

# Partnership between the Museum and Society

The Museum has been working to build networks to ensure the more systematic and viable use of cultural resources through academic collaboration with museums and universities, both in Japan and overseas. The Museum is also promoting various projects and activities that benefit local communities and international society, in cooperation with many organizations.

## Conduct of *Kamuynomi* and craftsmanship training at the Aynu (Ainu) Association of Hokkaido

The Museum is carrying out two projects under an agreement with the Hokkaido Aynu Association. One is an implementation of the *Kamuynomi* rite. *Kamuynomi* is an Aynu word meaning 'prayer to the gods.'

By implementing the *Kamuynomi* rite, the Museum aims to ensure proper storage of its Aynu collection and handing down of this traditional rite to future generations. In the past, this rite was privately performed by the late Mr. Kayano Shigeru (former director of the Nibutani Ainu Museum), but starting from AY2007, chapters of the Utari Association (currently the Aynu Association) take turns to host the rite. The first performance before an audience at the Museum was held by the Chitose Chapter of the Utari Association. They performed their traditional Aynu dance, as well as the *Kamuynomi* rite. The other project is to accept traditional artisans sent by the Aynu Association, which will help the Museum to further improve its academic research and collection on Aynu culture, and also promote the cultural development of Aynu people.



The *Kamuynomi* rite

## Min-pack

In order to contribute to a better understanding of our research, the Museum has developed a learning-kit for children, called Min-pack. It is rented to schools and other educational institutions. Min-pack is a learning kit carried in a suitcase that contains a variety of materials including clothes, musical instruments, everyday commodities, and children's learning aids of the world's countries and regions. With the addition of the new exhibit, "Meeting Aynu Culture," 19 packs and 10 types are now available.



Min-pack "Meeting Aynu Culture"

### As of April 2008, the following ten types are available:

- Living in the Extreme North: Anoraks and Duffle Coats from the Inuit in Canada
- Treasure Box of the Andes: The Festivals and Life of the Peruvian Southern Highlands
- Understanding Javanese Culture through Wearing their Costumes: *Salun* and *Kain*
- Islam and Life of the Arab World · School Life in Bhutan · Seoul Style: A Day in the Life of Children in Seoul
- Indian Costumes: Saris and Kurtas · Bricolage Art · The Arabian Nights · Meeting Aynu Culture

Number of loans in 2008: 180 in total

## Museum-School Partnership Workshop for Teachers

Based on case studies of educational activities that have used the Museum's exhibits or other resources, this workshop for teachers provides ideas and insights into how to build collaborations between museums and schools.

In 2008, the workshop was offered on August 5, and 122 teachers (mainly from elementary schools) attended. The workshop has already achieved practical outcomes. For example, teachers who attended the workshop are willing to use the Museum in their social science classes. The workshop this year is also scheduled in the summer vacation time, coordinated with other educational institute schedules.

## Volunteer activities

Minpaku Museum Partners (MMP) is a group of volunteers established in September 2004, to assist the Museum in the planning and implementation of its activities. MMP members work closely with staff of the Museum to show visually-impaired persons around the exhibitions, plan and implement special holiday events, and undertake a wide range of activities.

Another group of volunteers, the Earth's Story-telling Village, was formed in October 2005, inspired by the "West African Story-telling Village," a special exhibition held at the Museum in 2003. This group plays African musical instruments and tells folktales not only at the Museum, but also at the International Institute for Children's Literature, children's centers, elementary schools, and children's welfare facilities in the vicinity.