Universities receive ¥1.7 billion in donations from power industry

Kyodo

Eight state-run universities involved in nuclear studies have received donations totaling ¥1.74 billion from utilities and other power industry members in the five years through fiscal 2011, information disclosed upon Kyodo News requests showed Thursday.

As most of the donations were directed to specific researchers, including those participating in the Nuclear Regulation Authority's meeting for setting new standards for atomic power plant safety, some experts voiced concerns that it could affect the country's regulations.

According to the information disclosed by the universities, the University of Tokyo received the most, at ¥560 million, followed by Tohoku University at ¥417 million, Nagoya University at ¥251 million and Kyoto University at ¥212 million. Tokyo Institute of Technology received ¥104 million, Kyushu University ¥83 million, Osaka University ¥79 million and Hokkaido University ¥38 million.

The donated funds were used, among other studies-related purposes, to purchase equipment needed in research and to cover researchers' travel expenses when they attended conferences, according to the universities.

The donors included eight utilities, including Tokyo Electric Power Co. and Japan Atomic Power Co., nuclear reactor makers Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd. and Hitachi-GE Nuclear Energy Ltd., and other power-related companies and organizations.

Tepco has stopped making donations after the nuclear crisis started at its Fukushima No. 1 power plant in March 2011.
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