

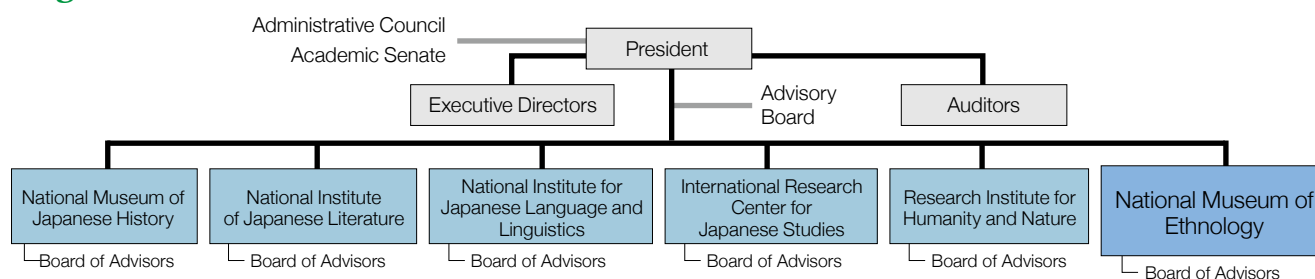
National Institutes for the Humanities

As centers for academic research, the Inter-University Research Institutes are designed to enable the sharing of large-scale facilities and huge collections of materials and information among universities and other research institutions all over Japan in order to facilitate effective joint research.

The National Institutes for the Humanities was established in April 2004 as an Inter-University Research Institute Corporation made up of the following five Inter-University Research Institutes concerning human culture: the National Museum of Japanese History, the National Institute of Japanese Literature, the International Research Center for Japanese Studies, the Research Institute for Humanity and Nature, and the National Museum of Ethnology. A sixth institute, The National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics, will join us in October 2009.

Today, as the 21st century unfolds, the world is facing many difficult issues in which nature and the historical actions of mankind have become inextricably linked on a global scale. In order to deal with these issues, six research institutes have transcended their traditional fields of study and formed a national center of research—the National Institutes for the Humanities (NIHU)—to create a new paradigm. They aim to conduct comprehensive research programs related to human culture while also taking into consideration the natural environment. NIHU strives to develop basic cultural research programs which cover the extensive scope of both time and space, such as empirical research based on the vast amounts of cultural records available and theoretical studies providing comprehensive coverage of the humanities and social sciences. The organization is also engaged in research programs to find solutions to existing problems. The objective of NIHU is to become a global center for comprehensive scholarly research on culture and the humanities. While specialized in their respective academic fields, these institutes and their researchers also actively take part in interdisciplinary research projects beyond their individual specialties, thereby adding to the creative nature of the institutes. The members of the National Institutes for the Humanities boast huge collections of cultural materials. Capitalizing on collections of materials and information—both existing and to be acquired—the institutes will continue to make concerted efforts to encourage internal and external researchers in their research and investigation activities, and to offer the results of such activities widely to the public, both at home and abroad, through exhibitions and publications as well as by various digital media, with a view to contributing to academic and cultural development.

Organization Chart



Governing Body as of April 1, 2010

Executive directors

President KINDA Akihiro **Executive Director** NAKAWO Masayoshi KURIKI Shigeo **Auditor** KOMAGATA Kiyonobu
 ONO Masatoshi ISHIGAMI Eiichi HIROWATARI Seigo

Promotion of Research in the Humanities

The National Institutes for the Humanities is Japan's largest research institution specializing in human sciences since the start of the modern age. Today, a significant paradigm shift is required in research on human cultures, in the face of the ever-complicated cultural and historical context of the 21st century.

The National Institutes for the Humanities is promoting the following projects to create new interdisciplinary genres in human culture studies and to encourage advanced international research activities.

In order to prepare the mid-term goals/plans for the second period of the corporation, the National Institute for the Humanities continued accepting applications of proposals for pilot study projects in 2009. Regarding projects related to the Museum, the following projects were accepted: "The Methodology of Public Humanities," "A Comprehensive Study of 'The SHIBUSAWA Collection,'" and "A Pilot Study: Cross-cultural Comparison of National Identity."

Inter-institutional and External Joint Research

The National Institutes for the Humanities is promoting inter-institutional research with a view of "creating new perspectives for Humanities studies in the 21st century" and to ensure that research programs implemented by two or more member institutes complement one other and are developed accordingly. The research activities are designed to allow for the participation of scholars both inside and outside the National Institutes for the Humanities. In the first corporate term, we implemented three research topics based on the theme of "Integrated Research on Exchange between Eurasia and Japan," namely "Relationship between Eurasia and Japan: Interaction and Representation," "An Integrative Study on Human-Water Interactions in Humid Asia" and "Research on the interaction between Japanese and Eurasian cultures." We also implemented eight research topics based on the theme of "Advanced Application of Cultural Resources."

