Center for Research Development

The Center for Research Development was established in 2004 to help develop strategies for the Museum’s core research projects and other research activities. Overseas visiting faculty are hosted by the Center.

Plans for 2010

Development of Research Strategies
Survey of Trends in Anthropological and Ethnological Research and Publication of the Results
As a core research institute of cultural anthropology and ethnology in Japan, the Center is responsible for collecting information on the latest research trends in Japan and abroad, and making the information available to the Museum staff and the general public. Currently, the Center is carrying out a research project entitled “A Survey of the Trends in Cultural Anthropology and Ethnology Research. How Such Research Can Meet the Needs of Academic and Non-academic Communities, and the Best Ways to Build Cooperative Relationships with Other Research Institutions.” The Center now employs research assistants who are working on this project. The results of the project will be reported in “Report on the Activities of the Center for Research Development” to be issued at the end of every academic year.

Study of the Academic and Social Demands for Ethnological and Anthropological Research

The Center for Research Development accumulates information on the academic interest and demand for the Museum’s core research, joint research, and inter-university research projects, in addition to the public interest shown at fieldwork sites, in order to investigate what types of ethnological and anthropological research should be considered.

Development of Research Strategies

The Center determines mid-term objectives and formulates research strategies based on analyses of the data coming from the above studies. The Center also explores research systems that might be suitable for the research programs and research fellow systems to facilitate them, and examines the development of methods for essential resources such as reference and archive materials.

Planning of Academic Exchange Salon Meetings

In order to help create research strategies, academic exchange meetings have been hosted at Minpaku since 2007, aiming to foster greater understanding of research trends in academic fields outside anthropology and ethnology. Following a lecture from a guest speaker whose study area is relevant to anthropology and ethnology, the salon is opened for all those attending to exchange ideas. In 2010, we conducted the event four times under the common theme of “On the Limits of Being Human.”

Planning, Design and Implementation of Research Projects

Promotion of Core Research Projects, and Support for the Operation and Planning Designs of National Joint Research Projects of the Institutes for the Humanities, and Other Large Research Projects

The Center supports the implementation of the Museum’s core research projects, while giving advice on the redesign and operation of projects and plans for planning of academic exchange salon meetings. The Center also seeks further improvement of its research systems and activities through self-inspection, considering the comments of external evaluation committees, and evaluations based on the mid-term goals and plans of the National Institutes for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation. By summarizing annual reports and mid-term reports of ongoing core research and joint projects, the Center supervises their activities and provides support.

Evaluation of Research Structure and Research Projects

Development and Use of Evaluation Systems, and Inspection and Evaluation of Ongoing Research Projects

Reference materials are prepared for mid-term and final evaluations of the drafts of the National Institutes for the Humanities’ annual achievement reports and the progress of their mid-term goals and plans. The Center also seeks further improvement of its research systems and activities through self-inspection, considering the comments of external evaluation committees, and evaluations based on the mid-term goals and plans of the National Institutes for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation. By summarizing annual reports and mid-term reports of ongoing core research and joint projects, the Center supervises their activities and provides support.

Research Coordination and Collaboration

Promotion of Research Collaboration with Universities and Other Research Institutes

In order to promote research collaboration with other research institutes, core research projects and research fellow systems are continuously examined to identify areas for improvement.
Projects for Junior Researchers
Since 2006, we have hosted the “Young Researchers Meeting on Joint Use of the National Museum of Ethnology”, seeking participation from members of the public. In 2009, Minpaku held its first “Minpaku Young Researchers Seminar”. Outstanding presentations at the 3-day seminar in 2010 received the Minpaku Young Researchers Award. Participants included 16 postgraduate students from public and private universities throughout Japan. We also began trials of the “Joint Research by Young Researchers” project in November 2008 based on the opinions of young researchers, and selected two projects in 2008 and one project in 2009 after seeking applications from the public as listed below. The project was formally established in 2010 and we have been seeking public applications in a similar manner to general joint research (see p. 14).

Organizer Research theme Research period
Iconic Use Tetu Anthropological Research on Place, Space, and Landscapes, Focusing on Human Migration October 2008–September 2010

Promotion of Research Collaboration with User Communities such as the Japanese Society of Cultural Anthropology
On February 27, 2008, Minpaku signed an agreement with the Japanese Society of Cultural Anthropology (JASCA), the closest affiliated society within our user community. Minpaku has formed an alliance for cooperation on research conferences organized by Minpaku and for managing and maintaining an archive of anthropological videos owned by academic societies. To further strengthen this alliance, Minpaku has reviewed its agreement with the Japanese Society of Cultural Anthropology (JASCA) and is moving towards entering into a comprehensive formal agreement, apart from specific programs, with that society.

Coordination with the Japan Consortium for Area Studies
The Japan Consortium for Area Studies (JCAS) is an active group of academic communities sharing the common theme of global research. Minpaku became JCAS’ 70th member organization in May 2006 and a member of its executive group in 2008. On November 8, 2008, an annual meeting was held, co-hosted by the Museum, and an open symposium was offered on “Practical Use of Area Studies: Reports from the Field at Development, Disaster, and Medical Sites.”

