



National
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Problems in the Study of Foraging Societies

Eighth International Conference on Hunting and Gathering Societies

Shuzo Koyama

National Museum of Ethnology

The National Museum of Ethnology will host the eighth International Conference on Hunting and Gathering Societies (CHAGS 8) in October 1998. As a centre of anthropological studies in Japan, the National Museum of Ethnology has been actively organising international symposia and publishing the results in English since 1979. CHAGS 8 will be held as part of the twentieth anniversary celebrations of the opening of the Museum. The Kyoto University Center for African Area Studies will be co-host.

The conference title is: 'Foraging and post Foraging Societies: History, Politics and Future.' The official language of the conference will be English, but session summaries and the opening and plenary presentations will be in both Japanese and English.

The original 'Man the Hunter Conference' was held in Chicago in 1966. Subsequent conferences have been convened in Paris, France (1978); Quebec, Canada (1980); Bad Homburg, Germany (1983); London, England (1986); Darwin, Australia (1988); Fairbanks, Alaska (1990); and Moscow, Russia (1993).

At the Man the Hunter Conference in Chicago, participants tried to find a definition of hunter-gatherer societies but were unsuccessful. The conventional evolutionary definition was unsatisfactory because of the huge diversity of societies unified only by having once had a broadly similar mode of subsistence. Even if hunter-gatherers were long ago a distinct cultural type, this idea has long been rendered irrelevant. No single definition can embrace the present complex variation in social and cultural institutions, in adaptations to regional environment, and in articulation with adjacent societies. Nevertheless the high level of attendance at and the success of previous conferences indicate that the CHAGS meetings provide a useful forum for scholars from around the world.

Preconference meeting

In a preliminary meeting held in Kyoto in 1995, the major issue raised by the participants was the importance of having a theme broad enough to allow all people with an interest in hunter-gatherer studies the opportunity to participate.

At past conferences the tendency has been to concentrate on the present. As a consequence there have been only limited opportunities for archaeologists to participate. Indeed archaeology was virtually excluded from the second conference onwards. This conference will reintroduce archaeology.

The participants in the meeting at Kyoto were particularly keen to see an opportunity for discussion of tradition and continuity in the Jomon Culture of Japan, as well as other topics related to archaeology and material culture – because of the many interesting developments in archaeology over the last thirty years, in Japan and elsewhere.

It was also considered important to examine changes that have taken place in the culture and disciplinary perspectives of researchers over the last thirty years, and to discuss the major changes that have taken place in hunter-gatherer-fisher societies during the same period. A small measure of the change in

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Aboriginal bark painting, Australia. (National Museum of Ethnology)

researchers' perspectives is provided by the changing titles and topics of CHAGS conferences from 1966 to 1998.

Core subjects such as demography, ecology, land tenure and subsistence have been constant themes through all the conferences, but the range of subjects addressed in recent years has become increasingly diverse, reflecting changes in anthropology at large. Terms such as ethnicity and identity were rarely used thirty years ago but now they are key foci of research, as are the role of the state, the emergence of international networks, and the rhetoric of rights. Indigenous scholars are now beginning to make their mark on proceedings and have contributed to an increased awareness of issues of representation.

Japanese studies of hunting, gathering and fishing societies

Japanese researchers have mainly worked in three regions, as briefly reviewed below.

The Ainu and northern hunter-gatherer-fishers. The Ainu are the only indigenous hunter-gatherer-fishers in Japan. As a result of a tense international and regional history, especially with Russia, many travelogues and regional histories were published on the northern regions of Japan in the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries. The Ainu feature strongly in this literature and the condition of Ainu society at that time was described vividly. After the introduction of Euro-American styles of academic anthropology, most twentieth century Japanese scholars regarded contemporary Ainu culture as contaminated by contact with the Japanese way of life. These scholars tried to reconstruct an ideal past, rather than describe the actual circumstances of people at the time of their research. As a result there are few records of the specific conditions under which Ainu people lived from the beginning of the twentieth century until the 1950s.

Hitoshi Watanabe was the first to break with this tradition of descriptive reconstruction by introducing a theoretical framework for his analysis of Ainu subsistence activities, in a presentation at the 1966 conference. His paper was expanded and published as *The Ainu Ecosystem* in 1972 (Univ. of Washington Press), which became an exemplary case study of hunter-gatherer-fishers' studies for Japanese researchers in the area. This year, the Northern Studies Association at

Hokkaido University and the Museum of Northern Peoples in Abashiri are hosting a series of International Symposia involving scholars from Russia, Alaska and Canada.

Although studies of the Ainu in their contemporary situation remain rare, there has been a recent increase in publications by Ainu people about their own culture and history. Shigeru Kayano has been especially active, publishing an autobiography, an Ainu-Japanese dictionary and works on mythology, folktales and material culture. These publications are mostly in Japanese, so there is a real need for English translation.

Hunter-gatherers in Africa. Kyoto University started its general fieldwork program in Africa in 1961. At that time the main focus was on non-human primates. During the mid-1960s, a number of researchers began switching to the study of human subsistence. Surveys were first carried out with the Hadza, and the research then expanded to include fieldwork among the Ju/'hoansi (San) in the central Kalahari and the Mbuti in eastern Zaire. Through active participation at international conferences and publication in English, the work of the Kyoto University Center for African Area Studies has become widely known.

Australian Aboriginal studies. Japanese studies of Australian hunter-gatherers began in 1980. The research was carried out in parallel with the development of holdings of Aboriginal material culture at the National Museum of Ethnology. The focus has been on contemporary material culture rather than artefacts from the nineteenth century. This policy enmeshed Japanese scholars in the structures and organisation of the modern Aboriginal art and craft industry. The results were presented at an international symposium organized by the Museum in 1988. In this symposium we compared the impact of commoditisation on Aboriginal and other foraging societies (N. Peterson and T. Matsuyama eds., 1991, *Cash, commoditisation and changing foragers*, Senri Ethnological Studies No 30).

