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Special Theme: Food Culture

Food is an essential requirement for all creatures, and has many special meanings for humans. It is a source of pleasure, mediates social relationships, and is a key component in modern industrial economies. Civilization is impossible without food. Thinking about food is essential for understanding human existence. In this issue, five staff and visitors introduce some general views, specific cases, and current directions in food studies. (A. Nobayashi, special theme editor).

The Human and Natural History in Food Production

Atsushi Nobayashi

National Museum of Ethnology

Minpaku has a long tradition of food culture research. Naomichi Ishige led this research from the beginning. He was also the museum's third director. Ishige's work did not just lead Minpaku's food culture research, but food culture research in Japan as a whole. One of the chief characteristics of his work has been to promote food culture research with a global perspective. He has conducted field research in more than 80 countries and regions, publishing books such as *"Cultural Noodology (Bunka Menruigaku)"*, *"Field Work of the Palate (Shita no field work)"*, and *"Thinking Stomach (Kangaeru Ibukuro)"*. With two statements, Ishige summarized the relationship between humans and their food: 'Man is an animal that cooks', and 'Human beings are animals that share and eat food together'. These statements inspired me to think about food culture research in terms of the human and natural history together.

The idea of the human as an animal that cooks has been around for a long time, but has been extended by Ishige. We might paraphrase his words as follows: human beings are animals who plan to eat. Human beings have selected ecological resources that are useful to them from the natural environment and have added the processing, cooking, and combining of these resources to their feeding behavior. The important point is that humans practice this in a systematic manner. Most wild animals in the natural environment exist in a state of equilibrium, in which they themselves are a part of the environment. Their food consumption activities are carried out within the environmental system they occupy, and they rarely alter the environment by making an unbalanced use of its ecological resources. One of the key characteristics of human use of ecological resources lies in the imbalance between selectivity and quantity of consumption.

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Anthropology Newsletter

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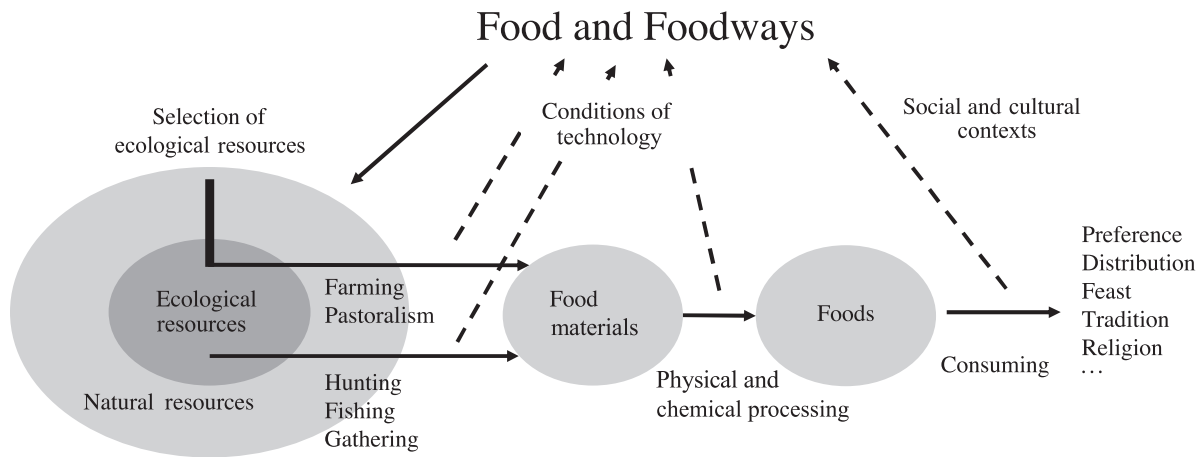


Figure 1.
Food and foodways

Humans have actively made selective use of ecological resources and consumed in mass quantities in such a way as to maximize individual profit. Over time, this has caused the extinction of certain animals and plants. Furthermore, one of humanity's adaptive strategies has been to switch to selective use and mass consumption of ecological resources through the inventions of domestication and cultivation. The result has been an explosive increase in the populations of livestock and agricultural species, as well as in the human population itself. Such imbalances in the utilization of ecological resources cannot be explained solely in physical terms. It is also necessary to consider the social and cultural factors that lead to imbalance. With this problem in mind, the author organized an interdisciplinary project called "Food and Foodways in Cultural and Environmental History" at the Graduate University for Advanced Studies. Anthropologists, archaeologists, and informatics researchers all participated

in the project. First we looked at the strategies of hunter gatherer societies, the diversity of cultivated plants in agricultural societies, and a broad spectrum of ecological resource-utilization under different 'food' systems. Based on the research and discussion, we proposed an overview of humanity's eating behavior and its impact on the environment (Figure 1).

Recently, the present author has also been engaged with the idea that 'Human beings are animals who share and eat food together', with a particular focus on meat-eating as one of the key elements in human food consumption. In this project, I consider the relationship between ecological adaptation and cultural status, and explore the changing nature of meat-eating in today's consumer culture, including possible future trends.

In the course of evolution, humanity has adapted ecologically to both carnivorous and vegetarian diets, and has also established social relations through the distribution and communal eating of meat, the use of meat in

sacrifice, and the avoidance and regulation of meat-eating. With the industrialization of meat production and distribution in the latter half of the 20th century, eating meat became an everyday occurrence in developed societies. Conversely it became very rare for people to gather for a communal meal of meat eaten directly from the animal. Against

