

Disaster Recovery in Modern Japan as seen in Archaeological Records

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The disasters of the Edo era can be learned from ancient documents. For example, the document sent from the village damaged by a disaster to a feudal lord asking for the restoration, tells us the damage situation and a state of the disaster restoration.

The Nakagawara street of Kyogashima-mura located in Hayakawa-cho Yamanashi, central Japan, is treated as an example of the disaster restoration about the way in this report. The method of the restoration of this street is to put back a flow path and a street along the riverbank changed or blocked by floods such as typhoons using a technique of the river improvement.

I put back a duct using a technique of the river improvement. Here the actual situation of river improvement, the unified traffic maintenance and street use are reviewed.

In villages of the Edo era, the mutual understanding with a feudal lord and the farmers of the village was basically carried out in the exchanges of the document. As a document is circulated from a feudal lord in "Shuku-tugi" and "Mura-tugi" to villages, the document will go along the way of the village through the hands of the person. The way was the important because they are used not only for document service but also for the life including the transportation of supplies and traffic to the neighboring villages, and the traffic to the cultivated land. The roadside villages carried the maintenance of the way.

"Sebori-mizutome-gofushin" was construction work performed for the traffic maintenance of the Nakagawara street through the Edo era. When Hayakawa became the state of "filled with water" by a rainstorm, the northern part of Nakagawara was dug. A flow path turned into the side of a cultivated area and the rocky mountain of Kyogashima-mura located north of the Nakagawara and cut Nakagawara street apart after water went down. Kyogashima-mura gave request for building and an offer of an expense and the material from the Shogunate, and built it to dissolve a state of the street interruption. This was named "Sebori-mizutome-gofushin" to bring Shinkawa, changed path, to Furukawa, original path, by putting "Horikawa" for Furukawa and "Shimekiri" to Shinkawa. The meaning of "Shimekiri" is putting Oishi in Shinkawa and reinforcing it with Neda and branch and Shiba, and to prevent a flow of the water. The meaning of "Horikawa" is digging down the riverbed of Furukawa to conduct water flowed through Shinkawa into Furukawa.

If flood damage of the Nakagawara street was little, emergency measures are implemented with temporal bridge, small "Horikawa," and "Shimekiri." The expense is paid by the neighboring villages. Furthermore, they maintained communication by avoiding a riverbank, and passing through the surrounding mountain. In this way, it is revealed how people of the Edo era confronted a disaster by reading ancient documents.

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