Post-Foragers – the future of hunter-gatherer-fishers

Fully independent and self-sufficient hunter-gatherer societies no longer exist. All are in some way and to some extent integrated into the world economy. The growth of an international capitalist economy demands continuous industrial development to support an ever increasing population. The international economy threatens the subsistence and environments of those people who still continue to hunt, gather and fish. Even environment-conscious tourism, which is expected to be a major industry in the twenty-first century, cannot avoid damage to the environments traditionally occupied by hunter-gatherer-

fisher societies. At the same time such societies often face strong integrative government policies. It is often said that anthropologists can do nothing to change what seems to be the inevitable demise of such societies. However it is quite clear that indigenous groups across the world have enormous resilience. Although their ways of life are generally changing fast, they can maintain a strong sense of identity and community. Aboriginal people in Arnhem Land are a case in point. Despite an almost complete dependence on the welfare state for income, and fifty years of missionisation and government control, they still have a highly distinctive culture and way of life. Frequently they have turned external pressure and intervention to their own purposes and have sometimes been able to use them to strengthen their own cultural practices. Their strength has been an inspiration for city-dwelling Aboriginal people for whom assimilation policies have often created identity crises.

Post-conference symposia

We are planning to raise funds for two post-conference symposia. One will be an Ainu symposium at Nibutani, Hokkaido, and the other will be an archaeological symposium at Aomori city.

The town Nibutani has about 500 people and 70 to 80 % of them are Ainu descendants. It is one of the strongest centres of Ainu culture. Nibutani is a tourist town with the Ainu Cultural Museum, reconstructed traditional houses, a tourist information office, restaurants, souvenir shops, craft shops and inns. Traditional songs and dances are performed in the community house upon request.

The Director of the Ainu Cultural Museum is Shigeru Kayano, the first Ainu member of the House of Councilors of Japan. He is now working to revise the old Ainu Law.

In Aomori city, the Sannai-Maruyama site is now a centre of controversy among Japanese archaeologists. It is a neolithic site occupied during the early to middle Jomon period (5,500 – 4,000 BP). What started out as a routine rescue dig in 1992 has now become a major excavation on which a total of 160,000 man-days and one billion yen (10 million US dollars) have been spent over the last two years. About 50,000 square metres have been excavated so far, representing an estimated one seventh of the total site. Pottery sherds filled more than 40,000 boxes, and abundant faunal and floral remains were found. The settlement was planned and permanent. This was a great surprise because Jomon society has long been thought of as non-sedentary and based on hunting and gathering.

Before excavation the site was designated for a baseball park. Aomori prefecture and the city office are now planning to make the site a park with a museum and an archaeological research centre. Several symposia have already been held in Aomori city. The proposed archaeological symposium will be the first international symposium at Sannai-Maruyama.

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For conference details (registration and programme), contact Dr S. Koyama, CHAGS 8 Project Office, National Museum of Ethnology, Suita, Osaka, Japan.
Fax: +81-6-876-2160
E-mail: chags8@idc.minpaku.ac.jp

Freeing Anthropology from the Fetters of the Nation

Jan van Bremen

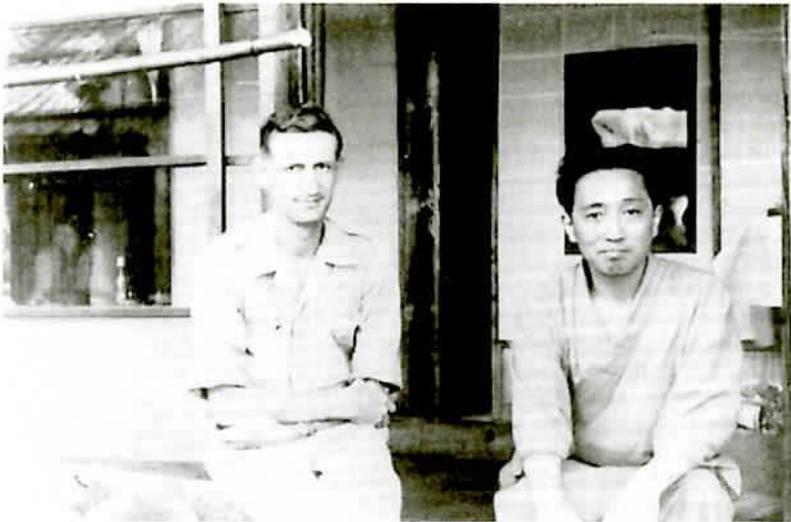
University of Leiden

Practically every Western textbook or history of anthropology presents the discipline as originally and essentially the domain and work of European and American scholars. In this way, the fact is overlooked that anthropology has pedigrees in other regions of the world where it has been practiced for a century or more. World systems have long been discovered by historians and economists but the idea that anthropology has universal dimensions still seems to be unusual to anthropologists in the West. Individual scholars from outside America or Europe are certainly noted, but the full extent of anthropology in other regions is not usually perceived in the West. Confining the

discussion to Asia, scholars like Fei Hsiao Tung from China, M.N. Srinivas from India, Koentjaraningrat from Indonesia, or Mabuchi Tōichi from Japan are well known in America and Europe. However, the full range and magnitude of anthropology in Asian countries – and in countries on other continents – is hardly realised.

Area specialists have been aware of other traditions in anthropology but their admonitions seem to have fallen on deaf ears in Europe and America. In the case of Japan, in spite of the information given by Cornelis Ouweland and scholars like him, it still seems to surprise Western anthropologists today that Asian studies are

The author is an anthropologist and intellectual historian in the Center for Japanese Studies in the University of Leiden. With D.P. Martinez he has edited Ceremony and Ritual in Japan: Religious Practices in an Industrialised Society, a book published by Routledge in London in 1995 and reprinted this year.



Cornelis Ouwehand (1920-1996) and Mabuchi Tōichi (1909-1988) in Ina, Nagano Prefecture, Japan, in the summer of 1956: two scholars who bridged national barriers and resentments (photo courtesy of Mr Mabuchi Satoru and Mrs Shizuko Ouwehand-Kusunoki).

so paramount in anthropology and have been since it became an academic discipline and a profession more than a hundred years ago in the land of the rising sun. Also at the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka, the anthropology of Asia is dominant. The reason is not hard to see as more than half of the inhabitants of the world live in that continent. A further explanation for the principal concern with Asia at the Museum given by the Director-General is its 'closeness' to Japan in a geographical, historical, and cultural sense. The idea seems to echo the doctrine of the former Yanagita Kunio school of folklore studies that only native inhabitants are capable of understanding the local culture, in particular its religious, ethical, and artistic life. Those domains were thought to be unreachable for an outsider. Yanagita applied the notion to Japan but believed that it was true for every place in the world. Why it should be limited to Asia now, ill-defined as that area may be, is an interesting question.

