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Special Theme: Masks that Live

In this issue, four authors introduce topics related to the Special Exhibition: *Masks in the Performing Arts and Festivals of Japan*. Ryoji Sasahara led this Special Exhibition for the 50th Anniversary of the Museum's Founding and invited participants to contribute here. His introductory remarks follow.

Masks and people

Ryoji Sasahara

National Museum of Ethnology

Wearing masks

The first thing that comes to mind when people hear the phrase “wearing masks” may be the image of a person donning a mask to take on a different persona from themselves during festivals or folk performing arts. In other words, masks are used as a tool for individuals to temporarily assume the appearance of something other than themselves. Noh actors put on their masks in the *kagami-no-ma* (mirror room) that is separated by a curtain from the eyes of the audience before appearing on stage, and are regarded by the audience as living the roles depicted by their masks. Similarly, dancers at the *Hana Matsuri* (flower festival) wear masks in the so-called sacred place *Kanbeyu*, then appear at the festival site where rituals and dances are performed throughout the night, and are seen by throngs of onlookers as ogres, old men, and other characters represented by their masks. Because they are perceived to be these characters, we can say there must be a certain validity to the images people hold in mind.

Masks worn to show the performer's face

It is also true that the images held are not always sufficient for understanding the meaning behind the wearing of masks. In a surprisingly large number of performing arts and festivals in various regions, masks are worn with the performer's face visible. For example, during the *Futokoroyama no Okunai* New Year's event in Hamamatsu city, Shizuoka prefecture, performers wear masks fixed over the foreheads in the roles of *okina* (old man) and *baba* (old woman) and in the *Hotoke no Mai* (dance of the Buddha), while performers of *Saru no Mai* (monkey dance) have their monkey masks fixed in a *hachimaki* headband beside their heads so that their faces are visible. At *Niino no Yuki Matsuri* (a snow festival) in Anan town, Nagano prefecture, performers of *okina* and *tengu* (long-nosed goblin) wear masks over their foreheads so that the performers' faces can be seen clearly (photo below).

Contents

Special Theme: Masks that Live

Masks and people	
Ryoji Sasahara	1
Analyzing masks and the status of narratives about masks	
Junichi Koike	3
Funny masks	
Toshio Fukuhara	5
<i>Jagashira</i> in Shimane prefecture	
Sachiko Ishiyama.....	9
Exhibition.....	12
Information.....	14
New Staff.....	15
Publication.....	16
Forthcoming Exhibitions.....	16



Mask fixed on the forehead at *Niino no Yuki Matsuri* (a snow festival), Nagano prefecture (Sasahara, 1989)

Sasahara specializes in the study of folk culture and folk performing arts. His major publications include *Sanbiki Shishimai no Kenkyu* (A Study on *Sanbiki Shishimai*, or Threesome Lion Dance) (Shibunkaku Publishing Co., Ltd., 2003), which he authored, and *Hare no Katachi: Tsukurimono no Rekishi to Minzoku* (The Shapes of *Hare*, or Festivals, Ceremonies, and Other Extraordinary Occasions: The History and Folklore of Crafted Objects for Festivals and Ceremonies) (Iwata-Shoin, 2014), which he co-authored. He also wrote and edited *Koto Densho to Moji Bunka: Moji no Minzokugaku/Koe no Rekishigaku* (Oral Tradition and Literate Culture: The Folklore of Letters/The History of Voices) (Shibunkaku Publishing Co., Ltd., 2009) and co-edited *Tsukurimono no Bunkashi: Rekishi/Minzoku/Tayosei* (The Cultural History of Crafted Objects for Festivals and Ceremonies: History/Folklore/Diversity) (Benseisha Publishing Inc., 2014).

Other examples include the *kake men* masks worn for *Sennin Musha Gyoretsu* (1000 *samurai* procession) during the spring and autumn festivals at Nikko Toshogu shrine in Nikko city, Tochigi prefecture, and the *menkake* masks worn during the *Waka Matsuri* (*waka* poetry festival) at Wakayama Toshogu shrine in Wakayama city, Wakayama prefecture. In this way, surprisingly, it is not uncommon for performers to wear masks while their faces may be visible. This type of mask-wearing raises the question of whether festival goers perceive the appearance of masked performers differently when their faces are visible. In other words, does the audience regard the performers' appearance as something that the masks represent, and not that of the performers themselves? If a mask is worn in a way that does not fully obscure a performer's face, it is difficult to regard the performer's appearance as something that the mask represents. In this case, the relationship between the mask and the performer does not seem to match the image of mask-wearing that I presented at the outset of this paper.

Masks that people don't wear but worship

How then should we think about mask-wearing? One clue may be found in the fact that there are masks that are not worn by people but are worshipped. These masks can be found throughout Japan, particularly from Miyagi prefecture to southern Iwate prefecture. Masks of *kamagami-sama* (hearth god) are enshrined in kitchens

and on *daikokubashira* (the main pillar of a house) to ward off fire and theft. Also, in southern Kyushu, there are many shrines where masks resembling demonic gods are dedicated. These masks are all horrifying in appearance, with no holes for the eyes or mouth, and no gouges in the back, and are not made to be worn by humans.

