

? (C) When the U.S. government passed the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) in 1990, some people predicted this would lead to an end of the history of museums as we know them. The law requires any institution receiving federal funds to return human remains and objects found in Indian burial sites to their original owners, thus allowing Native American people to get back not only their own property but also a sense of their own worth. However, while acknowledging the justice of the law, museums feared that Native American tribes would soon arrive in pickup trucks at their doorstep and empty their collections out in no time.

? In fact, “repatriation,” or the return of museum collections to their former owners or places of origin, is a far more complicated and lengthy process, a daunting challenge both to the museum and the people who claim ownership of artifacts the museum holds. Institutions first need to provide summaries of their holdings and lists of objects eligible for return. The latter should be arranged in categories, such as human remains or sacred objects, in accordance with the NAGPRA guidelines. Once the documentation is ready, the Native American agents would take a tremendous amount of time and trouble to review the collections, so they can identify items they might rightly claim and finally make official requests for return.

After the process of repatriation is completed, the tribe can face yet another problem, often concerning conservation of the precious items. It often takes special treatment and professional storage techniques to prevent organic decay and insect and fungus damage. Another matter of dispute would be about choosing an appropriate location for the repatriated objects. Community members often prefer to be able to appreciate their treasures displayed in public rather than hidden or stored in places only accessible to the chiefs and authorities. For these reasons, many of the Native American artifacts in the federal-funded museums remain under their care and protection.

? It should not be overlooked, however, that some of the returned objects are put to use again for ongoing traditional rituals and ceremonies, and that human bones are respectfully reburied in the sites where they originally belonged. Also, some tribes have put together their own exhibits and displayed them out of tribal pride or for their own education. In the latter case, whether the collection is shown in a new museum established by a Native American community or in an old institution which formerly owned the artifacts, collaboration between the museum and its audience, as well as between Native American and non-Native American curators, is a major factor for success.

? Thus, by practicing repatriation and facing other ethical issues that enhance people’s awareness of the roles of collectors, researchers, and museum curators, contemporary museums are now seeking new ways of using their accumulated knowledge and objects.

20. According to the text, a purpose of the NAGPRA is to
- (a) assist Native Americans to regain their rights and self-respect.
  - (b) close museums built on or near Native American burial sites.
  - (c) cultivate the appreciation of art in Native American communities.
  - (d) provide aid to museums holding Native American artifacts.
21. To carry out repatriation is challenging for the museum, because
- (a) ancient art works and human remains are too fragile to transfer.
  - (b) highly technical terms abound in the government's guidelines.
  - (c) it is difficult to locate Native American artifacts in the collection.
  - (d) the preparation process requires time, devotion, and professional skills.
22. One reason why Native Americans do not necessarily believe that they should regain every item identified as theirs is that
- (a) they are not always familiar with proper methods of handling art objects.
  - (b) they do not agree with non-Native American curators on the value of art.
  - (c) they would rather limit the items to those of exceptional artistic value.
  - (d) tribal chiefs are not prepared to negotiate about the location for display.
23. According to the text, what do Native Americans do with returned items?
- (a) They invite people to their rituals to show off the uniqueness of their tradition.
  - (b) They make profits by organizing exhibitions or running their own museums.
  - (c) They treat the human remains as spiritual objects, not for research or display.
  - (d) They use some objects creatively in ways that suit their modern life styles.
24. Which of the following is most likely to be offered by contemporary museums?
- (a) A change of displays to show the variety of Native American collections.
  - (b) A sale of museum items to visitors interested in Native American cultures.
  - (c) A workshop for people to study their ancestors' art to maintain tradition.
  - (d) An educational program for tribal people on non-Native American art.