Be that as it may, anthropology has been flourishing in Asia where as a universal branch of knowledge it was grafted on native roots. If anthropology has an impressive history in Asia, signs also show that it may have a prodigious future in that part of the world. Just two examples may bear out this assertion. The National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka in Japan has been one of the largest centres for anthropological research and dialogue in the world since it was established in 1974. In Malaysia in the past decade, about 1,000 students have enrolled in anthropology in the universities every year. New departments have been created and there is employment for the graduates.

Anthropology has roots not only in Europe and America but also in the academic and proto-academic traditions of other countries. This fact is not disclosed in the authoritative handbooks and histories of anthropology current in the West. They are

silent about anthropology in countries like India, China, Korea, or Japan, to mention just a few nations with an anthropological tradition in Asia. They reveal next to nothing about the contributions to anthropology that have been made by scholars outside the Western world. Yet it is indisputable that there are outstanding scholars and traditions in anthropology outside Europe and America. Anthropology is larger than is commonly acknowledged in the Occidental readers or primers. Every local institute is a piece of the discipline but the worldwide story of anthropology has not yet been written.

Anthropology was made at various places in the world. It has been nourished by indigenous and imported traditions, and by research done at home and further away. Nowhere is it true that anthropology is a purely local affair. The interactions of individuals and professional associations lift it to an international level and have created the international and cosmopolitan anthropology of today. However, most national narratives disregard these external dimensions and relations. If in places anthropologists feel that they still work in the shadow of a (former) coloniser, be it Britain, France, Holland, the United States of America, China, Russia, or Japan, the contacts that originated in the colonial period and its aftermath have been transnational. They crossed national and cultural boundaries and contributed to the growth of international anthropology in the world. International societies have fostered the feeling that anthropologists are members of a worldwide scientific community.

The history of anthropology over the past century shows that academic and professional anthropology did not develop disjointedly in different places in the world. Anthropology is local, regional, and global, national and international, generational and trans-generational, parochial and universal. Newly a scholar decided to list sources written in Japanese in the bibliography of her book published in English.¹⁾ It may baffle those who do not command Japanese as it may puzzle those who do not know that the Japanese Society of Ethnology is one of the largest and most productive associations of academic and professional anthropologists in the world today. Scholars learn whichever foreign language is needed to gain access to information recorded in it. Work published in a local language is not less important than work published in a tongue that is in international use. It is only less accessible.

The standards of competence and good work are universally recognized in anthropology. They include such accomplishments as conscientious fieldwork, a familiarity with scholarly research beyond one's immediate concerns, and an understanding of the pertinent theoretical debates. The working procedures

1) Ohnuki-Tierney, Emiko. 1993. *Rice as Self: Japanese Identities through Time*. Princeton, Princeton University Press.

and the conditions of fieldwork should be made clear and the methods of data-collection presented. Credit to native and foreign scholars alike should be given and not only in a preface or a casual footnote but throughout the work. The inquiry should be placed into continuity and dialogue with the work done by others and provide substantial arguments when criticising others but also acknowledge their findings and insights instead of ignoring earlier efforts. Such an approach provides a true forum for scholars who work in a particular area and for their ideas.

A comprehensive account of anthropology in the whole world is definitely needed and

should be produced by a collective effort and the support of a major endowment or institution. The links of local traditions with anthropology worldwide should be clarified. It is no longer defensible that the global dimensions of the discipline are missing in the authoritative accounts of anthropology in encyclopedias, compendia, or handbooks. The existing accounts should be revised to match the reality. Anthropology is not the property of any one nation but the endeavor of all mankind.

Non-Western Art as Ethnographic Narrative

John Mack

Museum of Mankind, London

In Great Britain last year was the year of *africa95*, a cultural festival which embraced so-called 'traditional' arts, contemporary painting, print-making, sculpture and music from the continent of Africa. It was born of the ambition of the Royal Academy, a major exhibition venue run by an association of senior British artists, to hold a block-buster exhibition covering the whole continent throughout all time. 'Africa, Art of a Continent,' however, stopped more or less at about the 1950s. Little graphic art was included, and no contemporary art from the continent. To some of us it seemed a reversion to a perception of non-western art which ethnographic museums had been struggling for a long time to subvert. A major exhibition of African objects as 'Art,' with no information or interpretation that would allow their cultural meanings to emerge, appeared to return us to a world where African creativity was to be validated only by its proximity to modern European art. Furthermore, there was also the niggling suspicion that the Royal Academy regarded present day African artists, many from urban contexts, as of less calibre than their European equivalents. Yet, if they were to win any support from the institutions from which they would need to borrow objects they had to address the issue. The result was *africa95*, a celebration of creativity across the continent, complementing the Royal Academy's show but taking place elsewhere.¹⁾

The Museum of Mankind is situated directly behind the Royal Academy. We had to lend to their exhibition, but we also had to try and provide a corrective to it. We are, after all, the only major institution in Britain which for the last twenty-five years has been

consistently presenting different aspects of African cultures in a long series of exhibitions. We needed to do something different and striking to illuminate both the cultural and the contemporary dimensions that we knew would be lacking next door. We decided to invite an artist from Africa to create an exhibition linking her own works to her upbringing in Africa and to the collections held by the museum. We began to explore the themes with the Nigerian sculptor Sokari Douglas Camp, and eventually from her commissioned eight large figures in steel. These, together with our own objects and a series of contemporary mask headpieces, formed the core of the exhibition. She also worked closely with Dr Nigel Barley in curating the exhibition.

For a museum which sets as its clear aim the collection, display and dissemination of scholarship in the areas of ethnography and ethnology, this is a departure. Are we not stumbling somewhat blindly into the territory of Museums of Modern Art? In trying to do what we believed the Royal Academy should have done, were we not acting more like an Academy of Arts and less like a Museum of Mankind? To make any misgivings still more profound, we have subsequently acquired many of the artworks created and these have now entered our own collections. We intend to re-exhibit them in a new African Gallery we are developing in the main British Museum (of which the Museum of Mankind is part).

