Significance and Future Prospects of Activities to Preserve Lifestyle and Culture in Disaster-hit Areas: A Case Study of the Ogata Residence in Kesennuma City, Miyagi Prefecture

HAYAMA Shigeru

This article examines project for the rescue of cultural properties in disaster-hit areas from the viewpoint of community development and discusses their problems. To this end, the activity of the National Museum of Japanese History to recover the daily utensils, folk tools, old documents, fixtures of the Ogata residence, a private house in Kogoshio, Kesennuma City, Miyagi Prefecture, is used as a case study.

A viewpoint of community development is considered essential for examining problems now that the traces of buildings and life have been lost in the area affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake. I sort out the problems of community development in folklore, point out the recent emphasis on tourism in discussions of community development, and attribute the viewpoint of community development in folklore to the “community education” of Tsuneichi Miyamoto. He discussed the community education based on residents’ logic. Similarly, it is necessary to make a good use of the results of the project for the rescue of cultural properties to clarify how people have lived and how their current problems can be solved in the context of community development in the disaster-hit area.

On the basis of the above discussions, this article emphasizes the necessity to pay attention to the relationships people have established with the nature and other people and to study the specific details of the relationships when examining the lifestyle of local people. In addition, this paper outlines the history of the Ogata family and uses instances such as tablets, Oshirasama (folk religion), and a medicine chest to discuss the social relationships represented in the cultural assets recovered from their residence.

Moreover, the process of reminding people of their memory hidden behind material goods is explained by using the process of searching the straw anvil of the Ogata family as an example. Referring to the theory of affordances by Gibson, this study indicates that the story narrated over material goods is not isolated as an internal memory of the speaker but closely connected to certain material goods or places and recalled only when the conditions are right.

In other words, such memory is awakened depending on the situation, which might be brought about with the help of goods recovered through cultural asset rescue activities. Moreover, there is a possibility that the attempt to “rescue” the lifestyle and culture behind material goods may be useful in solving problems of community development such as an effective use of them after infrastructure is established.

Key words: Project for the rescue of cultural properties, community development, material culture, experience, memory