In some cases, masks are enshrined without being worn. At *Tani no Omen-san Matsuri* (a mask festival) held once a year in Katsuyama city, Fukui prefecture, there is an altar dedicated to Noh masks that are said to have drifted down from a large temple upstream (photo below). Noh masks and *bugaku* (court dance and music) masks may also appear as items of sacred power in rituals, such as a prayer for rain.

These examples of masks that are worshipped without being worn seem to indicate that masks are not subordinate to people as tools used to dress up, rather, such masks are independent of and separate from people, fulfilling a certain role regardless of whether they are worn or not.

A clear distinction is generally made between humans and masks. Unification of the mask and the person wearing it has long been considered an anomaly, as found in an anecdote from Awara city, Fukui prefecture—punishment came to a woman in the form of mask that could not be removed from her face, a mask now known as the *nikutsuki* (stuck to flesh) mask (see next article).



Tani no Omen-san Matsuri (a mask festival), Fukui prefecture (Sasahara, 2023)

Masks superior to people

If we consider that masks are not subordinate to people as tools for transformation, but are independent of people, and that the two are clearly distinguishable, we may be able to account for the relationships between people and masks in the different regions examined above. Masks are often regarded as sacred objects, revered for their power beyond human understanding, or considered to depict the arrival and exit of divine spirits at festivals or in performing arts when worn and removed. Considering that masks have been revered as sacred in

some form or another, masks may be said to be superior to human beings rather than of an equal status. If such a perspective is possible, when a performer wears a mask, the sacred mask itself becomes the master, and the human performer becomes inferior and subordinate to the mask, so whether or not the performer's face is visible may not matter so much. In this case, what matters is the very appearance of the mask or what the mask represents, not necessarily who is playing the role.

Analyzing masks and the status of narratives about masks

Junichi Koike

National Museum of Japanese History

Masks are often treated as one of the components of the performing arts. There is a stage, music is played, costumes are worn, *torimono* (sacred tools) are brought out, and various lines are spoken. Masks cover the faces of performers and are often the last part of their transformation into gods, Buddha, men, women, old men, ogres, monkeys, or foxes. Therefore, the mask is the final piece in the transformation from a human being into something else. By wearing a mask, a human being transforms into something that is not their self and makes a most striking, strong, and constant statement about it. Moreover, it is often understood that the person's actions, thoughts, and consciousness while wearing a mask are no longer their own, and the fact that the mask wearer often believes this to be the case is also an indication of the power that resides in the mask.

Thus, when considering a mask, no matter how much we talk about, verify, and record its shape, color, size, material, weight, and texture, we will never get a complete grasp of the mask. Masks are not only masks *per se*, they also begin to assert their existence and function vividly only in the context of fantasy, promise, and symbolism. Much of the research on masks has been devoted to confirming and analyzing this aspect.

Often, masks detached from these

contexts have been treated as something more than mere objects and something excessive. This is why only a select few are allowed to touch and feel them, and why the name of the creator is perhaps deliberately withheld. In this way, masks are cut off from society and history, and they remain so.

Masks are considered magical, and most of the appeal of masks is tied to this. However, in the folklore surrounding masks in Japan, there have been activities in which such masks have been separated from the performance of performing arts and attempts to tell something with the masks alone. One such example is an old story about the origin of the tutelary deities of the hearth. For example, Kunihiko Uchida's *Nanso no Rizoku* (Traditions of South Kazusa) (1915) includes a story of how an unscrupulous man came to be enshrined as *kojin-sama* (a powerful deity) behind the hearth after he died. In some cases, such old stories depicted the origin of a mask with frightening appearance (*kamagami-sama*, see photo next page) that was put up near the hearth or on the *daikokubashira* (main pillar of a house) from Miyagi prefecture to southern Iwate prefecture.

According to the study of narrative folktales, those with the same theme had already been handed down in various forms in medieval Japan,

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Goddesses in Each Season) (Shunjusha Publishing Company, 2015), and *Shin Onmyodo Soshō (4) Minzoku/Setsuwa* (New Onmyodo Series (Vol. 4) Folklore and Tales) (Edited book, Meicho Publishing, 2021).



Kamagami-sama (H0328021, Minpaku). To avoid fire and theft, similar masks are enshrined near the stoves in households.

and it is assumed that they became associated with *kamagami* masks, as they incorporated the spiritual experiences of the gods and Buddha, as well as the strange fates of men and women. Masks became more associated with universal narratives and it perhaps can be said that this is because the masks themselves were isolated from the society in which they were handed down.

Another example of such a mask is the *yome-odoshi nikutsukino-men* (threaten the daughter-in-law/stuck to flesh mask) of Yoshizaki-gobo Gankeiji temple in Awara city, Fukui prefecture (photo right). This mask is accompanied by an anecdote about a mother-in-law who could not remove the mask after threatening her daughter-in-law because she hated the latter's frequent visits to the temple. After much suffering, she finally removed it by chanting *Namu Amida Butsu* (a homage to Amida Buddha).

It is clear that these masks were passed down thanks to a strong faith in the Shinshu sect, and the masks themselves had been used not in the performing arts or theater, but rather as temple treasures and for recounting anecdotes. Rather than the importance of the process of making masks or the characteristics of their facial expressions, masks have been handed down as an expression of great faith in the Shinshu sect. The history of the masks themselves has become background information, and they have been valued as symbols of the religious environment of the Shinshu sect in this region.

