

The Committee for the Protection of Buried Cultural Properties¹

Remarkable results for sites to proceed for the direction of preservation was yielded by activities of the Committee for the Protection of Buried Cultural Properties (the Committee) in fiscal 2019, but on the other hand, there were many cases of important archaeological sites being destroyed leaving just recorded data behind.

Also, since cultural properties damaged in natural disasters such as extremely heavy rain have been increasing, we were swamped to deal with such cases in this fiscal year. The damages were not only caused to sites, but also there were many cases of museums, storage for cultural properties, individual owned cultural properties, that is, artifacts and records, being damaged. We are forced to take new measures. As such natural disasters are expected to happen frequently in the future, it is necessary to enhance cooperation with the Committee for Disaster Measures and examine measures for disaster prevention or reduction.

Due to the revision of the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties (the Law) each municipality needs to formulate a plan for preservation and utilization, but there is a serious concern that differences between municipalities will increase in their attitudes and details. Furthermore, as utilization of cultural properties as tourism resources is promoted by the government, it is easily expected that an easygoing way of utilization may take place. In order to serve the original purpose of the Law to activate the local community by getting residents engaged in the preservation/utilization of cultural properties rather than only a part of businesses related to tourism to acquire profit, it is necessary for the Committee to establish a cultural properties management system to be able to give specific proposals and advice.

It is a new task of Japanese archaeology to consider utilization measures to protect cultural properties from destruction and disaster as local assets and create sustainable communities. The social responsibility of the Association seems to be growing.

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