the research environment surrounding archaeology is making big changes, not limited to the Kofun period study. The international research environment regarding the placement of East Asian history is changing rapidly due to China's political and economic rise, and diversification is required for Japanese "international information sharing," which was directed toward Western countries in the past. It is necessary to reconsider how and to whom to send information on "universal values" of cultural properties. Also, administration of buried cultural properties and college education are changing with the aging society due to a decreasing birthrates. In the period of these changes, we are tested in the pursuit of the value of cultural properties from every angle based on detailed study of features and artifacts, and an attitude to appeal to the world.

In the main article, major directions of the fiscal 2016 Kofun period study were organized. For excavation reports, publication of "overview reports" is increasing that include reevaluation of research results in the past and preservation and utilization of archaeological sites. At symposiums and study meetings, compilation works were accumulated as they are a strong point of the Kofun period study. For international information sharing WAC-8 should be mentioned. Development of digital technology and its application to archaeology are outstanding, such as three-dimensional survey, ground-penetrating radar (GPR), three-dimensional measurement and so on. Also, digital archiving of excavation reports and theses is becoming an important topic. The Kumamoto Earthquake in 2016 gave serious damage to decorated mounded tombs similar to the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011. As the Japanese Archipelago always faces various disasters, it is important to utilize its memories and teachings for the next disaster. Attention should be given to the promotion project for designation of Mozu/Furuichi mounded tombs as a World Heritage site. On the other hand, there is a need to sincerely listen to proposals of researchers asking for academic results of post-war archaeology and values of cultural properties, such as the naming problem of "imperial mausoleums."

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Taking the above into account, movements of the Kofun period study were discussed under five topics.

1) International Exchanges and Social Theory

Focusing on Japanese-Korean archaeology, it was confirmed that study is progressing from discussing easy subjects such as “continental artifacts” and “Japanese artifacts,” to discussion of bidirectional comparison and historical background. It was also pointed out that important issues are reexamination of the “centrality of Kinai,” and how to deepen the relationship between archaeology and document history.

2) Region and Settlement Study

Major themes were the relation of “central” Kinai and “regions” or the difficulty of locating archaeological phenomenon within history. Also, a possibility was pointed out that a viewpoint to compare and discuss movements of settlements and mounded tombs may become a new viewpoint to reconstruct images of the Kofun period, such as discussion on lineages of tombs for chiefs.

3) Tumulus and Burial/Surface

Facilities Attention was given to nondestructive research methods for tumulus and stone chambers, such as digital three-dimensional surveying, GPR, and SfM/MVS as three-dimensional measurements.

4) Pottery and Burial Rites

The importance of experimental methods and ethnological examination were confirmed for the study of Haji-ware pottery, and chronological reexamination at production sites is progressing for Sue-ware pottery. As for burial rites, it is important that verification is progressing for analysis of examples based on detailed excavation.

5) Funerary Equipment

This is a field the Kofun period study is most good at, and numbers of detailed and minute analyses were accumulated.

Thus, it was understood that there were fewer macroscopic descriptions of the Kofun period, an indication of theoretical frameworks, and international information sharing compared to accumulation of detailed study on features and artifacts. As the society surrounding archaeology is changing drastically, now it is necessary to strengthen the ability to share our knowledge internationally by means of empirical study based on detailed analysis for which the Kofun period study is good at, while sublimating study results theoretically and from diversified standpoints.