There are a number of obvious things to say about this. Firstly, the kind of emphasis which insists on some arcane definition of our field as 'traditional' societies in a limiting sense is clearly inadequate. Sokari herself is

The author is Keeper (Director) of the Museum of Mankind, London. He has carried out anthropological fieldwork both in East Africa and on the island of Madagascar, and has published on both of these and on the art and culture of Zaire. He is currently working with Dr Kenji Yoshida of Minpaku towards a special exhibition and catalogue to coincide with next year's twentieth anniversary of the opening of the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka.

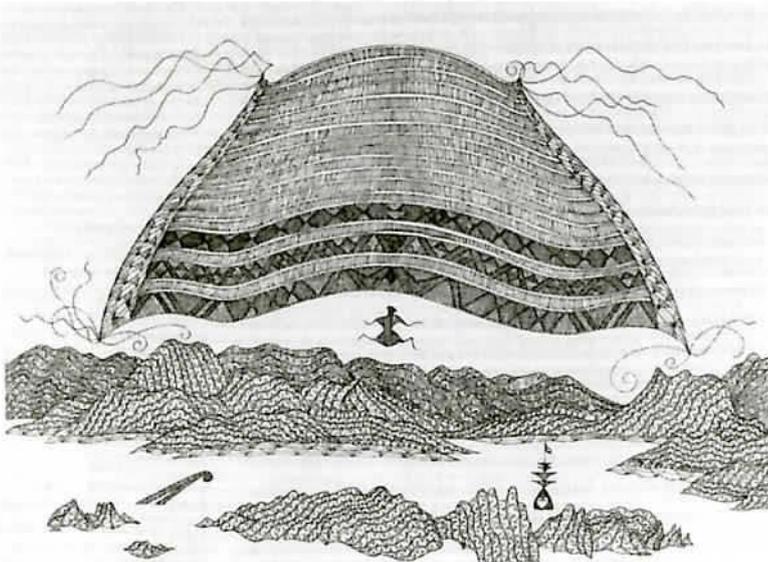
1) The major publication coming out of the Royal Academy exhibition was Tom Phillips (ed.) *Africa, the Art of a Continent* (Prestel in association with the Royal Academy, 1995). For a full review of the exhibitions, publications and concept of the festival see the special issue of *African Arts* (Vol 29, No 3, Summer 1996).



Steel sculpture of a Kalabari water spirit masquerade by Sokari Douglas-Camp.

2) I am reminded of the compelling discussion of the question of whether the Japanese constitute a single ethnicity in a recent interview with Dr Komei Sasaki (*Anthropology Today*, Vol.12, No.3, pp. 16-20).

Drawing showing a flax coat above the islands of the Pacific by the Maori artist John Bevan Ford.



Kalabari, that is from one of the groups of the wider Ijaw-speaking peoples who occupy the area of the Delta of the River Niger. For well-over three hundred years the Kalabari were critical links in the chain which connected the ambitions of European traders and adventurers stationed along the coast of West Africa to the interior. Their experience as middlemen negotiating relationships between Europe and Africa since the late fifteenth century already denies any temptation to speak in terms of ethnography as treating only of small-scale isolated communities, universes unto themselves. They, like the peoples they have been in contact with, are made up of a whole range of complex historical experience that subverts any easy self-contained definition of Kalabari identity.²¹

A second potential problem concerns the materials used. Works in steel are inevitably

evocative of an urban, industrialised modern context. Again, the notion has sometimes been promoted that the proper subject of ethnographic investigation is small-scale rural communities. It is obvious that this view risks consigning a vivid source of insight into the human condition to uniquely historical observation, or to investigation of only the most remote parts of the globe. We are happy to resist it.

I am not, however, advocating that museums with the title and intention to explore ethnographic or ethnological subjects should suddenly turn themselves into museums of non-western art. We are, however, deeply interested in the impact of one culture upon another, in questions of cross-cultural perception. It is, in fact, fundamental to definitions of our activities.

This is also a space that Sokari's sculpture occupies. The most striking figures are large gladiatorial works with dramatic headdresses which recall the water spirit masquerades of the Kalabari. Their very scale is threatening. The sculpture is about events seen and remembered. To that extent they are affective vehicles, which speak of emotion, fear, and threat. They are very far from romanticised reflections, but rather – like the film of masking in the Delta which also showed on a screen in the exhibition – they are documentary in conception. In that light, the sculpture emerges as an important narrative – albeit expressed in visual and aesthetic terms – that relays an interior view of one culture to an audience in another. It is this capacity for sensitive self-reflection, rather than any stylistic affinities of her work that might be proposed, still less her passport, that makes her work interesting.

At the Museum of Mankind we are looking again at our policy on acquisitions and in particular at this question of how far the field of ethnography extends in relation to objects. Apart from acquiring Sokari's sculpture we have over the years assembled collections of prints from artists in the Arctic, from the North West Coast. We have made a collection of prints by the Maori artist John Bevan Ford. None are literalist in content. They are all sophisticated multi-layered images. But all are in the end alike in having this narrative quality which we are beginning to see as the appropriate condition of our engagement with contemporary non-western art.

The exhibition being planned at Minpaku for next year under the supervision of Dr Kenji Yoshida and myself sets out to examine these themes in a historical and contemporary context. For that purpose archival photographs, and methods of displaying and classifying objects in the past are regarded as narratives which allow us to reflect on the whole question of the mechanisms by which cultures inter-relate and inter-penetrate. This, of course, is also a

mechanism of self-reflection. Minpaku and the Museum of Mankind are comparable to the Kalabari middleman. We are institutions which promote intercultural perceptions within our own communities at the same time as we examine these questions in more

academic contexts. And it is fitting that some of Sokari's works will be included in that exhibition. Equally, it is fitting that it should subsequently transfer to Setagaya Art Museum in Tokyo.

Knowledge of the Native and the Study of Culture

An Indian Overview

M. L. K. Murty

University of Hyderabad, India

While I browse through the voluminous literature on our exercise of interpreting cultures, past and present, I consider it worthwhile to share some of my experiences from close interaction with native peoples in the state of Andhra Pradesh, India. I am using the word native as a general term to refer to such social groups which are treated as scheduled tribes, scheduled castes, backward castes, and so on, in the Indian constitution.

