

Nuclear disaster leaves historic statues abandoned

Experts say a historical site in northeastern Japan that was abandoned after the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident is being damaged.

Last month, the experts inspected a group of large Buddhist statues carved in rocky cliffs in Minamisoma City in Fukushima Prefecture. The city was declared off-limits for more than a year after the 2011 disaster because of high radiation levels.

The statues include a nine-meter-tall multi-armed deity believed to be from the Heian Period, between the 8th and 12th centuries.



The earthquake that damaged the nuclear plant also destroyed the wooden building housing the statue, exposing it to the elements.

The experts found moss growing on the surfaces of the stone statues.

They warn that the statues will deteriorate further if left unattended.

A city official says it will take stop-gap measures by March to protect them from the rain.

The official also says the city will quickly come up with ways to preserve other cultural properties where entry was restricted.

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