In the second term, we promoted new research topics based on the two core themes of "Comprehensive Research on Human Cultural Resources" and "Historical Synthesis of the Multitiered Relationship of Nature and Culture in Asia."

Exhibitions of the Results of Inter-Institutional Research Projects

One of the objectives of the resource-sharing scheme pursued by the National Institutes for the Humanities is to put together, study, and make available to the public the abundant research materials and information held by member institutes. Results of joint research projects conducted by each institute will be put on display, in some cases in inter-institutional exhibitions.

Minpaku will host the themed exhibits “Water and Vessels: From Cupped Hands to the Planet” and “Beyond Asia’s Borders” as collaborative exhibits. The latter exhibit will be hosted at the National Museum of Japanese History before coming to Minpaku (see page 35).



Developing an Improved Research Resources Database

The member organizations of the National Institutes for the Humanities are committed to developing and sharing a research database that covers a wide range of cultural fields. As a result of the efforts to build on previous advances in database development and to ensure more effective use of the research data, a new searchable database has been constructed and opened. This will provide members with access to a centralized, comprehensive database of all research data held by each of them across borders, and will contribute to a research environment more suitable for a broad, multidisciplinary approach than for a limited, exclusive one.

Intellectual Property

The National Institutes for the Humanities is committed to the production, acquisition, and use of intellectual property in the Institutes, while the Corporation’s intellectual property management office maintains good relationships with the other institutes of the Inter-University Research Institute Corporation.

Promotion of Area Studies

This is a new type of research project that promotes research by jointly establishing research hubs at affiliated universities and institutions and creating an inter-hub network. Following selection of the “The Committee for the promotion of Area Studies,” NIHU began research on “Islamic Area” in 2006, “Contemporary China Area” in 2007, and “Contemporary India Area” in 2010.

Being one of the new “Contemporary India Area” study centers and maintaining active collaboration with overseas institutes, the Museum is planning to investigate religions and cultures in the Contemporary India Area, where remarkable changes are happening due to the effects of globalization. The studies are implemented under two themes, “Religions: Religious Movements and Transformations in Contemporary India” and “The Circulation of Contemporary Indian Cultures.”

Open Lectures and Symposia

Comprised of six research institutes with different specialties, the National Institutes for the Humanities has been able to promote research activities in a wide variety of fields. The research results are presented widely to the public through regularly organized open lectures and symposia.

Open Lectures and Symposia in Commemorating the Establishment of the National Institutes for the Humanities

The 1st Open Lecture and Symposium

Human Cultures: Why Now?

Date: September 25, 2004

Venue: Hitotsubashi Memorial Hall, Tokyo

The 2nd Open Lecture and Symposium

Walking Humanities: A New Relationship between the Humanities and Society

Date: June 25, 2005

Venue: Grand Cube Osaka (Osaka International Convention Center)

The 3rd Open Lecture and Symposium

Plant Domestication and Human Culture

Date: October 6, 2005

Venue: Yurakucho Asahi Hall, Tokyo

The 4th Open Lecture and Symposium

Why do We ‘Love’ the Flower?

Date: May 27, 2006

Venue: Kyoto International Conference Hall

The 5th Open Lecture and Symposium

What Kind of Letters Did People Write? Communication and Modern Japan

Date: September 30, 2006

Venue: Hitotsubashi Memorial Hall, Tokyo

The 6th Open Lecture and Symposium

The Worldwide Spread of Japanese Pop Culture: The Influence of Manga and Anime

Date: June 2, 2007

Venue: Yurakucho Asahi Hall, Tokyo

The 7th Open Lecture and Symposium

International Cooperation: Research and Application

Date: November 30, 2007

Venue: Matsushita IMP Hall, Osaka

The 8th Open Lecture and Symposium

Searching for New Images of Early Modern History

Date: June 8, 2008

Venue: Tosho Hall, Tokyo

The 9th Open Lecture and Symposium

The Beauty of the Tale of Genji

Date: October 13, 2008

Venue: Yurakucho Asahi Hall, Tokyo

The 10th Open Lecture and Symposium

The World of the Night Procession of One Hundred Demons

Date: July 11, 2009

Venue: Yurakucho Asahi Hall, Tokyo

The 11th Open Lecture and Symposium

Japanese Language Seen from *Uchi* (Inside) and *Soto* (Outside)

Date: December 5, 2009

Venue: Yurakucho Asahi Hall, Tokyo

The 12th Open Lecture and Symposium

The Role and Fascination of knowledge: Considering the Direction of Humanities Research

Date: July 9, 2010

Venue: Yurakucho Asahi Hall, Tokyo

The 13th Open Lecture and Symposium

Food as an Interface between Biodiversity and Cultural Diversity

Date: July 16, 2010

Venue: Yurakucho Asahi Hall, Tokyo

The 14th Open Lecture and Symposium

Diversity of Language Patterns

Date: February 19, 2011

Venue: Yurakucho Asahi Hall, Tokyo