I began my academic career as a Palaeolithic archaeologist with an orientation towards lithic typologies and variability, and site formation and preservation processes, and stratigraphy. But the eye opener for me in understanding the archaeological record, and in the interpretation of past human behaviour was in the 1970s, during an excavation at the Kurnool caves. The cave I excavated was about an hour-and-a-half walk (about 8 km), one way, from the village where I was camping, and the path went through rugged karst terrain. The people who worked with me in the excavation were the Boyas and Yerukulas. These two tribes are indigenous, and they figure in historical inscriptions from c.700 AD and in late medieval literature. To kill the monotony of walk, and as our relationship grew closer, we started indulging in gossip, in which everyone participated (twelve of them including four women). These gossip sessions covered village caste structure; caste hierarchies, subordination and antagonisms; patron-client relationships; use of wild plants for food, structures, implements, livestock fodder, and medicine; habits and habitats of big and small game in that region; practices of tracking the game by following pug marks; hunting, fishing, and foraging (e.g. honey collection) technologies and strategies; soil types, agricultural seasons, and crop rotation; impotent husbands and promiscuous wives (including herbal medicines to cure impotency); local gods and goddesses (folk deities), sacred topographies, and propitiation rituals with animal sacrifices; sympathetic magic; and witchcraft. Fortunately, I made notes of the

important aspects of our discussions, for my record of vernacular terms and local usages with which I was not at all familiar. Soon I realized that the knowledge possessed by indigenous peoples is a vast mnemonic system of information, and I started recording similar conversations on tape, in addition to making notes, during my fieldwork in other parts of Andhra Pradesh.

During my cave excavation at Kurnool (Upper Palaeolithic to Late Mesolithic occupation (c.15,000 to 1,800 BC), I found that the Boya and Yerukula participants were experts in animal anatomy, the knowledge of which they gained while processing the game they hunted. They identified animals (e.g. antelope, deer varieties, wild boar, porcupine, and civet cat) from dental remains; identified the butchery practices from the cut marks on bones; and explained how meat foods were processed, by looking at the charred bones. The living traditions of Boyas and Yerukulas provided cues for interpreting past adaptive strategies, and links with the present. It was around that time that my friend, the late Professor G.D. Sontheimer (South Asia Institute, University of Heidelberg, Germany) enquired about the shepherds of my region, as he was then involved in a cross-cultural comparison of shepherds (Dhangars) in Maharashtra and Andhra-Karnataka (Kurubas/Kuruvas and Gollas). He explained how important the oral epics and rituals of these communities are for understanding the socio-cultural ecology of their pastoral cultures. This was the inspiration for me to pay attention to the Kuruvas, through whose transhumant camps we were walking to the cave site. I developed an interest in the pastoral domain, and Sontheimer and myself did extensive fieldwork among the Kuruvas and Gollas of Andhra. I am continuing that study of sheep/goat pastoralists with focus on the pastoral cult centres as ritualised landmarks and symbolic complexes, and the oral epics and rituals of their gods as commemorative festivals of the pastoral realm in which the past is mediated in the metaphysical present, through narrative art. As a

The author is the Head, the Centre for Regional Studies, and Honorary Director of the Centre for Folk Culture Studies at the University of Hyderabad, India. He is involved in the study of hunter-gatherer, pastoral and shifting cultivator communities of the Eastern Ghats; traditional knowledge systems; and folk religion and rituals. His fieldwork is in the State of Andhra Pradesh.



Yerukula Naganna, one of the most jocular and highly knowledgeable participants in our discussions, and cave excavation.

corollary, I became involved in the study of folk religion and the mother goddess cults in Andhra (e.g. Ankamma, Poleramma, Peddamma, Yellamma, Maisamma, and other such cognates). The mother goddess, in the local belief system, is the primordial supreme female power. She is a goddess of vegetation and fertility, and needs propitiation with blood sacrifices to protect the village and bestow rewards. She wards off epidemics, cattle pestilence, ensures good rains and crops, bestows health, gives children to the childless, helps people in crisis, and in overcoming misfortunes. Most places of her worship are associated with sacred trees like pipal (*Ficus religiosa*), fig (*Ficus glomerata*), banyan (*Ficus bengalensis*) and neem (*Azadirachta indica*); termite mounds; dolmen-like structures; and her power is enshrined in a stone, which is the *axis mundi* of the village. In her propitiation rituals, a he-buffalo sacrifice is most important. The he-buffalo represents Mahisha, the demon killed by the goddess. She is identified with Mahishasura Mardini or Durga-Kali of the Hindu pantheon. The slaying of the demon by the great goddess Durga-Kali is celebrated in India during the

Lower reaches of the river Godavari with the eastern Ghats in the background. This region is the habitat of shifting cultivators.



nine-day Navaratri festival (September – October). However, in the classical tradition, the village goddesses are treated as impure, meat-eating, dangerous and erotic. Yearly or cyclical rituals are performed to satiate the goddess, in which the village, cutting across caste barriers, becomes a 'whole,' and the priests in the sacrificial rituals are of lower castes. Some men and women get possessed and if she is not satisfied with the ritual, she speaks through the possessed and makes demands, which need to be obeyed. Otherwise, the goddess may turn malevolent and harm the village. Families or individuals, who have taken vows, fulfill them during the ritual by sacrificing fowls, sheep and goats.

Finally I would briefly draw attention to the shifting cultivators of the lower Godavari valley (Konda Reddi, Konda Dora, Koya, Savara, Bhagata, for example) in the dry deciduous woodlands. Within the range of their settlements, there are Late Palaeolithic and Mesolithic sites with component heavy-duty lithic tools. Adaptive patterns among the present inhabitants of this area are helpful for speculating about the prehistoric strategies, especially tuber crop horticulture and rice exploitation (wild *Oryza nivara* is extant in this region). For the communities of shifting cultivators, fire is a most important tool for forest clearance. Forests are cleared to raise settlements and to prepare fields for shifting cultivation, which is called *podu*. In the ecotones manipulated by fire, several varieties of local rice (landraces) grow on their own, and are harvested. It is possible that this area is a secondary centre of rice domestication, but we must wait for archaeobotanical data to test this conjecture. The tuber crops (about 34 species, some being toxic) are dug up in the forest and are stored for three to six months. Some of them sprout, and the sprouts are planted in the kitchen gardens and *podu* fields. One would expect such practices in the prehistoric context of this region, in the light of recent discoveries in other parts of the world. Also, the present communities have expert knowledge of their biological environment. Most of their forests are being heavily degraded by commercial use, which destroys the fauna and flora on which the people have traditionally depended. Their knowledge of foods, medicine and other forest products is gradually being obliterated. It is possible to use their knowledge, in combination with scientific technologies, for afforestation with plants of traditional value. The local communities and the Government can benefit by involving the former in participatory management, and by depoliticising social environments. To conclude, in the late medieval literature of this region the natives were referred to with esteem, in various contexts their knowledge and life-styles were acclaimed, and their cultures were already recognized as a rich heritage.