Promotion of Research Coordination and Collaboration with Overseas Research Institutes
The Center is undertaking preparations for agreements with overseas research institutes in efforts to obtain research coordination and collaboration. Minpaku concluded agreements with the Tokyo National University of the Arts in May 2009 and China’s National Palace Museum in October of the same year.

Collection of Research Information and Publication of Research Results
Collection of Information on Research Activities and Compilation of the 2009 Annual Research Report
The Center collects, digitizes, and stores information about all of the research activities conducted at the Museum, including core, joint, and individual research projects as well as externally-funded research projects such as those conducted with JSPS Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research. The Center is also compiling the annual research report of the Museum for AY 2009.

Supporting the Publication of Research Results through the Research Dissemination Program
In efforts to open research results to the public more effectively for the good of society, we expanded the “Promotion of the Research Forum Program” established in 2002 into the “Research Dissemination Program” in 2003. Through this program, the Museum’s joint research and individual research projects are made available to the public in various forms, such as symposiums, research forums, and academic lectures. In 2008, five symposia, five research forums and one international workshop were held through the program. In addition, academic lectures are organized every year in Tokyo and Osaka, helping to disseminate research results throughout society (see page 21).

Research Center for Cultural Resources

Purpose
The Research Center for Cultural Resources was established in April 2004 to facilitate the systematic management of cultural resources and to digitize them. The Center is also charged with conducting investigations, and research and development to ensure that its resources are shared internally and used for the good of the society. The Center is also involved in planning and coordinating the promotion of the implementation of relevant projects.

Cultural resources include a variety of materials, both tangible and intangible, and information related to such materials, as well as knowledge, skills, know-how, human and organizational networks, and intellectual property, all of which are considered useful resources for the development of society.

By encouraging the sharing of these cultural resources worldwide, the Center aims to develop a basis for fostering cross-cultural understanding and the realization of a multi-cultural society where people with different backgrounds live in harmony and better meet the needs of this age of globalization.

Cultural resources become more apparent through the process of investigation and collection. These resources can be better shared and used for the good of society when managed systematically and digitized. Promotion of each of the steps in this process requires a framework of social alliances and international contributions, as shown below.

Flow of Cultural Resources from Surveys and Collections to Society

Alliances and International Contributions

Academic community

Society

Study and collection of cultural resources
Management of physical materials
Digitization

Examples: Renewal of the exhibition with new concepts
Examples: Support for volunteers and promoting museum-school partnerships
Examples: Making the artifact databases open to the public

Examples: Maintenance and preservation research of artifacts
Examples: Development of a cataloging and management system for material cultural resources
Examples: Planning for the next Videolique
Examples: Experimental development of the next Minpaku Digital Guide

Examples: Research Dissemination Program
Examples: Joint Research on the Effect that Restructuring of Alternative Dispute Resolution Systems Would Have on the Pluralistic Legal Systems of Asian and African Countries
Examples: Support for volunteers and promoting museum-school partnerships
Examples: Development, management and maintenance of Min-packs
Examples: Organization of workshops, and use of worksheets
Examples: Promotion of the Research Forum Program

Cultural Resource Projects
A “Cultural Resource Project” is a research project which aims to consolidate Minpaku’s position as an Inter-university Research Institute, promote the organization of academic resources held both by Minpaku and other institutions, encourage the shared use of Minpaku, and enhance its academic value, all in accordance with the second and third mid-term programs.

Since 2009, steps to build up our overseas members have included the introduction of a research fellow program to facilitate joint research on cultural resources and consultation with external experts when evaluating new projects.

Relationships among Cultural Resource Projects in each category

Survey and Collection Projects

Examples: Collection of artifacts and audio-visual materials
Examples: Development of exhibition-related printed materials

Examples: Support for volunteers and promoting museum-school partnerships
Examples: Development, management and maintenance of Min-packs
Examples: Organization of workshops, and use of worksheets

Examples: Planning for the next Videolique
Examples: Experimental development of the next Minpaku Digital Guide
Examples: Making the artifact databases open to the public

Exhibition Development Projects

Examples: Removal of the exhibition with new concept
Examples: Publication of exhibition-related printed materials

Examples: Collection of artifacts and audio-visual materials
Examples: Development of exhibition-related printed materials

Examples: Support for volunteers and promoting museum-school partnerships
Examples: Development, management and maintenance of Min-packs
Examples: Organization of workshops, and use of worksheets

Artifact Management Projects

Examples: Maintenance and preservation research of artifacts
Examples: Development of a cataloging and management system for material cultural resources

Examples: Planning for the next Videolique
Examples: Experimental development of the next Minpaku Digital Guide
Examples: Making the artifact databases open to the public

Community Alliance Projects

Examples: Support for volunteers and promoting museum-school partnerships
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Examples: Planning for the next Videolique
Examples: Experimental development of the next Minpaku Digital Guide
Examples: Making the artifact databases open to the public

Documentation and Digitization Projects

Examples: Maintenance and preservation research of artifacts
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