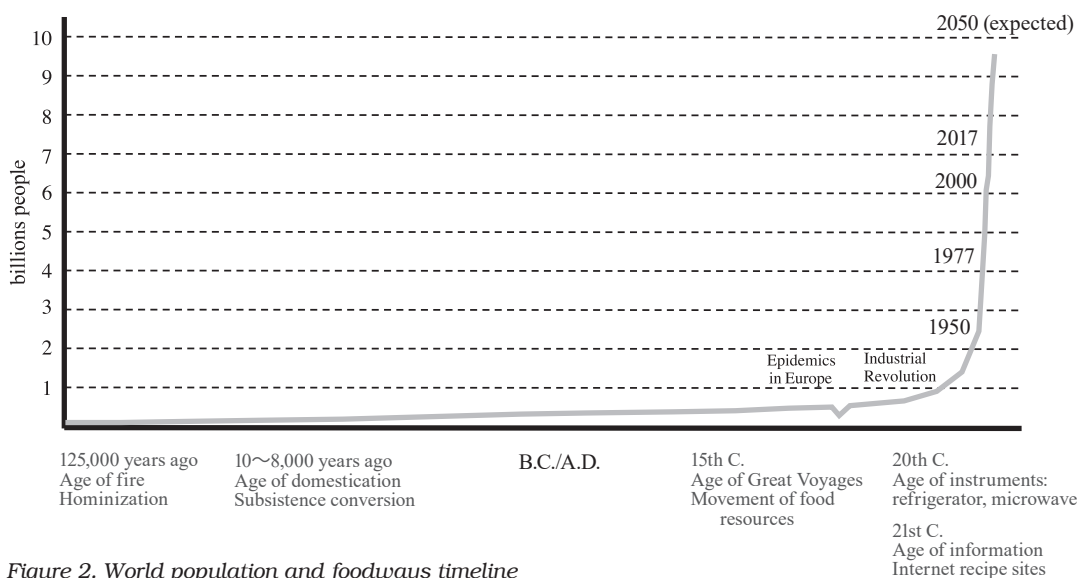


Figure 2. World population and foodways timeline

this social backdrop, discussions on the rights of animals, including the pros and cons of meat-eating, have flourished. This is seen particularly in the ethical approach advocated by “Animal Liberation Theory” in Western society. While these ethical arguments have also flourished in Japan, there have been few opportunities for an integrated discussion of the complex and diverse problems behind meat-eating and related practices. At Minpaku, therefore, we organized an Interdisciplinary Research Project entitled “A study of meat-eating”, and compiled the results in a book of the same name. Besides clarifying the tangled web of issues related to meat-eating, we considered the proper role of meat in today’s global consumer society. The project also aimed to bring a fresh perspective on the relationship between human and animals.

Building on the previous research, the author is currently planning a new

Minpaku Special Research Project entitled “Systems of food production in human and natural history” to look at four aspects of food and foodways: ecology, eating, society and civilization. Originally, food was a source of individual sustenance, all within the ecological cycle of the planet. However, the treatment of food resources in this modern era of mass production and mass disposal can be said to constitute a new, dark side of civilization that human society has never experienced before (Figure 2). The purpose of this research is to examine, within political and economic contexts, the mechanisms behind the current state of food production in modern society, which has deviated from ecological adaptation. The problem of food will be addressed using anthropological and socio-ecological perspectives. Through interdisciplinary approaches, the author hopes to further advance Minpaku’s research into food culture.

Atsushi Nobayashi, a professor at Minpaku, has carried out ethnoarchaeological research in Taiwan, focusing on hunting and farming of the indigenous peoples, and the significance of artifacts and objects made and used by them. He curates the Taiwan Collection of Minpaku and has managed exhibitions on the ethnography of indigenous culture and history. He also studies the social functions of food and foodways and edited, *The study of meat-eating* (in Japanese, 2018).

The Significance of National Cuisine in Today’s Globalized Society

Taeko Udagawa

National Museum of Ethnology

In December 2017, the “Technique of Italy’s Neapolitan Pizzaiuolo” was registered as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO. This was the second food registration in Italy, following the “Mediterranean diet”.

In response, President Macron said that France should immediately apply for listing of the baguette as the Intangible Cultural Heritage in France, where the “French meal” was already registered. Italy responded, with the chairman of the Italian Organization of Farmers (CORDIRETTI) remarking to the media that, “If France says so, registration of the production area of Italian Prosecco (white sparkling wine) should take precedence because the production areas of Champagne and Burgundy are already registered as World Heritage sites in France”. The chairman also mentioned that exports of Italian wine in 2017, already almost twice as much as French exports, increased by 11% from the previous year, almost twice as fast as the French exports, and Prosecco is the driving force behind it. This is an exchange of

nationalism over food.

Cuisines named after their countries, such as Italian cuisine and French cuisine, are commonly referred to as “national cuisine” or “national food”. National cuisine is deeply connected to the identity and image of a country and is often tied to nationalism. Studies of national cuisines in connection with establishing and growing nation-states have increased in recent years.

However, the situation is not so simple; a variety of factors contribute to nationalism, and the meaning of nationalism varies depending on how the nation-state is established. Accordingly, the meanings of national cuisine have become very diverse. In particular, globalization seems to have brought a paradigm shift to “national cuisine”, recently. But what is national cuisine?

Nationalism is primarily a process of how people are mobilized and integrated as members of the nation-state, which can be defined as an “imagined community”. The association of this movement and national cuisine

Taeko Udagawa is Professor at Minpaku. She specializes in family and gender studies, conducting fieldwork in Italy. Recently she has developed an interest in food movements. She published *Italy that Has Been Seen through My Living Inside the Castle Wall* (2015), and was one of the editors of *the Anthropology of Global Assistance* (2017), *the Anthropology of Work* (2016), and *Reading the Anthropology of Gender* (2007).



Artusi's cook book *La scienza in cucina e l'arte di mangiar bene* on sale in a modern bookshop (center of the bottom row) (Rome, Italy 2006)

can be learned from the spread of cookbooks and recipe collections as an anthropologist, Arjun Appadurai has noted. In Italy, a cookbook called *La scienza in cucina e l'arte di mangiar bene* (Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well) was published 30 years after 1861 when the Kingdom of Italy began. The book's success (it is said that each family has this book even now) is considered to integrate diverse dishes from different places under the category called "Italy". The author, Pellegrino Artusi, traveled through Italy, gathering recipes of each region into one volume and revising it many times with reference to readers' letters received after publication. Italy had been delayed in modernization compared to other European countries. However, by the time of *La scienza*, infrastructure such as the railroad and postal system had improved, and standardization of the Italian language had progressed. This book was published and spread during the growth of Italy as an "imagined community".

Currently, however, interest in Italian cuisine has strong economic implications related to tourism and trade, rather than representing public consciousness or a symbol of integration. Behind this "economic turn" lies globalization with people, goods, and information moving rapidly on a global scale.

Of course, the movement of people and goods beyond national borders is not new; in fact, it has been an essential factor in the development of national cuisine to date. For instance, migrants who left Italy during the late nineteenth century contributed to the establishment of Italian cuisine elsewhere. While being exposed to others' eyes in a migrant society, they became aware of themselves as "Italians" and recognized their own foods as "Italian food". In particular, the success of Italian restaurants opened

by migrants raised the international recognition of Italian cuisine and led to an increase in the export of Italian food materials. Foreign tourists visiting Italy also contributed to the establishment of Italian cuisine. Such contacts with other people cannot be overlooked in the establishment of any national cuisine.

Recent globalization has increased exponentially in scale, speed and complexity. The fact that people initially began to use the word "globalization" in an economical sense also implies a further permeation of market principles. The recent movement to try to register food as UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage in many countries is largely attributable to the expectation of an economic effect. In particular, among the nations that became independent after World War II, there are many cases where the outline of the nation was created before establishing sufficient public consciousness. In such cases (e.g., in some African countries), a government may select a meal and food without seeking people's consensus, and sometimes promotes them as national cuisine in order to appeal to foreign tourists, to wipe out negative images such as conflict and to increase tourism income. There is, of course, the view that "top-down" foods should be avoided in the national cuisine, though some have been recognized as part of real national cuisine, while utilized frequently for tourism and other commercial contexts.