The existence of a folk culture that talks about masks and tells stories about them indicates that these masks have a different meaning from those used as an element of performing arts. They are not mere objects, of course. If so, what should we call them? The mask by itself does not tell stories. However, if we try to analyze the folkloric meaning of masks, we should pay attention to the stories told by masks and the status of those stories.



Yome-odoshi nikutsukino-men (replica, courtesy of Yoshizaki-gobo Gankeiji temple, Awara city, Fukui prefecture).

Funny masks

Toshio Fukuhara

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Mekazura and hyaku manako

Masquerades or masked balls in medieval Europe often had an atmosphere of immorality about them as the masked participants danced and socialized while concealing their identities and backgrounds, and anyone could enjoy companionship that went beyond what was permitted in their everyday lives. Domino masks (queen masks) of such obscure lineage often appeared in the form of eye masks covering the upper half of the face and were widely used in costume parties and as party goods.

Meanwhile, in the early modern period in Japan, *mekazura* (eye masks), consisting of a rectangular piece of cardboard with eyebrows, hair drawn

on the side, and holes drilled for the eyes, were attached to the ears with string or elastic.

The purpose of *mekazura* is not to transform the wearer into the person represented by the picture on the mask, but to induce humor or laughter similar to Western joke items such as mustache or nose glasses. They were used in street performances, advertising, and for selling products. The illustration below shows Yonekichi, a toothpaste seller who prospered when he sold his products wearing a *mekazura* with *hyaku manako* (a hundred eye expressions).

Mekazura can be seen in the *Kibyoshi* (yellow cover) picture book, *Tamamigaku Aotogazeni* published in

Born in Tokyo in 1957, Fukuhara submitted a thesis on folklore for his PhD at Kokugakuin University. After serving as a curator at Osaka City Museum, he became an assistant professor at the National Museum of Japanese History, an assistant professor at the Graduate University for Advanced Studies, and a professor at Japan Women's University. He is currently a professor at the Faculty of Humanities, Musashi University. His main single-authored publications include *Kanda Festival Illustrated Handscroll from the Peak of the Edo Period—Oyatoimatsuri and Tsukematsuri in 1823* (published by Watanabe Shuppan, 2012), *Edo Downtown Picture Diary at the End of Edo Period—Life and Livelihood of the Town Painter* (Watanabe Shuppan, 2013), *Illustrated Handscroll of Festival Stalls and Floats in Edo—Kanda Festival and Sanno Festival* (Watanabe Shuppan, 2015), *Illustrated Handscroll of Edo Sanno Festival—Procession/Umbrella-Shaped Decorated Kasaboko Floats and Other Parade Floats/Festival Stalls* (Iwata Shoin, 2018), and *Illustrated Handscroll of a Mask and Niwaka Festival* (Iwata Shoin, 2020).



Hyaku Manako seller
(Ishizuka Hokaishi in *Kinsei Akinaizukushi Kyoka Awase*,
1852, National Diet Library
collection)

1790. In the Kansei era (around 1800), *hyaku manako* became popular at *yose* (vaudeville shows) in Edo (Tokyo). In these performances, *mekazura* with various facial expressions were worn one after another to invite laughter while stories were told.

During the Bunka era (1804–1818), *rakugo* storyteller Sanshotei Kajo revived the obsolete *hyaku manako*, which was also called *hyakumenso* (one hundred faces).

In the Kabuki play *Shiranami Gonin Otoko* (The Five Thieves) first performed in 1862, *Enma* (the king of hell who

judges the dead) appeared on the stage wearing his crown, *mekazura*, over his ears and holding a *shamisen* (a three-stringed Japanese instrument) from the runway, drawing laughter.

In the Edo period play *Gokan Kyogen Bakama Itsutsumonzukushi* (1828), *mekazura* masks are sold at night stall fairs, and they continued to be used as a children's toy in the Meiji era and thereafter (from the mid-1800s). The illustration below shows *mekazura* sold at night stalls in Mukojima and Ueno.



Mekazura seller (Shimizu Seifu, *Yowatari Fuzoku Zue*, Vol. 5, National Diet Library collection)

Niwaka at festivals

Every year on May 3rd and 4th, during the Hakata *Dontaku* Port Festival, a traditional storytelling comedy (Hakata *niwaka*) is performed at Kushida shrine and other locations around Hakata city in Fukuoka prefecture. The stage opens with music from *shamisen*,

sho gong, and *taiko* drums, followed by a standard prologue. Then, the performers present their latest material and deliver punch lines reflecting the current state of affairs in the world.

The word *niwaka* means quickly or suddenly, as in *niwaka ame* (sudden rain), and is an abbreviation for *niwaka*

kyogen (short farce), which began as an improvised performance at summer festivals and other events in Osaka in the early modern period.

It is the aesthetic sense of *furyu* that underpins *niwaka* performance with penchant for eye-catching and elaborate one-time-only costumes and settings. *Furyu*, which became popular from the Heian to the Kamakura period (around 800–1300), were combined with *odori* (music and dance) and took shape as *furyu odori*, a form of entertainment in which people in the medieval period in Japan paraded through town beautifully dressed for festivals and other occasions, or danced to the accompaniment of musical instruments.

