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## **Expositions and Local Communities in the Early Meiji Era: Aspects of “Civilization” at the Exposition in Chikuma Prefecture**

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The latter half of the 19th century is also called the “era of expositions”. With the World Expo that started in Europe, the exposition boom spread around the world. In response to that wave, expositions were held in various places in Japan after the Meiji Restoration.

In this paper, various aspects of the local expositions in the early Meiji era were examined from the case of Chikuma Prefecture (currently central and southern Nagano Prefecture and northeastern Gifu Prefecture). The characteristic of the case of Chikuma Prefecture was that expositions were held not only in Matsumoto, which was the center of the prefecture, but also in various parts of the prefecture. Despite the lifetime of Chikuma Prefecture, which was less than five years, the number of related events of the expositions was only confirmed, reaching a total of 27 times.

Regarding the background of this situation, the author examined the trends of the expo companies that were responsible for it and the documents of the purpose of the meeting as clues. First, being involved in the operation of the exposition was believed to have given its bearers an outstanding position. The bearers had gained the initiative of “civilization” by bringing knowledge and information from outside the region through negotiations with Expo Secretariat at the Ministry of Education and selecting items and things suitable for exhibition. Secondly, in the memorandums of various parts of Chikuma Prefecture, the history of the event was described in relation to local attractions and historic sites. The exposition was an opportunity to arouse their regional pride. In addition, the consciousness of trying to imitate the preceding areas such as Matsumoto was repeatedly expressed. From here, it can be seen that the events of the exposition were held as if to compete in various places so as not to miss the trend of “civilization”.

The expositions in the early Meiji era promoted the reorganization of relations in the local communities as a project symbolizing “civilization”. However, the “civilization” sought at the local expositions did not necessarily overlap with the purpose of industrial promotion intended by the new Meiji government. At the expositions in Chikuma Prefecture, attempts such as “evaluation” and “agricultural council” were seen, but they were not effective. It is thought that the purpose of the exposition will shift from “civilization” to industrial promotion in earnest after the start of the National Industrial Exhibition in the 10’s of Meiji era.

Key words: civilization, exposition, Chikuma prefecture, regional pride, industrial promotion

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