Nationalism itself is also changing. When globalization accelerated in the 1990s, there was a concern that the meaning of a nation's existence would decline. The concern that all food and culture of the world will become uniform has been expressed in the word "McDonaldisation". Certainly now, the essentialist nationalism that dominated previously appears out of date; however, it remains apparent that the nation is one of the most important actors on the stage in the era of globalization. Interest in cultural differences including those related to food, and the value of these differences is increasing. In recent nationalism theory, the word "banal nationalism" has attracted attention as a more realistic expression that refers to everyday representations of nationalism, in sports and music for example, although these may appeal trivial, compared to essentialist and extremist claims for the homogeneous "imagined community".

Food is an exact model of banal nationalism and may be one of the most effective vehicles of nationalism

in today's global society. While nationalism is becoming less essential, it is more common and complicated. Certainly, food is nurtured in each environment and penetrates the body and the memory of the people living there. However, compared to language which is considered one of the foundations of nationalism, food is easy to change, translate, and acquire; it has the character of easily moving and transcending categories. Furthermore, since humans are curious about new and different foods (although there is also resistance), food is easily exposed to desires and interpretations. Some nations have started to dislike such movements and try to assert the authenticity of their foods, with examples including the Italian restaurant authentication system and the geographical indication system of food. However, such assertions easily reveal their limits if you look at how recipes from Italian cuisine have been modified by individuals around the world, as can be seen on the Internet.

Focusing on the transformations of national cuisine will surely help clarify changes in the position of the nation in global society. As nationalism becomes less essentialist, national cuisine has become one of the more important indicators of the complexity of an "imagined community"



Museum of the Mediterranean Diet (Pioppi in Campania, Italy 2017)

Authenticity, Soft Power and the Japanese Food Boom

Yoshimi Osawa

National Museum of Ethnology

Japanese food has become a huge trend throughout the world. The number of Japanese restaurants overseas is increasing every year. According to data provided by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan (MAFF), there were an estimated 118,000 Japanese restaurants outside Japan in 2017, a five-fold increase since 2006.

There have been various reactions throughout Japanese society to the international Japanese food boom, in particular by the Japanese government and food-related industries. In 2006, MAFF announced the introduction of a certification system for Japanese restaurants outside Japan. The primary purpose was to promote "correct" knowledge of Japanese food culture, to promote the export of agricultural and marine products to international markets, and to encourage Japanese food industries to expand their business overseas by ensuring the credibility of Japanese restaurants overseas. A panel of 11 experts appointed by the MAFF

Minister discussed how the certification system should work. For instance, they considered what types of restaurants should be the subject of certification and how to standardise the system. The term "*Sushi Police*" was coined by the American mass media to satirize these efforts, after which the system was considerably toned-down from a "certification system" to "recommendation program".

A short-animated series, *Sushi Police* inspired by the Japanese government's attempt was broadcast in 2016 in Japan. On its promotional website, the publisher says "Some want to defend authentic food culture. Others want to restore their right to eat what they like. They are opposite sides of the same sushi". Such rhetoric raises questions about what is "correct" or authentic Japanese food. "Authentic" is an expression repeatedly found in this kind of discourse. Is California roll authentic Japanese food? What about *ramen*, which has its origin in China?

In 2013, "*Washoku*, traditional dietary cultures of the Japanese,

Yoshimi Osawa has recently joined Minpaku as a Research Fellow. She specializes in ethnobotany and the anthropology of food. Her research centers on understanding relationships between humans and nature, particularly by looking at human taste perception, food and ecology. She is currently working on the history of MSG (monosodium glutamate) consumption and its rejection in Thailand.

notably for celebration of the New Year" was added to UNESCO's register of Intangible Cultural Heritage. How to define "*washoku* (Japanese food)" was one of the main discussion points during official meetings held in preparation for registration. According to UNESCO, *washoku* is "a social practice based on a set of skills, knowledge, practices and traditions related to the production, processing, preparation and consumption of food. It is associated with an essential spirit of respect for nature that is closely related to the sustainable use of natural resources". Note here that it was not food itself but social practice and culture, typically seen during New Year celebrations, that was recognised as intangible heritage.

Wa is a cultural concept referring to things Japanese, as in *wa-shoku* (Japanese food). The concept and the term *wa* has been used to distinguish Japanese from other external cultural influences, in particular Western and Chinese. As noted by many scholars including Harada and Ohnuki-Tierney, the concept of *washoku* originated during the Meiji period (1868-1912) to distinguish Japanese cuisine from other cuisines, at a time when the Japanese were engaged in "westernisation (*bunmeikaika*)" through various cultural borrowings including culinary culture.

The question still remains: what is correct and authentic Japanese food? Japanese food, just like other major global culinary traditions, has developed by incorporating different ingredients and cooking methods with diverse origins, inside and outside the country. Japanese food prepared outside Japan tends to be more flexible in terms of cooking methods, ingredients, combinations, and presentation - for reasons such as the availability of ingredients and a desire to adapt the palette to local sensitivities. The word *nihonshoku*,

often translated as "Japanese food", is commonly used to describe the food of Japanese restaurants outside Japan: *nihonshoku resutoran* (Japanese food restaurant). However, the term *nihonshoku* is rarely used in relation to food in Japan. Instead, *nihonryori* (Japanese cuisine) or *washoku* are used. Compared to *nihonshoku*, the meanings of *nihonryori* and *washoku* are more restricted and normally only used to describe more traditional Japanese food. Although there is no clear definition of *nihonshoku*, the certification policy mentioned earlier used the expression *nihonshoku resutoran*.

Proposing the Japanese food certification system and UNESCO *washoku* registration ran parallel to the Japanese government's Japan Brand strategy and cultural diplomacy. Soft power, a concept referring to socio-cultural politics and introduced by Joseph Nye, gained attention with the government's earlier promotion of "Cool Japan". Food culture was first included in the "2005 Intellectual Property Promotion Plan" as a "Japan Brand". The aim was to evaluate and develop prominent aspects of food culture and to promote widely the "correct" knowledge and techniques for Japanese food consumed outside Japan. Japanese food is considered to be a soft power, by the government and food industries, serving as a driving force for economic development and political good will, along with *anime*, *manga*, music, games, and fashion.

What has motivated these actions at a national policy level is the potential economic value of Japanese food. In various government statements, one of the main reasons given for government promotion of the credibility and quality of Japanese restaurants overseas is to support expansion of Japanese agricultural, marine and food product exports into global markets.