Computer Systems and Network

Yasunori Yamamoto

National Museum of Ethnology

One of the Museum's main goals is to develop multimedia databases with all kinds of information needed for ethnological research and exhibition. We have been constructing databases of bibliographic information on all materials (including artefacts) held by the Museum since its establishment. We are also digitising and storing images of artefacts, photographs and sounds from audio tapes and records.

The computer system consists of a mainframe computer (IBM 9221), image servers, and other specialised input/output devices, work stations and personal computers (PCs). The high-speed local area network (LAN; FDDI, 100 Mbps) connects about 230 computers with each other. Some computers are attached to FDDI directly and others are via Ethernet. About 400 sockets for LAN have been placed throughout the Museum.

The Museum LAN is directly connected with the Computation Center, Osaka University, one of the main network operation centres of ORIONS (Osaka Regional

Information and Open Network Systems). Through this connection, our LAN is connected to the Internet. This connection uses a leased digital line with a speed of 1.5 Mbps.

Outside access to Museum databases

We started a service for outside users in October 1993. Some Museum databases are accessible through public telephone lines or the Internet. The service is open to registered users. Catalogues are available for the following Museum materials: Books in Japanese, Roman alphabet, and Cyrillic alphabet; journals; films and videotapes; records, compact disks and audio tapes; and artefacts.

There is also a set of databases, called the 'Minpaku Costume Databases.' They are catalogues of books and journal articles related to costume, cosmetics and personal adornment.

The various catalogues are managed by JAIRS (the Japanese Information Retrieval System) in our mainframe computer. Users need

communication software that emulates a vt100 type terminal.

Electronic mail

The number of e-mail users in the Museum research departments quickly increased after staff could use e-mail from PC terminals in their offices. Most staff use Chameleon, an application operated by MS-Windows, or Eudora, a Macintosh application, to read and write e-mail. These applications make e-mail relatively easy for novices.

All e-mail is received by a central mail server, and is then transferred to PCs by the POP (Post Office Protocol) when requested by users.

World Wide Web (WWW) server

The Museum started running a WWW server in December 1995, to transmit information about the Museum through the Internet (URL: <http://www.minpaku.ac.jp/>). The information supplied includes:

- ◊ Hot news
- ◊ About the Museum
- ◊ Graduate education
- ◊ Museum hours and admission fees
- ◊ Location and transportation
- ◊ Exhibitions and events
- ◊ Publications

All contents are available in Japanese and English.

Image retrieval system

The image retrieval system allows us to retrieve images of artefacts and photographs in the Museum by keywords, and to see them on PC displays and higher resolution displays within the Museum network. The system is composed of keyword databases (mainframe computer), image servers (work stations) and clients' PCs running with OS/2 operating system. The system is not yet accessible from outside. We are now developing a new retrieval system which includes sound data and which is suitable for WWW browsers.

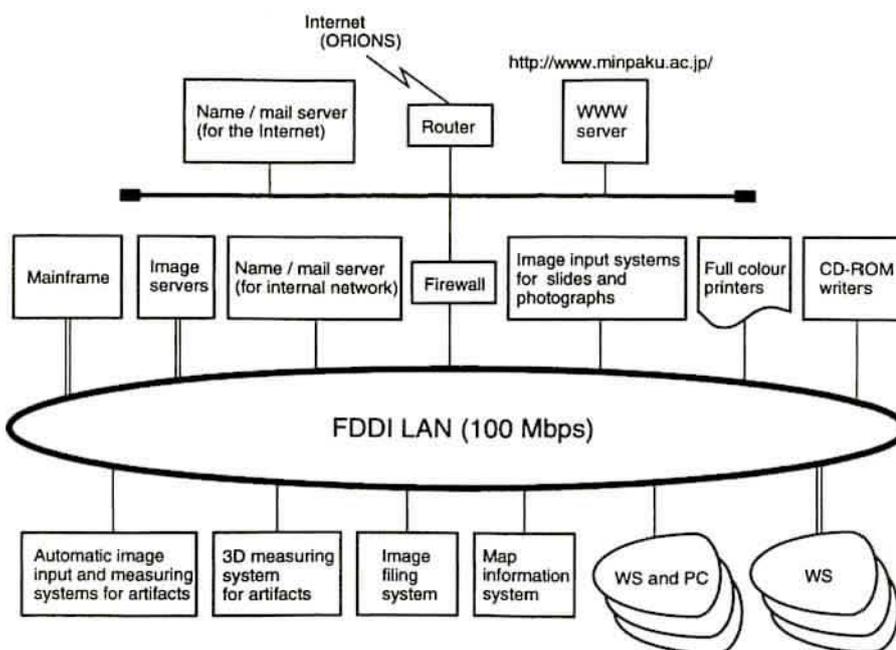


Fig. Computer system in the National Museum of Ethnology

Exhibitions

Special Exhibition: The Japanese Collections of Philipp Franz and Heinrich von Siebold

From 1 August to 19 November 1996, a special exhibition was held to mark the 200th anniversary of Philipp Franz von Siebold's birthday.

Siebold, a German, visited Japan twice in the nineteenth century and made a comprehensive collection of Japanese materials. This collection is very precious today. In it, we can find remnants of Japanese daily life and traditional culture that present-day people have lost. There is, for example, a book with over one-hundred sheets of coloured illustrations of Japanese figures from many occupations: a farmer wearing a straw coat, a whale hunter arranging a long topknot, a half-naked female diver, street performers, and others. Such people cannot be found now. They were drawn by a Japanese artist at the request of Siebold. His collection also includes various kinds of green tea, handmade paper, lacquer ware, wooden boxes decorated with straw inlays, clothing and many other daily objects. It is an outstanding ethnographic collection.