Niwaka developed as a branch of *furyu*. They consisted not only of skits and dances, but also costumes, float carriages, and musical accompaniments were called *niwaka* or *niwaka odori*. Although there were scripts, improvisation, performed only once with little practice, was valued. Improvisation, satire, wit, and humor were the hallmarks of *niwaka*.

Osaka *niwaka*, in which several people performed short comedy skits on the street, imitated the kabuki actors of the time, parodied their

stories, and turned their dissatisfaction with samurai society into laughter.

Niwaka performed at an Osaka summer festival is believed to have influenced the theatrical *danmono* (improvisation) style of Hakata *niwaka*.

Hakata *matsubayashi* and *niwaka*

Matsubayashi is both an art form performed at the beginning of the year to celebrate good fortune and a musical performance held during the first seven days of the year. It was popular in the Muromachi period (1336–1573) but gradually evolved to become a part of *Matsubayashi Noh* plays.

Matsubayashi in Hakata in the early modern period refers to performances given on the 15th of January as part of the New Year's celebration by each town from Hakata castle town (east of the Naka river) to the castellan of Fukuoka castle. The main part of the festival consisted of the same *sarufukujin* (three lucky gods) procession, *chigo* (children) dance, and *kasaboko* (umbrella-shaped decorated floats), and each town would change both the appearance and performance of the festival annually. After returning to their hometown, Hakata, people drank and had a merry time.



Ebisu (a god of fortune) on horseback and Hakata citizens wearing *hanmen* mimicking a Korean envoy (Hakata *Matsubayashi Torimon Emaki*, colored on paper, Vol. 1, private collection)

Hakata *niwaka* was performed in the form of *torimon* (a procession where participants paraded in a variety of costumes), but the actual situation is not clear.

A *torimon* painted in *Hakata Matsubayashi Torimon Emaki* (previous page), an illustrated handscroll produced in the late modern period (1750s-1850s), is thought to be a depiction of an actual performance that took place in a certain year, although exactly when is unclear. Hakata citizens playing the double-reeded *suona* and mimicking a Korean envoy wore a clown's mask like the one shown in the illustration. With ridiculous sounds, actions, and jokes, the performer made both the lord and the commoners laugh.

Some say that Hakata *niwaka* originated in the Meiwa period (1764–1771) when the performers would play *Matsubayashi no dochu* (*Sekijoshi*), a *torimon*, or present a playful joke to entertain the lords and their wives in the castle (*Tsuikai Shozan Iji*).

Hakata *niwaka*, characterized by costumes, farcical plots, and jokes, are thought to have originated as *Matsubayashi torimon*, but they have not been performed as a *torimon* since the Meiji era.

The heyday of *niwaka* is said to have been in the Meiji 20s and 30s (1880s–1890s). At that time, *bon niwaka* were mainly performed immediately after the Bon period, and masters of large retail stores and others paid to form groups and spent long hours developing scripts, which were then presented in elaborate performances.

The *danmono* style was the mainstay

of Hakata *Matsubayashi* and *Niwaka* at that time. However, during the Taisho era (the early 1900s) the popularity of these performances declined in Hakata and other regions, partly because the aesthetic sense of *furyu* declined.

Hanmen of Hakata Niwaka

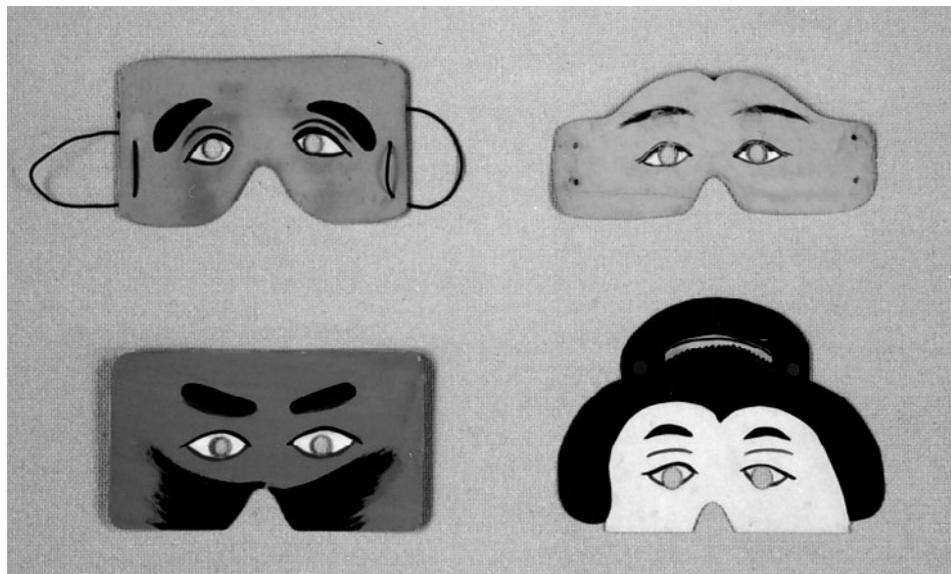
It is said that Okazakiya Kihei of Kawabata town, considered to be an expert in the art of *niwaka*, was the first to wear *hanmen* (a half mask) during the Tempo period (1830–1844). The papier-mâché *hariko kazura* called *bote kazura* was mentioned in *Morisada Mankou* in around 1853.