Economics is not the whole story - there is more to tell and more to learn. Toshikatsu Matsuoka (1945-2007), who initiated the Japanese food certification system as Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, mentioned his experience of eating Japanese food outside Japan in an online newsletter published in the Abe Cabinet E-mail Magazine (Dec 14, 2006): "I think, as a Japanese citizen, our food is something we can be proud [of, but] ... when I went overseas, I noticed restaurants serving dishes that did not in anyway resemble Japanese food, yet there was still a sign indicating a Japanese restaurant". I have found similar opinions during my fieldwork. Some



Take away sushi in Melbourne, Australia (Photo by author, 2016)

Japanese abroad complained how bad the Japanese food overseas tasted or told how a Japanese chef of Japanese cuisine lost his motivation working in England because the customers did not understand the Japanese delicate taste.

In the academic field, the *Society of Japanese Food Studies* was established this year in order to focus on various global issues related to food based



Sign identifying an 'Officially Accredited Authentic Japanese restaurant' at a Japanese Restaurant in London. (I could not find any official information about this accreditation.) (Photo by author, 2015)

on "Japanese food (*washoku*)". In 2019, Kyoto Prefectural University will open a new Department of Japanese Food Culture (*washoku bunka*), providing further opportunities to explore *washoku* in terms of history, arts, science, literature, culture, management and beyond.

The question of how globalization might strengthen or re-establish national and local identities has been examined by many scholars and is highly relevant to the globalization of food and foodways. The rising popularity of Japanese food overseas has brought us an interesting opportunity to consider the broader roles of food in cultural diplomacy, political economy, culinary nationalism, and cultural authenticity. Let me close with a quote from *Sushi Police*. "What is true sushi? It is not for us to decide but sushi will".

Taste, Authenticity, and Cultural Politics of Heritage Food

Shingo Hamada

Osaka Shoin Women's University

Fermentation is a cultural adaptive strategy that can make use of over-abundant resources, such as pelagic fish species that seasonally approach shorelines and are caught in the great quantity. Japanese scholars, notably Toru Shinoda and Naomichi Ishige, have greatly contributed to our understanding of fermented foods in human history and cultural geography, including fish sauces and other aquatic products in Southeast and East Asia. This essay reports the author's ethnographic research on the cultural value and meaning of *saba-narezushi* (fermented sushi made with mackerel) in the rural foodscape of southwest Fukui, Japan.

Mackerel Route and Fishing History - Tagarasu is a coastal community with a current population of approximately 400, located in Wakasa Bay, in Obama city of Fukui prefecture. Tagarasu is significant for two historical reasons: Firstly, it is the starting point of the Mackerel Route (*sabakaido*), the trading path that brought maritime products from the Sea of Japan to

the old capital of Kyoto. Secondly, it is known as one of the first places where advanced purse seine nets were employed for catching sardine and mackerel in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The mackerel fishery became an iconic economic and social activity in Tagarasu, but inefficient fishing regulation and resource management, possibly coupled with environmental changes, resulted in depletion of regional mackerel stocks and the closure of the purse seine fishery in Tagarasu in 1987.

Tagarasu individuals used to receive dozens of surplus mackerel after a successful fishing trip. These fish were preserved as dried or fermented products, such as *heshiko* (fish fermented with salt and rice bran) and *heshiko-narezushi* (*heshiko* re-fermented with rice and *koji* rice mold). The *narezushi* in Tagarasu and nearby coastal communities is unique in using two processes of fermentation. First, to make *heshiko*, fat-rich seasonal mackerel are stored with rice-bran in winter, then become aged with a condensed umami flavor in the rice

Shingo Hamada is an associate professor in the Faculty of Liberal Arts at Osaka Shoin Women's University and a research associate in the Department of Anthropology at Indiana University Bloomington. His research revolves around the environmental history and cultural politics of seafood in coastal Japan, with a special focus on fermented seafoods and commoners' fish such as herring. He is the author of "Seafood: Ocean to the Plate" (Routledge), "The Future of Food Studies" in *Food, Culture & Society*, and "Gone with the Herring: Ainu Geographic Names and a Multiethnic History of Coastal Hokkaido" in *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*.



Heshiko in a fermenting house in Tagarasu.
(photo by author, 2015)

bran over a hot summer in a barrel. Next, the salt and skin are cleaned off the *heshiko* fish. The desalted mackerel are stored again for a second fermentation, this time for about two weeks with rice and *koji*.

Narezushi looks and tastes different from globally known sushi such as *nigirizushi* and *makizushi* as it is not fresh but aged sushi made with fermentation. Using *heshiko*, not directly salted mackerel, in the crafting of *narezushi* makes a final product with less fishy smell while enriching umami flavors. Fermenting also helped locals to avoid wasting mackerel caught in great quantities by purse seine fishing. This two-fermentation process and artisanal production made *narezushi* valuable enough to be listed on the "Ark of Taste" produced by Slow Food International. While local producers are proud to have international recognition of their heritage food, registration in the Ark of Taste means that *naresushi* is a heritage seafood at risk of disappearance.

Satoyama-Satoumi Foodscape - Fermentation technologies also made protein sources available for farming communities outside coastal communities. In the region of Tagarasu and surroundings, there was a gift economy network that connected farming communities to fishing communities. Fisherfolks brought seafood, including *heshiko*, *narezushi* and other dried fish, to nearby farming communities. Fermented fish could also be an important medium for farming communities to obtain salt and sodium in their diets. Tsuneichi Miyamoto also refers to salted salmon as a source of salt as well as fish in northern Japan. In return, farmers provide rice and vegetables. Rice received from farmers in Autumn was used for home consumption and for crafting *narezushi*, while farmers received *narezushi* in return in early winter. A few Tagarasu elders still



Mackerel narezushi in Tagarasu.
(photo by author, 2015)

continue this exchange practice, even long after the Tagarasu and farming communities began purchasing food commodities in grocery stores.

Local production, distribution and consumption of *heshiko* and *narezushi* are still important aspects of regional cultural identity, though local mackerel and salt are no longer sufficient for production. Tagarasu people now use both domestic and Norwegian mackerel for *heshiko*, but only domestic mackerel can be used for *narezushi*. Commercially the fish are sold under the same name, *masaba* (literally *ma* means "real" and *saba* means "mackerel"). The geographical origin of products is labeled by regulation, but the fish are different subspecies. The Norwegian fish are Atlantic mackerel (*Scomber scombrus*) while the Japanese fish are Pacific mackerel (*S. japonicus*). Norwegian mackerel contain about twice as much fat and cost only one-fifth compared to Japanese mackerel. Cheap and rich fat content appeals to the taste of contemporary customers, and Norwegian mackerel now makes up about 90% of imported mackerel in Japan.

Norwegian mackerel are too fatty for making *narezushi*. Their high fat content gives the final *narezushi* products a slight yellowish color, while *narezushi* made with domestic mackerel gives the fermented fish and covering rice a symbolically-significant color. A small-scale aquaculture is currently producing local-branded mackerel in Tagarasu, in order to maintain cultural meanings and social relations that the heritage seafood has held for centuries. The fish cannot be simply substituted with foreign mackerel.