One of his sons, Heinrich, came to Japan later and also made a collection. He collected various ethnological materials and many art objects, Buddhist sculptures and pictures, ukiyo-e, and ceramics. In this collection, our attention is caught by the boards with painted lions and folding doors decorated with gold-foil. These are the only surviving remnants of one of the mausoleums built by the Tokugawa Shogun's family. The mausoleums were located at the Zojo-ji temple, but were completely destroyed by the Tokyo Air Raid during World War II. We must thank the Siebolds for their work. At present, most of the collected objects belong to the national museums of ethnology at Leiden, Munich, and Vienna, and the Museum for Applied Art in Vienna. We selected about 750 objects from their archives to produce a systematic exhibition that expresses Japanese daily life in the nineteenth century.

The exhibition organisers are the German Institute of Japan Studies, Yomiuri Press, Osaka, and our Museum.

Masaki Kondo
National Museum of Ethnology

First Opening of the South Asia Exhibition

The public area of the Museum opened in 1977 with seven regional and two thematic exhibitions, and has since expanded in its coverage. South Asia is the most recent and last regional exhibition. The South Asia exhibition covers the cultures of the Indian Sub-Continent, which includes Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and the Maldives. The sub-continent embraces a wide diversity of cultures, material and spiritual, and these form common cultural environment.

The exhibits are divided into crafts, living utensils, traditional science, pastoralism, agriculture, fishing, religions, and modern urban life. The organisation and technical methods of the South Asia exhibition are more or less the same as in the older exhibitions. However, the following three points are new features:

1) This museum has had a policy of showing material culture that represents what is really specific to each ethnic group. Because of this policy, most of the earlier regional exhibitions tended to present pre-Industrial Revolution materials. In the South Asia exhibition we have tried to present rather contemporary materials from villages and cities, to express life in present-day South Asia.

2) Museums are usually associated with static displays of collected objects. We believe that museum displays should be more dynamic. As a first step, we have installed a Rajasthani puppet that is operated by a computer-controlled mechanism, in response to visitor requests. Since inauguration of the exhibition on 14

November, the puppet has been quite popular, and is almost always in operation.

3) In the area of religions, we have introduced some computer graphics to let the audience understand what mandalas are. In the academic field of fine art, mandalas are regarded as two dimensional paintings. In reality, however, they are a representation of, originally, a three-dimensional religious cosmos. We thought that explanations with computer graphics would be very effective. Our intention is right, but the response among the audience has not been so positive so far. I suspect that the story we wanted to tell is too much for the audience.

In area of religions, Buddhism occupies a relatively large part of the display. Although the following is almost nonexistent in comparison with the large Hindu and Islamic populations, we deal with Buddhism quite heavily because of its cultural connection to Japan.

Yasuhiko Nagano
National Museum of Ethnology

Refurbishment and Reopening of the Southeast Asia Exhibition

Twenty years after its initial establishment, the Southeast Asia exhibition had been substantially redesigned and was reopened on 14 November 1996 in conjunction with the grand opening of the new Seventh Exhibition Hall.

The new exhibition consists of nine sections based on the following themes: Rice Growing Culture, Maritime Culture, Hunting and Fishing, Utensils, Ritual and Worldview, Clothing and



Newly opened South Asia Exhibition

Accessories, Wayang Theater, Theravāda Buddhism and Urban Landscape.

The Rice Growing Culture features a section for various types of plow, irrigation wheels from central Thailand, and a rice granary of the Toraja people of Indonesia. The Maritime Culture section includes a houseboat of the Bajau people, Malaysia, and a Madurese fishing boat from Indonesia. The sections for Hunting and Fishing, and for Utensils and Ritual and Worldview feature blowpipes, rice steamers, replicas of sacrifice poles of the Lawa, northern Thailand, and a hornbill effigy made by the Iban of Malaysia, respectively. An appealing exhibit in the Clothing and Accessories section is a weaving scene from the Akha of northern Thailand. Indonesian wayang kulit shadow performances are reproduced audio-visually and various puppets from Viet Nam and Myanmar (Burma) are displayed in the Wayang Theater section. In the Theravāda Buddhism section one can experience the atmosphere of a monastery in Laos. Shop signboards on the back wall and a jeepney from the Philippines give us a glimpse of urban life in Southeast Asia.

Special attention was given to Maritime Culture and Urban Culture in redesigning the Southeast Asia exhibition, as these were somewhat neglected in the previous displays. The museum also tried to convey a sense of the social reality arising from a combination of global and local factors in contemporary Southeast Asian societies. This is a particular focus of the new exhibits for Maritime Culture and Urban Landscape.

Having finished redesigning the exhibition, we feel that we could have approached the work in different ways; we might have been able to touch on other urgent issues such as development and environment, ethnicity, diaspora, and so on. Despite these omissions we hope that the new exhibition does represent the present state of Southeast Asia to some extent. Social reality is always changing and so too must the exhibitions in any museum. In this context, we can say that we are still at a starting point – how can we best represent Southeast Asian cultures and societies, or more fundamentally, is it possible to represent them properly at all?

Tomiyuki Uesugi
National Museum of Ethnology

Conferences

Production of Culture and the State

*4th Symposium,
The Tradition and Change of
Ethnic Cultures in the Twentieth
Century,
9-11 November 1995*

The symposium, convened by K. Tamura of the National Museum of Ethnology, dealt with processes of production of cultures in this century from anthropological and historical perspectives. Sixteen papers were presented by Japanese and overseas participants, including M.R. Chakraborty Chitabongs (Thailand) and Jonathan Spencer (UK).

Comparative Studies of Information and Communication

*14th International Symposium,
Division of Civilization
Studies, Taniguchi Foundation,
11-18 December 1995*

Japan is said to have entered the Internet Era in 1995. This symposium on information and communication was pertinent to the occasion. One theme in the symposium was continuity and discontinuity in Japan during the Meiji Restoration. Another theme was parallel change in the Western world and Japan, along with modernisation. The papers were arranged so as to form a kind of matrix, with one axis representing time from past to present, and the other representing the diversity of media for information and communication.