As a stage performing art, Hakata *niwaka* centered on a one- or two-person dialogue and the actors wore half masks and *bote kazura*, spoke in the Hakata dialect, and, as a rule, delivered punch lines using homonyms.

It is generally believed that *hanmen* was created to conceal the identity and status of the performer to avoid being ostracized for playing a prank while putting aside rank.

However, it is doubtful whether anonymity was guaranteed during the visits by local lords or on the streets of Hakata, and it is more likely to be an essential item for easy and inexpensive comedy.

Although *mekazura* were once enjoyed in many parts of Japan, today, *hanmen* in Hakata are the only existing version. As paper masks are disposable, those of heirloom quality are rarely seen in Japan today. However, they still evoke a sense of nostalgia and form an important part of the history of Japanese masks.



Contemporary Hakata *niwaka* half mask (courtesy of Fukuoka City Museum)

Jagashira in Shimane prefecture

Sachiko Ishiyama

Center for Ancient Culture, Shimane prefecture

Shimane prefecture, located in the western part of Honshu main island and facing the Sea of Japan, is a small prefecture with a population of roughly 660,000. The folk performing art called *kagura* (Shinto music and dance) is flourishing throughout the prefecture, and there are still about 220 active practicing groups today.

Kagura is a performing art in which dancers perform to the accompaniment of music and songs. Performances are divided into two types: those with masks and those without. In the former, masked performers playing the roles of gods, ogres, and other characters dance to stories based on myths and legends.

A large number of masks from Shimane prefecture were exhibited in the Special Exhibition for the 50th Anniversary of the Museum's

Founding—Masks in the Performing Arts and Festivals of Japan. The majority of these masks are used in *kagura*. I would like to focus on four *jagashira* masks of the giant serpent, *Orochi*.

Performances featuring *Orochi* mask-donning dancers have different names in different regions, but they all share the same underlying mythology. Such performances revolve around a male deity named *Susanoo-no-mikoto* who slays *Orochi*.

According to *Kojiki* (Records of Ancient Matters) and *Nihonshoki* (Chronicles of Japan), history books compiled in the first half of the 8th century, Susanoo was banished from the heavenly realm for his misdeeds and descended to the Izumo region in the eastern part of present-day Shimane prefecture. There, he met

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The oldest Serpent Head in Shimane prefecture (property of the Odochi Kagura Preservation Society; photo provided by Center for Ancient Culture, Shimane prefecture)

a man with his family who informed Susanoo that a serpent, *Orochi*, with eight heads was consuming his daughters one by one every year, and it would soon be the youngest daughter's turn. Taking pity on her, Susanoo took the youngest daughter as his wife and, in return, agreed to slay *Orochi*, which he did with great skill.

This myth is well known to the general public, and in Shimane prefecture, where the myth is set, most *kagura* groups include the slaying of *Orochi* in their performances, making it a popular local attraction for tourists.

Except for a few regions, the masks used by *kagura* groups in the prefecture cover the head and not the performer's face, and are called *jagashira*. In the special exhibition, three *jagashira* used in Izumo *kagura* and one *jagashira* used in Iwami *kagura* in the western part of the prefecture were displayed. These masks resemble the head of a dragon, an imaginary animal, rather than a serpent. All of them have similar forms, but while the Izumo mask is made of wood, the Iwami mask is made of Japanese paper (*washi*).

Most of the *kagura* masks used in the Izumo region are made of wood, and the three *jagashira* exhibited this time are all made of wood (photo previous page). The *jagashira* owned by the *Kagura-kata* of the Odochi Kagura Preservation Society (Izumo city) is the oldest example of *jagashira* in the prefecture whose production date can be estimated. Ancient documents confirm that it was donated in 1788.

Because there are no major differences in the basic shape of *jagashira* compared with those produced later, it can be said that the image of *jagashira* in Izumo *kagura* was established by the late 18th century and has been handed down to the present day.

A very small number of *jagashira* can be called derivatives. One is the *jagashira* with seven small heads, which was also on display in the special exhibition (photo below). The *Orochi* in the story of Susanoo's extermination is described in the aforementioned history book as having eight heads, and this *jagashira* is thought to be an attempt to reproduce *Orochi* based on an existing *jagashira*. It is made entirely of wood, and even the small heads are produced carefully with horns and tongues, but it is heavier than the other *jagashira*. Therefore, when this *jagashira* was found, it was questionable as to whether people actually danced with it. No one in the area remembered when *kagura* was being performed, and the details were unknown. However, it turned out that a *kagura* group operating in the neighborhood where the *jagashira* was found still performs a *kagura* dance to exterminate an *Orochi* wearing the *jagashira* with eight heads, just like this *jagashira*, so it is assumed that this *jagashira* was also used in *kagura*.