More importantly, the authentic taste of *narezushi* has recently become a bone of contention that prevents locals from working together to preserve and promote their heritage food in our post-industrial society. Non-local consumers tend to avoid

salty food for health concerns, but traditional preserved foods like *heshiko* and *narezushi* are inevitably salty as salt must be used in the fermenting process. Some local producers recently began using rice wine to sweeten their *narezushi* because of their grandchildren's preference. Strictly speaking, the use of rice *koji* in the crafting of *narezushi* is also not an 'authentic' cooking method. Locals state that rice *koji* promotes fermentation process while also making *narezushi* taste sweeter. Others also use *mirin* (sweet sake) in crafting *narezushi*, possibly for sanitary purposes or to make its taste closer to what urban consumers are more familiar with. Each household had its own recipe, taste, and unique microenvironment and fermenting house, so the taste of *narezushi* diversified. Now, the diversity is decreasing as elders begin to quit

making *narezushi* at home.

In Japan, rural populations have shrunk and aged with younger generations moving to cities. It is becoming difficult to pass down the artisanal knowledge and trading network of *naresaba* to future generations. Under these dire circumstances, how does changing taste affect local efforts to preserve and maintain *narezushi*? Will changing the taste of *narezushi* from salty to sweet, in response to the current health hazard of salt, follow the general trend towards sweet foods? What taste should be authenticized, if possible, and passed down to future generations? The cultural politics of taste continues to be entangled with the personal, social, and nutritional values of salt(iness) and authenticity in the postindustrial era.



The barter economy between coastal and inland communities.

Tsampa Eating, Tibetan Sign Language and Tibetanness

Theresia Hofer

University of Bristol

The well-known staple food of Tibetans is *tsampa*, roasted and ground barley. Barley is an ideal, hardy crop for the region as most inhabited areas lie well over 3000 m above sea level. Legend has it that the first agricultural field in Tibet was cultivated with barley in the seventh century, when Tibetan kings and their powerful Indian Buddhist teachers "tamed the land" and civilized local religions. In the process of turning Tibet into a land of the *dharma*, or Buddhism, offerings made from *tsampa*, the so-called *torma*, replaced the animal sacrifice of indigenous Tibetan religions.

Tsampa is still today a crucial daily food item for most Tibetans, especially

in the farming areas of the Tibetan plateau and the high Himalayas, where it is usually eaten together with either tea or yoghurt and often combined with butter and dried cheese. It is also used in many different Buddhist, household and life-cycle rituals as well as in festive foods, such as those eaten during the Tibetan New Year.

Contrary to many outsiders' views, Tibetans have long had diverse regional, political and religious affiliations and they speak, write and sign many different languages. This diversity has often made the modern, political "struggle for Tibet" difficult in the context of occupation and integration into the People's Republic of China,

Theresia Hofer is Senior Lecturer in Social Anthropology at the University of Bristol, UK. She currently studies social, political and economic dynamics in the lives of deaf Tibetans and their communication practices in Lhasa, Tibet Autonomous Region, China. Her article 'Is Lhasa Tibetan Sign Language (TibSL) Emerging, Endangered, or Both? Notes on TSL's History, Linguistic Vitality and Tibetan Signers in the Tibet Autonomous Region' was published in 2017 in a special issue on minority languages in Tibet in the *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* (Open Access).

during the latter half of the 20th century. In 1957 in the *Tibet Mirror* (a newspaper published in Kalimpong, India), appealed to all Tibetans as "Tsampa eaters". Here *tsampa* represents Tibetanness in the face of threat, as explained by historian Tsering Shakya in his famous essay *Whither the Tsampa Eaters* (1993). In *Rice as Self* (1993), Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney writes "The power of food as a symbol of self-identity derives from the particular nature of the symbolic process involved. One of the dimensions of food as a metaphor of a social group is that each member of the social group consumes the food, which becomes part of his or her body and it operates as a metonym for being part of the self." This argument could easily be applied to *tsampa* for Tibetans.

Tibetan Sign Language (TSL) visualizes the concept of Tibetanness as *tsampa*-eating in its sign for *bō* ("Tibet", the place) and *bō pa* ("Tibetan", the adjective) in a particularly explicit manner.



The TSL sign for "Tibet" and "Tibetan" on the left, as depicted in a section on ethnic groups and nationalities. From the Tibetan Sign Language Book: Vol 1 (2004).

The sign *bō* and *bō pa* uses both hands, with the signer's non-dominant hand forming the shape of a bowl, within which four fingers of the dominant hand perform the action replicating the preparation of fist-sized balls made from *tsampa* and tea (Figure 2).

The action of this sign iconically depicts the forming of *pak*, or *tsampa* dough balls, out of a *tsampa* and tea mixture. This is the most common way to eat *tsampa* in Central Tibet and in Lhasa. There are other ways of preparing and consuming *tsampa* in everyday life, such as by forming the dough balls inside a leather *tsampa* bag (often used when travelling or herding), or by preparing a wetter dough mixture in a small wooden bowl and then



Figure 2: A Tibetan forming *tsampa* dough balls. <https://highpeakspureearth.com/2011/tsampa-eaters-and-sweet-tea-drinkers-tibetan-identity-assertion-through-food/> (accessed 14 November 2018)

licking it directly out of the bowl (more common in Eastern Tibet, especially Derge). As a snack, the dry *tsampa* flour is also consumed by shoving it to the back of one's mouth on a spoon.

I have no record of how the eating of *tsampa* in the form of *pak* came to be used as the sign *bō* and *bō pa* in the Lhasa variant of TSL. Even the earliest TSL textbooks I found in Lhasa, from the year 2000, use the sign that refers to the making of *tsampa* dough balls. This is the main way *tsampa* is eaten as a daily meal in Lhasa and in Central Tibet, and the bodily movement is also a co-speech gesture used by hearing Tibetans. The gesture is also used by deaf Tibetan signers in Central Tibet, who have not come in contact with the more formalized Lhasa variety of TSL. They use this gesture to refer more broadly to either "food", "*tsampa*" or *pak*. One would expect that deaf signers in other regions of Tibet have other gestures and signs for the food and for "Tibet" and "Tibetan", as *tsampa* is eaten in a different ways. There is so far little contact between TSL users and deaf signers outside Central Tibet.

In Lhasa today, many older Tibetans and especially parents lament the fact that children no longer love *tsampa* as they themselves do. They complain that when children join school (which now from an increasingly young age means to join boarding schools), they grow accustomed to eating rice-based and wheat-based food stuffs and cease to eat *tsampa*, even during the weekends and holidays at home. There is even a (new?) discourse that *tsampa* is too difficult to digest and that Tibetans' stomachs are no longer "strong enough" to digest it. Many Tibetan parents are anxious that their children grow up able to – and loving to – eat *tsampa*. From about two to three months onwards, some will introduce *tsampa* as a solid food stuff "to make sure", so I was told, that their children will be able

to “digest and love *tsampa*” when they grow up. This is quite apart from the common one-off first feeding of *tsampa* and butter straight after birth.

