

国宝「平城宮跡出土木簡」

2017年9月、「平城宮跡出土木簡」が国宝に指定されました。日本の木簡研究の原点である平城宮跡最初の木簡が見つかったのは、1961年1月24日のことでした。以来半世紀余りの間に平城宮跡で見つかった木簡は10万点以上にもおよびます。今回の指定はそのうち3,184点ですが、未指定の多数の木簡だけでなく、まだ平城宮跡の地下に眠っている未発掘の木簡も、将来発掘されて保存処理が済めば、国宝の追加指定の候補です。特別史跡であり、「古都奈良の文化財」の構成遺産として世界遺産にも認定された平城宮跡の学術的価値が、将来の国宝の包蔵地としてさらに高く評価されたともいえるでしょう。

今回、国宝に指定されたのは次の木簡群です。(1) 平城宮大膳職推定地出土木簡39点(SK219・SE311、2003年重要文化財指定。以下同様)、(2) 平城宮跡内裏北外郭官衙出土木簡1,785点(SK820、2007年)、(3) 平城宮跡内膳司推定地出土木簡483点(SK870・SK2101・SK2102・SK2107、2010年)、(4) 平城宮跡造酒司出土木簡568点(SD3035・SE3046・SD3047・SD3050、2015年)、(5) 次の5地点出土の未指定有形文化財計309点。①平城宮跡西南隅の二条大路北側溝SD1250出土木簡7点、②平城宮跡内の下ツ道西側溝SD1900出土木簡9点、③平城宮跡西南官衙の土坑SK1979出土木簡16点、④平城宮跡内裏東辺の暗渠SD2000出土木簡2点、⑤平城宮跡内裏東大溝SD2700出土木簡275点。

(1) から(4)までの重要文化財を統合し、(5)の有形文化財(未指定)を追加して、「平城宮跡出土木簡」として国宝に指定する、というものです。

なお、文化庁により、平城宮第1号木簡出土地(SK219)の解説板が設置されました。また、奈文研では国宝指定を記念して、桐箆笥に収納してある国宝木簡をモチーフに、「木簡てぬぐい」を製作しました。



平城宮跡出土木簡の国宝指定にちなんで作成した木簡てぬぐい
Mokkan hand towel made to commemorate the designation of mokkan recovered from the Heijō Palace as a National Treasure

National Treasure “Mokkan Excavated at the Heijō Palace

In September 2017, the “Mokkan Excavated at the Heijō Palace” were designated a National Treasure. Discovery of the first *mokkan* from the Nara palace site, the starting point for research on wooden documents in Japan, was made on 24 January 1961. Since then the number of *mokkan* recovered from the palace site has reached more than 100,000 during the span of over a half century. While the current designation is for 3,184 items, not only the many undesignated *mokkan*, but also those remaining undiscovered as they lie beneath the soil at the palace site, could become candidates for supplemental designation should they be excavated and treated for preservation at some point in the future. The scholarly value of the Nara palace site, already a Special Historic Site and recognized as World Heritage as a component of “the heritage of the ancient city of Nara,” may be said to have received further high appraisal as a repository of more future National Treasure.

The *mokkan* in the current designation as National Treasure are the following collections from within the Nara palace site: (1) *mokkan* from the inferred site of the Imperial Food Service Bureau, 39 items (provenance: features SK219, SE311; year of initial designation [as Important Cultural Property]: 2003); (2) *mokkan* from the Imperial Domicile northern outer office sector, 1,785 items (provenance: feature SK820; year of initial designation: 2007); (3) *mokkan* from the inferred site of the Imperial Table Office, 483 items (provenance: features SK870, SK2101–2102, SK2107; year of initial designation: 2010); (4) *mokkan* from the Sake-making Office, 568 items (provenance: features SD3035, SE3046, SD3047, SD3050; year of initial designation: 2015); (5) previously undesignated tangible cultural properties from five locations: (5a) *mokkan* recovered from feature SD1250, a gutter on the northern side of Second Row Street at the southwest corner of the palace site, 7 items; (5b) *mokkan* recovered from SD1900, a gutter on the western side of the Shimotsumichi road, 9 items; (5c) *mokkan* from SK1979, a pit in the southwestern government office sector of the palace, 16 items; (5d) *mokkan* recovered from SD2000, a culvert on the eastern side of the Imperial Domicile, 2 items; (5e) *mokkan* recovered from SD2700, the eastern Great Ditch of the Imperial Domicile, 275 items.

The current designation thus combines four previously designated Important Cultural Property collections, and adds a fifth group of tangible cultural properties (previously undesignated), which are collectively named a National Treasure.

In addition, an explanation signboard has been set up by the Agency for Cultural Affairs at the site of the feature (SK219) where the first *mokkan* was discovered at the Nara palace site. Further, to commemorate the current designation, the Institute has made a “*mokkan* hand towel” with a motif of these National Treasure *mokkan* stored in a drawer from a special chest made of paulownia wood.



文化庁設置の平城宮第1号木簡(国宝)出土地の解説板
Explanation signboard set up by the Agency for Cultural Affairs at the recovery site of the first *mokkan* discovered at the Nara palace site, a National Treasure