

Introduction

The historic Asuka Palace Site consists of the remains of palaces dating back to the Asuka period. Archaeological studies to date have revealed that the remains of the palaces constructed during three phases (Phases I - III) of the Asuka period overlap with each other. The palace in Phase I is believed to be Asuka Okamoto-no-miya Palace of Emperor Jomei; Phase II is Asuka Itabuki-no-miya Palace of Empress Kogyoku; Phase III-A is Nochi-no-Asuka Okamoto-no-miya Palace of Empress Saimei and Emperor Tenji; and Phase III-B is Asuka Kiyomihara-no-miya Palace of Emperor Tenmu and Empress Jito.

This time, an archaeological survey was conducted as part of the maintenance and utilization project of Asuka Palace Site and Asuka Pond Garden Site by Nara Prefecture, and it is the 191st excavation of the Asuka Palace Site. The area is located on the south side of the 2009 survey area (165th excavation), and is adjacent to the northwest of the naikaku (inner enclosure) of the Phase III remains. The main objective of this excavation is to get detailed information of the large building (SB0934) which was discovered during the 165th excavation.

Achievements of the Survey

(1)Primary remains detected

①**Large building SB0934** In the 165th excavation, post holes of a building were only found in the cross sections on both sides of the watercourse, but it was presumed that the building could measure approximately 35.4 m from east to west and 15.0 m from north to south and that it could have eaves on all sides.

This time, some post holes were newly unearthed in the southeast part of the building. That confirmed the structure and the size of the building expected before.

Viewed in its planar form, the shape of post holes are rounded squares of approximately 1.7 m per side and 1.7 m deep, with all posts having been removed from the pits. A noticeable feature of the pillar removal holes is that they contain large stones of 50 to 60 cm in diameter, which are thought to have been placed when the holes were filled in. The span between pillars (*hashirama*) is about 3.0 m (10 *shaku*) for both *moya* and *hisashi*. As for the *wakima* (areas located outermost of *moya*), the span between pillars is about 4.2 m (14 *shaku*) in the ridge direction.

②**Stone ditch (SD02401)** The stone ditch detected at the east side of the excavation area runs north-south and has an inner width of approximately 90 cm. Small stones with a diameter of 10 to 25 cm were laid at the bottom of the ditch,

while larger stones, approx. 40 cm across, were used for the sides. It was found that the stone ditch SD02401 was broken up by the post holes and pillar removal holes of the building SB0934. During the excavation, 3 parts of the ditch were detected with a combined length of about 2 m.

On the southern extension of SD02401 lie other stone ditches: SD6717 in Area 2 of the 13th excavation conducted in 1967, and SD6515 in the 7th excavation area conducted in 1965 (which was detected again in the 190th survey in 2023). Judging from their characteristics, they are thought to be a series of stone ditches running north to south with a total length of approximately 60 m.

The latest survey also confirmed that the stone ditch SD02401 overlaps with SB0934’s post holes and pillar removal holes and was broken up by these holes. From these facts, it is thought that SD02401 existed before SB0934 was built.

(2)Dating of the remains

Considering the orientation of the remains, the archaeological relationship with other remains detected in previous excavations, and their overlapping relations, it is thought that ①the large building SB0934 belongs to Phase III of the Asuka Palace Site, and ②the stone ditch SD02401 to Phase II. Since the structure and scale of SB0934 is similar to those of *Ebinoko-odono*, a large-scale building in Phase III-B, SB0934 is highly likely to be a building of Phase III-B. Also, it has been revealed in previous research at the Asuka Palace Site that the use of small stones for the bottom compared to those for the sides, as shown in SD02401, is a characteristic particular to Phase II.

Conclusion

The assessment of SB0934 The southeast part of the building SB0934 has been detected for the first time, which verified that the building was one of the largest buildings. The largest building discovered in the Asuka Palace Site so far is the *Ebinoko-odono* SB7701, a building with eaves on four sides, measuring 29.2 m from east to west and 15.3 m from north to south, which lies within the *Ebinoko-kaku* in the southeast, outside of the *naikaku*. SB0934 is comparable to the *Ebinoko-odono* in scale.

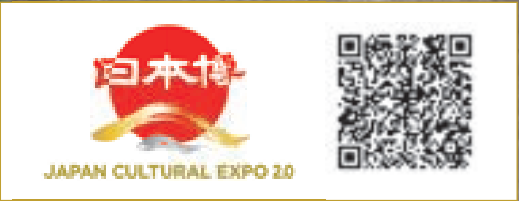
The plan of SB0934 coincides with the plans of main halls of the Imperial Residence(*dairi*) in the Heijo Palace Site which was used by emperors and empresses in the 8th century. This fact suggests that SB0934 was one of the important facilities of the palace compounds and that some elements of the 8th century Imperial Residence date back to the 7th century.

Asuka Palace Site (National Historic Site)

The 191st excavation of the Asuka Palace Site

Open Days Leaflet

November 30th and December 1st, 2024



Excavation area (From the West)