The anxiety over *tsampa* among Tibetans in exile, who often have no access to this foodstuff, is certainly epitomized in the popular Tibetan music video from 2012 by Shapaley, a Swiss–Tibetan song-writer. This was performed in New York (home to a large Tibetan diaspora), and sung hip hop style:

རྩམ་པ་ཟ་ནའི་མི།
ཁལ་སིང་མི་ཚོས་སང་ཆ་དྲིས་ན།
ངས་ལན་འདྲག་སྒྲིབ་གིས་ཡོད།
ང་རྩམ་པ་ཟ་ནའི་མི་གཅིག་ཡིན།
ཁ་བ་ཅན་གྱི་བོད་ཡོངས་ནས་སྒྲིབ་སྒྲིབ་ཡིན།
རྩམ་པ་ཟ་བའི་ནའི་དང་གསལ་པོ་ཟ་ནའི་དེ།

I am a tsampa-eater.
If people ask me what I am,
I tell them this:
I am a tsampa-eater.
The land of snow is where
I come from.
I drink butter tea and eat jerky.

Ethnographers in many places around the world have described how food and language interrelate, from the use of magic spells in growing yam (Malinowski 1935) to how

children learn not to whine for their sago (Schieffelin 1990). Within the recent turn in linguistic anthropology toward the study of language use and foodways, the questions of how Tibetans talk about food, and how language explicitly encodes dietary and social change, are certainly worth further anthropological exploration.

Whether in Lhasa Tibetan Sign Language, or among political activists of the 1950s, or for a Swiss-Tibetan performing in New York, *tsampa* has maintained the power to signify not only a core food stuff, but also – in popular imagination – the land of Tibet, the Tibetan nation, Tibetanness, and Tibetans as people.



A snapshot from Shapaley's hugely popular song “I am a Tsampa Eater” on YouTube (2018). Shapaley here sits and performs in a New York Tibetan restaurant, eating tsampa dough balls, with a bowl of tsampa flour, a tsampa bag, and more dough balls on the table.

Column

Disturbing Visitors: an Earthquake and Typhoon

Peter J. Matthews

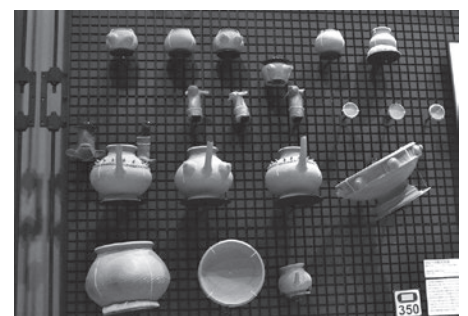
National Museum of Ethnology

Within the last six months, Minpaku has received two disturbing visitors – a powerful earthquake and an extraordinary typhoon.

On the morning of 18th June, a magnitude 6.1 earthquake struck northern Osaka at a depth of 13 km, very near the Museum. The quake was felt strongly across the surrounding region, including Kyoto, but the worst damage was in areas near to the main access routes to our museum, in the cities of Ibaraki and Takatsuki. The homes of many staff living near the museum were shaken, and supplies of electricity and water were cut over a large area. In the affected cities, older houses lost roof tiles, but generally, there was not much obvious damage

to buildings. The trains were operating fully again with a few days.

Our museum, however, was closed to the public for almost three months. Although structural damage does not appear to have been great, there was widespread cracking in walls, ceiling materials fell in the permanent galleries, and objects in some displays moved or were broken (see photo). There was fortunately little damage in the main storage rooms for our ethnological object collection, but the main library tower was badly shaken, and two-



Minor earthquake damage to a display of pottery, in the South Asia Gallery.

At Minpaku, Matthews is Professor, a curator of the Oceania Gallery at Minpaku, and heads the editorial panel of the present Newsletter. His research is focused on ethnobotany and plant domestication in Asia and the Pacific. Recent publications include the book chapter "Evolution and Domestication of Clonal Crops" (in the *Routledge Handbook of Agricultural Biodiversity*, 2017), and an article, "Phylogeography, Ethnobotany and Linguistics" (*Man in India*, vol. 97, 2017).



Exterior cladding that fell during the earthquake of June 18, 2018, at the public entrance to Minpaku.



Research office of our Director General after the earthquake.

thirds (approx. 400,000 books or journal volumes) of the library holdings were thrown to the floor. For research staff arriving at the museum in the days that followed, an unpleasant surprise was waiting: furniture, books and papers were scattered in many offices, according to how shockwaves passed through the building. Some office doors could not be opened for hours or days because of the objects that fell or moved inside. Fortunately, few staff members were present when the earthquake hit, and the museum had not yet opened to the public, so there were no injuries at the museum.

The consequences of the earthquake are still unfolding. The public auditorium at our museum, with a high ceiling and seating for 450 people, was found to be unfit for immediate repair, as the present 1970s design does not meet modern safety standards. Rebuilding and reopening of the auditorium are planned, but may take a long time. Safety in the museum generally has been reassessed. Bookshelves and furniture in our offices have been fixed or re-fixed to each other and to walls, where possible. Flexible bands for holding books in place have been added to many shelves. Staff members have been discarding unneeded books and papers to improve access and safety in their offices. Following initial repairs in the galleries, the museum reopened to the public on 13th September. Two special exhibitions were postponed, but are now showing and in preparation. Cracks in corridor walls have been painted over, but there is still concern about future maintenance costs and

the practical life-span of the building, which is a registered historical building designed by an award-winning architect, the late Kisho Kurokawa.

Just as our facilities and research began to settle back to something like usual, Typhoon Jebi hit Osaka and the surrounding region on the 4th of September. This was the most powerful typhoon to hit Japan in twenty-five years. Transport services, electricity, and other services were again interrupted. The obvious physical damage regionally was perhaps worse than the preceding earthquake. Large areas of metal and tile roofing were stripped from buildings. At our museum, numerous windows were blown out, and in the surrounding Senri Expo Park, hundreds of trees were ripped apart.

In the long-term, it is the earthquake damage that will most affect our museum, as it has pushed forward the need to think about the security and safety of our collections, facilities, and exhibitions. The Museum recently built new conservation facilities designed to assist other institutions with collections affected by disaster. We are very fortunate to have staff members who already have expertise in dealing with natural disaster. Ultimately, though, we have to accept that even our Museum is "mortal" and must face the same existential questions that every other building in Japan faces, given the geological forces that constantly act on this country. Hopefully, the spirit of the Museum will be resilient, even as the body weakens.

Exhibition

The World of Amish Quilts: Seeking Ways of Living, Weaving the World

Thematic Exhibition

August 23 – December 25, 2018

Amish people have developed communities primarily in North America as places to care and support each other, and to conduct a way of life based on their Anabaptist interpretation of the Bible.

