

Ancient

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Fiscal 2016 saw a national increase of excavation of government offices (kanga). Organization of historical sites seems to be the background.

Achievements were made for each castle town, and especially significant results were achieved at Fujiwara palace where features of doban (hanging banner ornament) were excavated from northern end of Hall of State, just south of the south gate of the Imperial Audience Hall. It became clear by comparing with historical documents that one doban was placed on the center axis and two sets of three doban were arranged in a triangle shape symmetrically to the east and west.

There were many excavation examples of local government offices, for both kokufu (provincial centers) and gunga (county seats). It should be noted that Bingo Kokufu was designated as a national historic site. Excavation of Bingo Kokufu yielded important results including discovery of an intersection where a road leading to Bingo Kokufu branching off from the ancient Sanyo-do. Also, it was noticeable that features belonging to buildings before provincial centers were constructed were excavated in various places. There were many excavated examples of gunga from Gunma Prefecture, and a building consisting of the county seat was excavated at Sai Gunga, and it was revealed at Tagogun-shoso-ato that warehouses (shoso) were divided by ditches and were organized under a conceived plan within a section of two cho (about 218 meters). Since results of excavation research in recent years have been achieved, books and symposia are often featuring gunga the past few years.

As for temples, excavation research continues for Todaiji temple. It was revealed that even though remains of a Nara period pagoda were destroyed by the Kamakura period pagoda construction, the original size of the time was able to be assumed even though paving stones around the foundation platform were taken away. It was newly discovered that a pagoda at Higashiyuge site had a foundation platform with a side about 20 meters long, an ancient temple with a scale equivalent to the seven greatest temples of Nanto. Excavated eave-end tiles used the same mold as Kofukuji and Todaiji styles, so it is assumed to be Yugedera, constructed by Emperor Shotoku/Dokyo.

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As for artifacts, only tiles and pottery were mentioned. On ancient tiles, discussions were made on the national diffusion of the cylindrical mold tile manufacturing technique that derives from Hiun-mon eave-end tiles at Kodai Kawara Kenkyukai. As for pottery, reevaluation of reference pottery was proposed, while the chronology of the capital city (Asuka chronology or Heisei chronology) is used more or less as an index to indicate chronology.

In the end, a result of underwater archaeology was mentioned. Heian period tiles were discovered from the sea bed around Ainoshima Island located in Shingu Town, Fukuoka Prefecture. In ancient time, Fukuoka Prefecture had kilns to provide tiles to Heiankyo, and it is assumed that these tiles sank underwater in the process of transporting tiles to Heiankyo. This kind of discovery is expected to occur again in the future, but there are many problems regarding research systems of underwater sites and their preservation.