In the Iwami region, on the other hand, most of the masks used in *kagura*, including *jagashira*, are made of *washi*. Before the modern era, wooden masks were thought to be the most prominent in Iwami also, but in the late 19th century, *washi*



Serpent Head with seven smaller heads (property of Izumo-city; photo provided by Shimane Museum of Ancient Izumo)

masks were invented and produced using Iwami or Sekishu *washi*, a local specialty. Many groups adopted these masks, and today, there are still several *washi* mask production studios supporting the tradition of *kagura* as one of the local industries in the region.

While there are far fewer examples of paper masks being used than wooden ones, they are not that rare nationwide. However, the method of making *washi* masks in Iwami is somewhat unusual. In Iwami at the beginning, as in the case of papier-mâché masks, the masks were initially made by pasting several layers of *washi* onto a clay mold and then peeling off the surface to avoid breaking the mold. Clay molds presumed to have been used during that period are still in existence.

However, a new method was developed in Hamada city in central Iwami during the Meiji period (1868–1912). Called *dakkatsu*, this method involves pasting *washi* with glue mixed with persimmon tannin, allowing it to dry, and then breaking the clay mold to remove only the surface. Although the process requires making a clay mold each time, it has made it possible to create strong and lightweight masks while maintaining the intricate, uneven form.

As a result, Iwami *Kagura* performers were able to dance with

intense movements while wearing large masks with rich individuality. Further, the creation of *washi* masks has led to various innovations, such as adding mechanisms like light bulbs in the eyes and the ignition of fireworks in the mouth for the *jagashira*. This has greatly widened the range of expression and the direction of Iwami *Kagura* itself.

In this article I have focused on the *jagashira* in general used in *kagura* in Shimane prefecture. However, the method of attaching the *jagashira* varies from region to region. In addition, while wearing *jagashira* is common to many *kagura* groups in Shimane prefecture, the form of the *Orochi*'s body from the neck down varies widely. This reflects how people in the region associated with the myth of *Orochi* struggled to express the *Orochi*'s appearance. Please watch videos on a sharing platform to learn more (see URLs below).

Ohara *shinshoku-kagura*
www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BaqLUV7ua0
 Okuiishi *kagura*
www.youtube.com/watch?v=cieWtpmAjf0&t=24s
 Arifuku *kagura*
www.youtube.com/watch?v=rb9J9qk_Iw0&t=26s



Serpent Head made of Japanese paper (*washi*) (collection of Shimane Museum of Ancient Izumo; photo provided by the museum)

Exhibition

Divine Affection: Enchanting Images of Hindu Deities

Special Exhibition
September 14 – December 5, 2023

Numerous Hindu deities appear in various forms, such as stone, metal, and ceramic statues, on pottery and in masks, paintings, prints, tiles, embroidery, and even picture books, comics, stamps, and stickers.

The diverse images have allowed people to interact with deities using their five senses. At the core of this interaction with images lies an affection for the deities. This affection is expressed actively and strongly felt subjectively. In other words, Hindus are not merely passive recipients of divine love. Based on various myths,

people offer love to the images much like the affectionate love of parents for their mischievous children, lovers' passionate adoration for one another, or vassals serving their masters without expecting anything in return. In daily worship, people actively engage with the images by bathing and adorning them, trying to entertain them and have their wishes heard.

This special exhibition focused on various forms of interaction between deities and humans based on this affection through approximately 650 items, including paintings and prints of popular contemporary Indian myths, and materials. These include individual decorations of images, ritualistic items that evoke physical sensations, and films or photographs that show actual ceremonies involving the deities.

Images of deities were not only produced in India and Nepal but also Japan

and Europe, and were used in everyday Hindu life. For instance, in the early 20th century, Japanese ceramic companies and match manufacturers exported to India large numbers of tiles and match boxes with images of Hindu deities. This exhibition also displayed images made outside South Asia, showcasing the global circulation of religious objects.

The exhibition was designed to allow visitors to experience interact with images through their different senses, not just visual but also auditory (listening to religious chants and songs recorded in India and live performances of percussion instruments used in Indian temples) and tactile (by touching several images and ringing bells). For the first time in an exhibition at the National Museum of Ethnology, Augmented Reality (AR) was introduced, allowing visitors to virtually interact with the popular Indian deity Ganesha.

Many related events were also held, including seminars, workshops, a live performance of Bhajan (religious songs) (see next page), a film screening, and gallery talks by the organizing committee members. These events introduced the multifaceted religious practices of contemporary Hinduism to visitors.

As a result, approximately 35,000 visitors attended the exhibition. Media reviews were generally positive, with major newspapers and television channels like NHK covering the exhibition. Visitors also shared positive impressions about the exhibition on social media platforms.

The exhibition was made possible with materials borrowed from museums (Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Mosaic Tile Museum Tajimi, INAX Live Museum) and many private collectors. We would like to express our gratitude to all these supporters.

Minoru Mio
National Museum of Ethnology



Flyer for the special exhibition (Minpaku, 2023)



Bhajan performance (Yamamoto, 2023)

The art style and images are highly distinctive. This tradition continues to the present, but from the late 1990s through the 21st century, young artists have been creating giclée prints using computers. Additionally, new forms of art such as Haida Manga have emerged. In the 21st-century art of the Northwest Coast peoples, we can observe novelty in the expression and motifs of the artworks, while also noting the presence of traditional styles of expression throughout.

