

【Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research(S)】
Humanities and Social Sciences (Humanities)



Title of Project : The Research and Study of the Shipwrecks at the Mongol invasions Using the Underwater Archaeological Method

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Research Area : Humanities, History, Archaeology

Keyword : Mongol Invasions, Seabed site of Takashima, Underwater Archaeology

【Purpose and Background of the Research】

In 1281, Chinese Emperor Kublai Khan of the Yuan Dynasty reorganized the Forces and attempted to invade Japan. This is Known as the Battle of Koan in Japan. The invasion failed primarily due to the courageous defensive mounted and a genuinely coincidental rainstorm.

This research will identify these shipwrecks on seabed based on the result of the sonar prospecting at Imari Bay as well as the geological maps and cross-sections of the area, and investigate them through an underwater archaeological study.

The study also aims to propagate around the world information about the remains on the seabed of Takashima, which is a key to understanding the Mongol invasions of Japan, as well as the research itself and the method employed, in order to garner global recognitions for the Study of the Mongol invasions of Japan.

【Research Methods】

The research team has in the past conducted studies on the wreckage remains related to the Mongol invasions of Japan at Imari Bay. In the process, the team conducted a seabed excavation in 2010 and confirmed wooden and brick material originating from the vessels involved in the Battle, and this research is intended to investigate these items thoroughly.

Salvaged remains will be also be scientifically analyzed (e.g. tree species identification, paste analysis of the bricks, radiocarbon dating) to understand them comprehensively. Also, based on the information acquired, the team will attempt restore a vessel.

Through this effect, the team will attempt to integrate underwater archaeology investigation system.

An international symposium will be organized with the aim to convey and share widely information relating to the Mongol invasion of Japan as well as the remains on the seabed of Takashima. As a part of the symposium, a special exhibition will be held with the cooperation of museum in Nagasaki Prefecture

and Saga Prefecture or facilities such as Kyusyu National Museum, to showcase the relics found during the investigation and raise awareness about the topic.

Results and findings of the research will be compiled into and published as a report, and a book for the general readership will be authored and published to raise awareness about the Mongol invasion of Japan and the remains on the seabed of Takashima.

【Expected Research Achievements and Scientific Significance】

In the past, shipwrecks and other relics related to the Mongol invasion of Japan have been found sporadically from the Takashima seabed remains and other remains related to the invasion. However, salvaging of ship material in significant volume like this research intends to perform has never been done before. We expect this research to fill the missing pieces and make great contributions to the restoration of a vessel based on the findings and other resources.

This research will provide an opportunity for not just Japan but the rest of the world to become aware of the study of the Mongol invasion of Japan, a historic event – an event of historic significance – and the relics related to it.

Furthermore, the integration of physical sonar prospecting and underwater archaeological research methods being explored in the research will establish a new underwater archaeological research method in Japan that should also have an impact in the rest of the world.

【Publications Relevant to the Project】

Ikeda, Yoshifumi, ed. Grasping and Analyzing Mongolian-Expedition-Related Archaeological Sites and Remains on the Seabed of Takashima (Kitamatsuura-county, Nagasaki Prefecture, Japan, No1~3, 2009~2011

【Term of Project】 FY2011-2015

【Budget Allocation】 80,800 Thousand Yen