First of all, the main purpose of the display of Amish quilts and everyday items is to show Japanese museum visitors that although Amish people seem to be apart from the modern world they actually interact with other people and the environment. The second purpose is to deepen knowledge of the Amish through exchanges with visitors and people who cooperated in preparing the exhibition, over a long period of time.

Quilts and other materials were collected, during three Minpaku museum projects conducted in 2011, 2013, and 2016, with the cooperation of people who are interested in Anabaptists' way of living and their quilts. The exhibits include 143 Amish and American quilts, written commentary, and photo panels.

These are presented in four parts. Part one traces the emergence of the Anabaptists,

the later separation of Amish from the Mennonites, their migration to North America, and the birth of various new Amish groups that chose different ways of living in this modern world. How Amish quilts attracted attention of people in the world especially in the late 20th century is also examined.

Parts two and three focus on the quilts mostly made by the first half of the 20th century. Part two features Amish quilts that express daily living and the natural environment, and examines aspects shared with American quilts more widely in American history. Part three focuses on Amish Quilts given to people at the milestones of life, including marriage, childbirth, and parting. These illustrate the ties that Amish people have woven into their changing lives.

Part four presents the current situation of Amish quilt making. Especially women have extended their living spaces by running small stores at home, and Amish people have continued to volunteer in making quilts to collaborate with other Anabaptist groups such as Mennonites for fund-raising activities to support care for diverse people.

Visitors can pick up four sheets at each section for further information on the Amish way of living, history of American and Amish Quilts, Amish lifecycle, and Anabaptist beliefs and practices for taking care of others. In the last

part, visitors can also see photographs of Anabaptist people's life from exchanges and documentations activities during the collection process in the United States.

Several gallery talks and lectures were given in the thematic exhibition hall. Workshops in

which participants actually experience making Amish quilts were conducted during the exhibition. Visitors can stay longer at a cozy sofa and table space in front of many quilts to see collected picture books and other information, including the paper "Creating Place for Caring and Pleasure: Living with Patchwork Quilts" in N. Suzuki (ed.) (2017), *Amish and Mennonites' Ideas and Practices for Well-being: Seeking Age-friendly Communities*. *Senri Ethnological Reports* 141.

The opinions of participants and visitors received during the preparations and the exhibition enriched research and exhibition activities at Minpaku and the collaborating institutions: International Quilt Study Center & Museum at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies, Mennonite Historical Library at Goshen University, and American Quilt Study Group.

Nanami Suzuki
National Museum of Ethnology

Transmitting Art and Craft: Japanese Industrial Design Originating in Tohoku

Special Exhibition

September 13 – November 2, 2018 (Interview)

Associate Professor HIDAKA Shingo, chairman of the executive committee, was asked about this special exhibition and its highlights. This interview was first published in Japanese in the "Minpaku Associates Newsletter" and is presented here courtesy of the Senri Foundation.

This exhibition focuses on the "National Research Institute of Industrial Arts" as the origin of industrial design in Japan. Could you tell us about its background and features of the exhibition? When the National Research Institute of Industrial Arts was founded in 1928, Japan was trying to industrialize craftwork as a pillar for promoting exports.



Visitors participating the "gallery talk" conducted by Nanami Suzuki (photo by Koji Suzuki, September 13, 2018)



Infinity table (photo by SAN-EI Corporation)

The National Research Institute was established in Sendai to help craft products to lead industrial development in the Tohoku region, where traditional crafts had originally prospered. The Institute produced many excellent designers and techniques up until the postwar period.

In 2015, prototypes manufactured at the Institute were donated in bulk to the Tohoku History Museum, with which I was involved while supporting the repair of cultural properties damaged by the Great East Japan Earthquake. This special exhibition has been realized as a result of my involvement in research on the donated materials. We also exhibited the "Sono Collection", a collection of craftwork owned by Minpaku, including a variety of tools used by craftsmen.

What made you use the title phrases "Originating in Tohoku" and "Transmitting Art and Craft"? I expect visitors to pay more attention to Tohoku after coming to this exhibition, and hope they will focus on the wonderful culture unique to Tohoku, not on "devastated Tohoku."

I chose "Transmitting" as a key word because I think past experiences are very important to us. I consider the concept of design or culture as the process of thinking about the present and the future based on the past. In recent years, we often see designs created without looking back at the past properly. This is very dangerous; our daily life goes well when our sense of values is based on a proper transmission and inheritance of both success and failure.

Are there any exhibits that you want the visitors to pay particular attention to? I would like visitors to pay special attention to the table-tennis

table "Infinity", which was used for the Olympic Games in Rio (see photo). Unlike conventional (high-performance) tables, its legs are made of wood. Thanks to the molded plywood technique developed by the National Research Institute, higher strength and precision were added to the wood – a fragile material. Furthermore, in response to the aspiration of the president of the manufacturing company, materials and techniques produced in Tohoku were used as much as possible. A new color used for the table, 'les yeux bleus', was developed as a color of life to express hope for successful reconstruction in Tohoku. In addition, this color has a design advantage that makes the ball easy to see. This exhibit represents both the spirit of the National Research Institute and the present Tohoku.

How do you want the members of the Minpaku Associates to enjoy the exhibition? You may think 'industrial design', is different from 'traditional crafts'. I think Japanese culture is well-balanced in tradition and modernity. I would be glad if visitors could understand through the exhibition how arts and crafts and industrial design can create a future by balancing the past and present.

Information

Awards

Akira Saito

Professor, Department of Modern Society and Civilization

Received from Daido Life Foundation the *Incentive Award for Area Studies* for his research on Latin America

(July 6, 2018).

National Museum of Ethnology

The Museum received the *JICA President Award* for preeminent contributions to socio-economic development in developing countries, in recognition of the International Museology Course organized by the Museum in collaboration with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and other museums (October 1, 2018).

Shigeharu Sugita

Professor Emeritus

Received the *Order of the Sacred Treasure, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon* for his long-term contributions to public education (November 3, 2018).

Retirement

After many years at Minpaku, the following will retire in March 2019.

Koji Sato

Associate Professor, Architectural history, ethno-architecture; Southeast Asia, Oceania.

New Staff

Hideaki Suzuki

Assistant Professor, Department of Globalization and Humanity



Hideaki Suzuki works on the Indian Ocean in world history, and especially the East African Coast. Specific interests

include topics such as piracy, merchants, port cities, pearl fishing, slavery and slave trading. He is the author of *Slave Trade Profiteers in the Western Indian Ocean: Suppression and Resistance in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Palgrave, 2017, a winner of Japan Association for African Studies Award, 2018) and

edited a collection of articles focusing on the abolition of slavery in various regions entitled *Abolitions as A Global Experience* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2016). He is currently writing a global history of the abolition of slavery which will be published next year.

