<Waseda> Obokata’s Doctorate Revoked Decision Made on Re-Submitted Paper

On October 29th, Waseda University made a final decision to revoke the doctoral degree of Haruko Obokata (32), who was lead author of a withdrawn paper on STAP cells and a former RIKEN researcher, according to several people with knowledge of the matter. It was determined that Obokata’s doctoral thesis contained plagiarism and inaccuracies, and although it was re-submitted at the direction of the University, a University review committee determined that revocation would be reasonable. Waseda University will announce the decision in the near future.

[Photo Feature] Published portion of Obokata’s laboratory notebook: "Positive confirmation! Great!"

Obokata received her Ph.D. degree from Waseda University in March, 2011. However, when allegations of inaccuracies in her STAP paper began to emerge last February, many issues were pointed out, such as that 20 pages of her thesis, or more than one-fifth of its full text, were identical to text found on the website of the US National Institute of Health.

In October of the same year, Waseda University said that “she had egregiously neglected her basic duties as a researcher” and decided to revoke her doctorate after a grace period of approximately one year. On the grounds that the University also bore responsibility for its lack of proper examination, an unusual decision was taken to provide Obokata a re-education on research ethics during that period, and to allow her to retain her degree if she were to correct her paper. [Momoko Suda]