The evolution of motifs and production techniques in Northwest Coast printmaking reflects the changes in both Northwest Coast society and the broader world on which it is situated. Northwest Coast peoples also use printmaking as a means to address indigenous rights issues, environmental concerns, conflicts and peace, as well as economic disparities in the wider society. They seek to effect social change through art. This exhibition presented unique Northwest Coast prints while also illustrating the relationship between social change and changes in printmaking.

The exhibition was organized into three parts. The first part introduced the nature, people, and history of the Northwest Coast region of North America through panels, photographs, and

“Screen Prints of Canada’s Northwest Coast Peoples”

Thematic Exhibition

September 7 – December 12, 2023

The Pacific Coast of Canada is where indigenous peoples such as the Haida, the Kwakwaka’wakw, the Coast Salish, and others reside. They are collectively known as the Northwest Coast People, renowned for making large wooden sculptures called “totem poles” and conducting Potlatch ceremonies. From the late 19th century to the mid-20th century, the Canadian government implemented assimilation policies toward indigenous peoples across the country, including the prohibition of Potlatch ceremonies and the implementation of residential school education. As a result, their traditional cultures and languages experienced a rapid decline. However, with changes in Canadian government policies towards indigenous peoples, there has been a movement towards the revitalization and creative

succession of their traditional cultures, continuing to the present day. One of the driving forces behind this movement has been the production of screen prints.

Since the late 1960s, indigenous artists have utilized the new medium known as screen printing to depict traditional worldviews, creatures, humans, and spirits.



The scenery of the exhibition hall (Kishigami, 2023)



Workshop: "Let's make a totem pole with paper craft" (Kishigami, 2023)

cultural objects including coppers, Chilkat blankets, and masks. The second part showcased screen prints by Northwest Coast artists from the Haida, the Tsimshian, the Kwakwaka'wakw, the Coast Salish, and other ethnic groups. The third part introduced giclée prints as a new form of printmaking that emerged from the late 1990s and into the 21st century. We also presented Michael N. Yahgulanaas's Haida Manga as an example of expansion into new art forms.

In this exhibition, indigenous artists from Haida Gwaii and Vancouver Island were actively involved in the planning process. Notably, figures like Nika Collison, James Hart, Christian White, April White from the Haida community, and Andy Everson from the Comox/Kwakwaka'wakw community visited Japan to contribute to discussions surrounding the exhibition. They also attended our symposium "Art of Canada's Northwest Coast

Peoples: Change and Current Status," held in conjunction with the exhibition at the 48th annual meeting of the Japanese Association for Canadian Studies. There, they exchanged views on the indigenous printmaking. Workshops on paper craft totem pole making and screen printing were also held, allowing members of the public in Japan to become acquainted with Northwest Coast cultures. Thus, the exhibition provided a valuable opportunity for researchers, source communities, and the general public to exchange opinions and learn from each other. We gained new insights about the artistic techniques and colors of Northwest Coast Peoples' art, and also discovered new possibilities for further research.

KISHIGAMI Nobuhiro
Professor Emeritus
National Museum of Ethnology

Information

Award

Kojiro Hirose

*Professor, Department of
Advanced Human Sciences*

Received the Commendation of Commissioner for Cultural Affairs FY2023. He is an advocate of tactile culture (culture of touch) and actively communicates his work through lectures, workshops, and exhibitions. He conducts pioneering research in the museum on the transmission of information that can only be obtained through contact with objects, without relying on the sense of sight. The Commissioner for Cultural Affairs presents the award to individuals who have demonstrated outstanding achievements in cultural activities and contributed to the promotion of Japanese culture, and the overseas dissemination of Japanese culture and

international cultural exchange, in recognition of their achievements.

National Museum of Ethnology

Received the Foreign Minister's Commendation FY2023 for a significant contribution to raising the quality of cultural and local development projects globally, and strengthening bonds of friendship between Japan and other countries and areas. This contribution was made through our longstanding partnership with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), supporting JICA training programs and projects related to museum operation and the conservation of cultural heritage.

URL: www.minpaku.ac.jp/mp_news/id-47559 (in Japanese)

New Staff

Hiroya Noguchi

Assistant Professor, Center for Cultural Resource Studies



Hiroya Noguchi specializes in cultural anthropology and Alaska native studies, with a particular

interest in the relationship between social complexity and prestige goods among hunting and gathering societies in the North Pacific Rim. He received his master's degree from Hitotsubashi University in 2013 and worked at the Hokkaido Museum of Northern Peoples as a curator (2015-2024). His main published works are "Hunting tools and prestige in Northern Athabascan culture" (with S. Kondo, 2019, *POLAR SCIENCE* 21: 85-100), "Origin and Sacredness of "Treasure" in Southwest Alaska" (in N. Kishigami ed. *Indigenous Cultures of the North Pacific*, 2024, Rinsen Shoten, pp.204-219, in Japanese). He organized many exhibitions at the Hokkaido Museum of the Northern Peoples, including "North to the Future: History of Japanese

Contact with Alaska (2018)" and "*The Ainu People Today 1: Raporo Ainu Nation* (2021, co-organized with Raporo Ainu Nation & Historical Museum of Urahoro)".