The participants and topics were: Yozou Konta (Publishing systems in the Edo period), Günther Distelrath (Comparison of information systems in Germany and Japan in 19th century), Edzard Jansen (Case study of technology-transfer between German and Japanese telecommunication industries), William Kelly (Japanese school baseball in view of state-making and media-event), Masatoshi Kubo (Persons and technologies of TV media), Shin Mizukoshi (Exclusion of amateur activity when radio was established

as a mass medium), Ken-ichi Fujimoto (Life style of young Japanese girls using pagers freely), Akio Abe (The modern Japanese postal system as reorganisation of the preceding stage-post system).

The final session was devoted to discussing general problems such as social continuity in the social system during Meiji-period modernisation. The new Meiji government promoted disconnection from the Edo system, in order to justify new systems of organisation. In fact, some of these systems, including the postal service, were just reorganised versions of the systems that already existed. We also discussed the phenomenon of late-developing nations or organisations overtaking early-developing nations or organisations. This is exemplified by societies introducing new telephone systems where telegraph systems were late to develop. Another example concerns HDTV (High Definition TV) broadcasting. European and American makers are late-developers of HDTV, and have adopted digital transmission. Japanese makers, who have been developing an analogue system since the early seventies, are reluctant to replace it with a digital system. The control of communication media was also discussed. Newly developed media are inevitably put under the control of some kind of authority, when their potential social influence is noticed by government and other authorities. In some cases the media are controlled politically to encourage a national consciousness among people. In other cases the media are controlled for commercial purposes. As control becomes stronger, the possible uses of media are narrowed down to only few modes.

At the end of the final session, discussion focused on the problem of whether electronic media like the Internet contribute to localism or globalism. Optimists suggest that the internet may encourage individual and personal expression, and pessimists fear that the new medium will serve to homogenise local cultures. What actually happens will depend mainly on how users gain access to the Internet.

The papers from this symposium will be published in English as one volume of the museum serial, *Senri Ethnological Studies*.

Masatoshi Kubo
Symposium Convenor
National Museum of Ethnology

The Theory of a Pluralistic Unity of the Chinese People, and Ethnic Relations in China

*International Symposium,
11-12 October 1996*

This symposium was attended by sixteen scholars, including three from China. The main aim was to understand ethnic relations in China from many viewpoints, in relation to a theory that the Chinese people is a pluralistic unity. This theory was proposed by Fei Xiaotong, a famous Chinese socialist and social anthropologist. The symposium was planned by S. Tsukada and H. Yokoyama. After an opening speech by K. Sasaki, papers were presented by S. Tsukada, H. Yokoyama, M. Segawa, K. Hasegawa, Ma Rong (Beijing), Chen Liankai (Beijing), and Zhou Xing (Beijing).

K. Tamura chaired the concluding session, in which A. Hamashima, K. Mori, C. Nakane commented on the presentations and the symposium theme. We had a lively discussion on sinicisation, ethnicity and the concept of 'Chinese nation' in China, and the symposium deepened our understanding of ethnic relations in China.

Shigeyuki Tsukada
Symposium Convenor
National Museum of Ethnology

New Staff Members

Saito, Mr Akira

is mainly interested in the history/ethnology of indigenous peoples in South America. He has worked in Eastern Bolivia, and is now studying the formation of the Jesuit missions in the Moxos region, and the genesis of folk Catholicism among Arawak-speaking peoples.

Kato, Mr Atsuhiko

is a linguist specialising in Karen languages and modern Burmese, and is interested in Southeast Asia. He is now working on Pwo Karen, and preparing a Pwo Karen grammar.

Nobayashi, Mr Atsushi

has studied subsistence and settlement patterns among native

Taiwanese, using ethno-archaeological and ethnographic approaches. He is especially interested in the relation between behaviour and material culture, and is preparing a comparative study about site formation processes in Taiwan and mainland China.

Visiting Scholars

The following visitors have been sponsored by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture (Monbusho):

Schnell, Dr Scott Randall



is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Iowa, Iowa City, USA. His research interests include social organisation, cultural ecology, religion, and ritual. He has done extensive fieldwork in Japan and is currently writing

a book on the use of rituals as a means of negotiating sociopolitical change. He will stay at the Museum for one year until 15 June 1997.

Hussainmiya, Dr Haji B. Abdul

is a Sri Lankan Malay academic, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of History, University of Brunei Darussalam. He was a visiting scholar at the Museum from 7 August to 6 November 1996 for a familiarising mission and to continue a study of State Formation



in Brunei Darussalam. He has published extensively on the history of modern Brunei, and the Malay minority Community in Sri Lanka. His latest book *Sultan Omar Ali*

Saifuddin III and Britain: The Making of Brunei Darussalam was published by Oxford University Press in 1995.

Publication

The following was published by the Museum during the period from April to November 1996:

◇ *Bulletin of the National Museum of Ethnology*, Vol 21, No 1, October 1996. Contents: Kyonosuke Hirai, 'Power and Social Interactions in a Northern Thai Factory: A Case Study of a Japanese Stationery Factory'; Teiko Mishima, 'Migration and Family Structures in Soninke Society'; Masaki Kondo, 'The Invention of a Pedal Driven Thresher: The History of the Invention as Revealed by Patent File Data'; and Toshio Hayashi, 'Stone Statues in Mongolia.'

MINPAKU Anthropology Newsletter

The MINPAKU Anthropology Newsletter will be published semi-annually, in June and December. 'Minpaku' is a Japanese abbreviation for the National Museum of Ethnology. The Newsletter will promote a continuing exchange of information with the 'Minpaku fellows' who have been attached to the Museum as visiting scholars, and who have visited us from overseas. It is also hoped that the Newsletter will become a forum for communication with a wider academic and anthropological audience.

MINPAKU Anthropology Newsletter No 1 is accessible through our homepage at:
<http://www.minpaku.ac.jp/eng.htm>.

General Editor: Komei Sasaki
Editor: Shigeharu Tanabe
Editorial Panel: Tomoya Akimichi, Tatsuhiko Fujii, Eisei Kurimoto, Peter Matthews, Akiko Mori, Yasuhiko Nagano, Hiroshi Shoji, Shigeharu Tanabe, Shigeyuki Tsukada.

Contributions and correspondence should be sent to:
Professor Shigeharu Tanabe, Editor,
MINPAKU Anthropology Newsletter,
National Museum of Ethnology,
Senri Expo Park, Suita, Osaka 565,
Japan.
Tel: +81-6-876-2151
Fax: +81-6-878-7503
E-mail: tanabe@idc.minpaku.ac.jp

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