Tetsuya Tanaka

Assistant Professor, Centre for South Asian Studies, National Museum of Ethnology and Research Fellow, Center for Transdisciplinary Innovation, National Institutes for the Humanities



Tanaka specializes in the History of Religions and South Asian Studies. He has conducted fieldwork with Marwaris,

known as one of the most successful trading communities in India, and especially their management of Hindu temples and public trusts in North India. His main interest is the transformation of religion in public areas and interactions between religion, law and the public in colonial and post-colonial India. He received his PhD in March 2014 from Kansai University, and was a JSPS (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science) Postdoctoral Research Fellow (2014-2016), Associate Fellow at the International Research Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (2016-2017), and a JSPS Overseas Research Fellow (2017-2018). His major works include *Business Community and Hindu Temple Management in India: Charity, Devotion, and Interest for Marwaris* (in Japanese, Fukuyosha, 2014).

Overseas Visiting Fellows

Adama Ousmanou

Senior Lecturer, University of Maroua

Adama Ousmanou is a Senior



Lecturer and researcher in History Department at the University of Maroua, Northern Cameroon. He has

specialized in Islamic studies in the Chad Basin, employing comparative methods to understand Chad Basin people and societies. His publications include a recent book entitled: "Islam, Ethnicity and Power in Chad Basin from 1960 to 2000, Comparative Studies of Cameroon, Nigeria and Chad, (2015). His ongoing research and teach focus on ethnicity, Islamism, post-Islamism, fundamentalism, and analysis of efforts to the counter violent extremism in the Chad Basin region and beyond. He is a national representative member of the RESOLVE Network Research Advisory Group that supports research initiatives through the United States Institute of Peace (2017-2018). From 2018 he will focus on issues related to Islamic education in West Africa. At Minpaku, he is using historical and anthropological approaches to develop the ethnological database and archives which include oral and audio literature and ethnographic objects from several ethnic groups in Northern Cameroon collected by the late Paul Kazuhisa Eguchi.

David Somfai Kara

Researcher, Institute of Ethnology, Research Centre for the Humanities (Hungarian Academy of Sciences)



I was born in Budapest but spent summer vacations in the Great Hungarian Plain where I met the local Cuman

people. This aroused my interest in the language and culture of the Kypchak Turks. I started my academic training

as a philologist and linguist and spent two years in Central Asia between 1993 and 1995. I was fascinated how indigenous peoples preserved their cultures despite the Communist ideology, and then started to revive them in the post-Soviet era. I have started collecting folklore to better understand indigenous culture. In the last 25 years I have travelled through Central and Inner Asia, Russia, Mongolia and China to meet Altaic peoples.

Theresia Hofer

Senior Lecturer, University of Bristol



Being trained as a social and medical anthropologist, I have over the past few years developed a renewed interest in how social processes

and practices relate to, or are expressed, through language. I came to Minpaku to learn from four linguists and an anthropologist studying sign languages and deaf communities in Asia, in a project headed by R. Kikusawa. I am currently writing *Signs of Resistance? Signing and Belonging to Tibet*, based on fieldwork in Lhasa. I work as Senior Lecturer in Social Anthropology at the University of Bristol, UK, and previously curated the *Bodies in Balance* exhibition at the Rubin Museum of Art in New York (with a publication of the same title). My second monograph *Medicine and Memory in Tibet: Amchi Physicians in an Age of Reform* has just been published with the University of Washington Press.

Yuka Kadoi

*Visiting Scholar
Al - Sabah Collection/ Dar al - Athar al - Islamiyyah*

Yuka Kadoi is a historian of Islamic and Asian art. Since the completion of her doctoral research (PhD in History of Art, University of Edinburgh), she has worked internationally as a researcher, lecturer and curator. She is the author or editor of several books and numerous

Forthcoming Exhibitions

Thematic Exhibition

Traveling Music: The String Instruments of South Asia

Feb.21 – May.7, 2019

National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka



vichitra vina

Special Exhibition

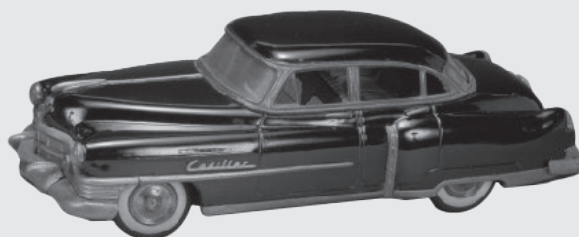
Toys Expo - Children in Modern Japan

Mar.21 – May.28, 2019

National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka



car



Cadillac



articles, including *Islamic Chinoiserie: The Art of Mongol Iran* (Edinburgh University Press, 2009; paperback,

2018; Chinese and Persian translations, forthcoming) and *Arthur Upham Pope and A New Survey of Persian Art* (Brill, 2016), and the curator of Islamic art exhibitions in Chicago (2010), Edinburgh (2014) and Hong Kong (2018). Her current major project is publishing a comprehensive catalogue of Islamic jade in association with the Al-Sabah Collection / Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah in Kuwait. As a grant recipient awarded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF), she has just launched a research project on the history and historiography of Persian art at the Institute of Art History, University of Vienna. At Minpaku, she is helping on developing the data for the Middle Eastern collections, in collaboration with Minpaku's Centre for Modern Middle Eastern Studies. This work is

aimed at a future exhibition of the Gluck Collection of modern Persian arts and crafts (a collection held at Minpaku).

Publications

available online at:
minpaku.ac.jp/publications

Bulletin of the National Museum of Ethnology 42

Issue 4: Nobayashi, "Clothes as Means to Visualize Ethnicity: A Case of Name Correction Process of Taiwan Indigenous Sakizaya People".

Bulletin of the National Museum of Ethnology 43

Issue 1: H. Kondo, "The Actual as Possessing the Land: Demarcation from the Perspective of the Embera (Panama)".

Senri Ethnological Studies 99

R. Fleming Puckett and K. Ikeya, (eds.) *Research and Activism among the Kalahari San Today*. 353pp (monograph).

MINPAKU Anthropology Newsletter

The Newsletter is published in June and December. "Minpaku" is an abbreviation of the Japanese name for the National Museum of Ethnology (Kokuritsu Minzokugaku Hakubutsukan). The Newsletter promotes a continuing exchange of information with former visiting scholars and others who have been associated with the museum. The Newsletter also provides a forum for communication with a wider academic audience.

Available online at:
minpaku.ac.jp/publications

General Editor: Kenji Yoshida
Editor: Peter Matthews
Editorial Panel: Hatsuki Aishima, Kazunobu Ikeya, Ritsuko Kikusawa, Yoshitaka Terada

Address for correspondence:
The Editor
MINPAKU Anthropology Newsletter
National Museum of Ethnology
Senri Expo Park, Suita, Osaka
565-8511, Japan
Tel: +81-6-6876-2151
Fax: +81-6-6878-8479
E-mail: nletter@idc.minpaku.ac.jp

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