The Situation and Tasks of Zoo-archaeology

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Zoo-archaeology is a field of archaeology which takes as its objective the consideration of past human activity based on excavated faunal remains. In order to realize the situation of zoo-archaeology in Japan, it is, firstly, necessary to overview the history of the study. While zoo-archaeology is a term only recently in use, the research of faunal remains began with E.S. Morse, father of modern archaeology, excavated the Shell Mound of Omori. As Morse was conchologist, that report gave a detailed account of the shellfish content. Later Japanese archaeology, however, has concerned itself with the study of the Japanese. Further, shell mound were excavated with the object of determining the era of remains and ruins. Concerned to the research of faunal remains, the naming alone has been considered sufficient and quantitative analysis has not been undertaken. But it is a principal achievement in zoo-archaeology before the World War II that the Jomon Marine Transgression was confirmed. The classification of faunal remains other than shellfish remains was left to the scholar of paleontology and anthropology and in most cases the meaning of these remains was not sufficiently researched by archaeologists.

After the World War II, also, shell mound investigations to determine the origins of Jomon pottery were undertaken. The faunal remains research, however, did not advance. A new development of faunal remains research began with KANEKO Hiromasa's report of the Ōkura-Minami Shell Mound which included records of quantities. After this, amongst archaeologists, researchers who dealt with faunal remains increased. It will be more necessary to cooperate with zoo-archaeologists in the future.