Maki Takashina

Assistant Professor, Department of Advanced Human Sciences



Maki Takashina specialises in archival science, with a focus on preserving and utilising private archives in Japan.

Her recent encounter with the archives of a photographer who documented Okinawan rituals inspired her to study the issue of how access to archival records can help protect intangible cultural heritage. In particular, she is interested in the relationship between the photographer and the subject of photographs. She collaborates with source communities to study public access policies related to archives of community rituals that have been recorded and preserved by others. Through these efforts, she wishes to help communities utilise archives as cultural resources. Before assuming her current position, she was a Research Fellow at the National Institute of Japanese Literature, and a researcher at the National Institutes for the Humanities Center for Innovative Research while also a project assistant professor at the National Museum of Japanese History.

Mark Winchester

Assistant Professor, Center for Cultural Resource Studies



Mark Winchester specializes in the modern and contemporary intellectual history of the Ainu people.

Having studied at the School of East Asian Studies (SEAS), The University of Sheffield, he completed masters and doctoral degrees at the Institute for the Study of

Global Issues, Hitotsubashi University. Before coming to Minpaku, he taught as a lecturer at Kanda University of International Studies, and worked as an Associate Fellow at the National Ainu Museum. Recent publications include the 2021 Japanese translation of Richard Siddle's *Race, Resistance and the Ainu of Japan*, and an article in Japanese on the Ainu poet, Totsuka Miwako. His main published work in English is, "To be the antithesis of all that is called human' – Sasaki Masao and political redemption in contemporary Ainu thought" (*Japan Forum*, 2012).

Sakura Kudo

Project Assistant Professor, Liberal Arts Communicator, NIHU Center for Innovative Research



Sakura Kudo specializes in religious studies and anthropology. She has conducted fieldwork mainly

in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal since 2006, studying Buddhist-Hindu rituals among the Newar. She is also interested in the anthropology of expressive culture, local knowledge about fermented food, and factors associated with livelihood. She was granted her PhD from Tohoku University in 2019 for religious anthropology, in which she studied a girls' puberty ritual among the Newar under Theravadin streams in recent years. She currently works as a Liberal Arts Communicator, a position established by the NIHU Center for Innovative Research for interactive communication between academia and society. Her main published works are: "Smell and 'Accomplice-ness': *Kināmā*, fermented soybeans in Nepal" in Japanese, Reiko Otsubo and Kenichi Tani (eds.), *Shikohin kara Mieru Shakai*, Shunpusha, 2022, 177-201. *Textual Education of Women: Theravada and Anagārikās in Contemporary Nepal*, RINDAS, 2020.

Publications

Online at: www.minpaku.ac.jp/en/research/publication/research-publications

Bulletin of the National Museum of Ethnology 48

Issue 1: S. Kondo and C. Hirano, "Indigenous People and Digitalized Society: Toward a New Framework of Indigenous Studies", T. Nishio and N. Okamoto, "Premier voyage de l'*Histoire arabe de Sindabad Le Marin* par François Pétis de La Croix: Traduction japonaise et annotations", Y. Ikari and R. Yaginuma, "Masao Oka and

the 'Nunamiut': A New View on Masao Oka through the Alaska Survey Materials at the Center for the History of Meiji University".

Issue 2: K. Hirai "Social Conditions for the Success of Museum Activities: Soshisha and Transformation in the Minamata Disease Field during the 1990s", C. Miyamae "Digital Technology Strategy Trends in Norwegian Museums".

TRAJECTORIA 2024 Vol. 5
URL: trajectoria.minpaku.ac.jp

A. E. Poloni, "Streets Are Not Communities: Visualising Redevelopment in Belfast"; K. Sawazaki, K. Amo, Y. Nonaka,

S. Shinmyo, M. Hasegawa, A. Alian and Y. Ertuğrul, "Emergent Use of Visual Media in Young Muslim Studies"; L. Hunt, "Drawing (Across) Borders: Reflections on the Use of Creative Visual Communication in Ethnographic Research with/for Young Refugees"; S. Nyambe, Y. Kataoka, S. Hanyika and T. Yamauchi, "'I See You' – Tackling Peri-Urban Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene by Employing Visualisation Strategies with Children and Youth in Lusaka, Zambia"; M. Ahmadou, Y. Yanohara, "Doing Visual Anthropology in Northern Cameroon: Sharing Stories/Histories through Dialogue".

Forthcoming Exhibitions

A Special Exhibition for the 50th Anniversary of the Museum's Founding

THE WORLD OF POET-SINGERS

September 19–December 10, 2024



Azmari singing to an audience in Ethiopia.

A Thematic Exhibition for the 50th Anniversary of the Museum's Founding

Hakka and Japan

Another History of East Asian Relations Created by Chinese Overseas

September 5–December 3, 2024



Fujian Tulou in Yongding



Baozhong Yimin Temple, spiritual support for the Hakka in Taiwan



Oil-paper umbrellas and Hakka flower-pattern textiles becoming tourism resources

MINPAKU Anthropology Newsletter

The Newsletter is published in summer and winter. "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: www.minpaku.ac.jp/newsletter

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