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Special Theme: The Pacopampa Project and Formation Process of Andean Civilization

In April 2025, Minpaku welcomes its new Director General, Yuji Seki.
Five authors, including Dr. Seki, will present their individual perspectives on the findings of the Pacopampa Archaeological Project, which he has been involved with for many years – particularly from an archaeological standpoint.

Long view of the Pacopampa archaeological site (©Pacopampa Archaeological Project, 2023)

Twenty Years of the Pacopampa Archaeological Project

SEKI Yuji
National Museum of Ethnology

This year marks the 67th anniversary of the first archaeological studies on Andean civilization conducted by Japanese anthropologists, which began in 1958. These pioneering efforts were led by Seiichi Izumi, who, together with Tadao Umesao, later founded the National Museum of Ethnology (MINPAKU). Their central research theme was the origin of Andean civilization. A breakthrough came with the discovery of preceramic public buildings at the Kotosh archaeological site, effectively shedding light on those origins.

Since then, Japanese expeditions have focused their excavations on public buildings, as early Andean civilization was characterized by social integration through the construction of such structures and the performance of rituals at these sites. This historical phase is known as the Formative Period, which spanned approximately from 3000BC to 50BC. Notably, no other ancient civilization is known to have maintained such a long period of religious and social cohesion.

In 2005, we began excavations at the Pacopampa site, located in the northern highlands of Peru at an altitude of 2500m. This effort was undertaken as a collaborative

Contents

Yuji Seki (Director-General, National Museum of Ethnology; Professor Emeritus, Graduate University for Advanced Studies) He completed the master's program at the University of Tokyo Graduate School of Sociology in 1983. After working as an assistant researcher at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at the University of Tokyo and at the University of Tokyo Research Archives, he became an associate professor at Tenri University in 1995 and an associate professor at the National Museum of Ethnology in 1999. He was promoted to professor at the museum in 2006. After serving as deputy director from 2017, he retired in 2022 and is currently the general director and an emeritus professor at the National Museum of Ethnology. His research focuses include cultural anthropology and Andean archaeology.

project between MINPAKU and the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos of Peru, forming a joint Japan–Peru research team. Pacopampa is the largest Formative Period site in the northern highlands.

By this time, our research focus had shifted from the origins of civilization to the process of its formation. It was once a widely held academic theory that the spread of architecture, craft traditions, and religious ideas during the Formative Period originated from Chavín de Huántar-a site now recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. However, since 1979, the Japanese team has conducted excavations at northern highland sites such as Huacaloma and Kuntur Wasi. Based on these studies, we have proposed an alternative view: rather than a single dominant center like Chavín, multiple independent centers existed, and information and ideas circulated laterally among them.

Our work at Pacopampa builds upon this perspective. We are particularly interested in the timing and mechanisms that led to the emergence of social stratification during the Formative Period. Through our research, we have established a local chronology, dividing the timeline into the Middle Formative Period (1200BC-700BC), referred to as Pacopampa I, and the Late Formative Period (700BC-400BC), referred to as Pacopampa II.

Building upon the findings from these archaeological investigations, we have endeavored to explore the emergence of social differences–namely, social power–by collaborating with experts across various disciplines, including zooarchaeology, biological anthropology, isotope analysis, geology, and conservation science.

In 2009, we discovered the “Tomb of the Lady of Pacopampa,” marking the beginning of the Pacopampa II phase. Then, in 2015, we uncovered the “Tomb of the Serpent-Jaguar Priests,” also from the same phase. Both tombs were unique underground structures accompanied by gold artifacts, indicating the presence of a social elite during the Late Formative Period. Analysis of human remains by physical anthropologists revealed instances of cranial deformation in these specific tombs. Since cranial deformation is usually performed during infancy, shortly after birth, it suggests that these individuals were likely destined for leadership roles. This serves as evidence that social differentiation was well established within the society.

Tomb of the Lady of Pacopampa (©Pacopampa Archaeological Project, 2009)

These findings align with earlier data from the Kuntur Wasi site, where richly furnished elite tombs were also found. Geologists and conservation scientists analyzing the burial offerings from the tombs determined that the warm-water shells originated from Ecuador in the north, the obsidian from the southern highlands of Peru, and the sodalite from as far away as Bolivia.

Furthermore, the analysis of the gold-to-silver ratio in the gold artifacts confirmed differences in the quality of the burial offerings among the elites. These findings suggest that the control and acquisition of valuable ritual objects underpinned the authority of the elite.

In contrast, although fewer luxury items have been found in Pacopampa’s tombs, copper artifacts appear more prominently across the site. We also unearthed slag, tools, and other materials associated with copper production. Geologists discovered a malachite mine - a secondary copper mineral - near the site and successfully refined crude copper through experimental archaeology using the material. These findings suggest that control over the production and distribution of copper objects may have formed a key basis of elite power at Pacopampa.

In addition, our team of geologists identified different provenances for the older (Pacopampa I) and newer (Pacopampa II) stones used in the architecture of the Pacopampa site. This data significantly contributed to our archaeological interpretation: in Pacopampa II, stones from Pacopampa I were reused, and materials from two different periods were found to be intermixed within the same structure. Since the reuse was not an isolated practice, it suggests that the mixing of stones was intentional rather than due to resource depletion. In other words, it is possible that the elite of Pacopampa II did not reject the past but instead incorporated it to reinforce their power base.

Zooarchaeological and isotope analysis have also challenged traditional interpretations of the Formative Period. Andean archaeology often relies on ethnohistoric and contemporary pastoral models that assume interaction between highland pastoralist groups and lowland peasant communities in the raising and utilization of camelids. However, our study found that camelids were kept around Pacopampa during the Late Formative Period (Pacopampa II), and that their primary use was ritual rather than pastoral or subsistence purposes.

Just as our research at Pacopampa appeared to be reaching its conclusion, we made a significant discovery. In 2022, we found a tomb dating to the beginning of the Middle Formative Period at the La Capilla site, located roughly 600m east of the main Pacopampa complex. The following year, we unearthed another tomb in the same mound, dubbed the "Tomb of the Priest of Seals," dating to the latter half of the Middle Formative Period. These discoveries indicate that the roots of social differentiation may lie not only in the Late Formative Period but also much earlier, during the Middle Formative Period. This shift in interpretation now compels us to deepen our understanding of the culture and social dynamics of the Middle Formative Period moving forward.

The author at the Pacopampa archaeological site, Peru (photo by Alvaro Uematsu, 2015)

Bioarchaeology of the Human Skeletons at Pacopampa

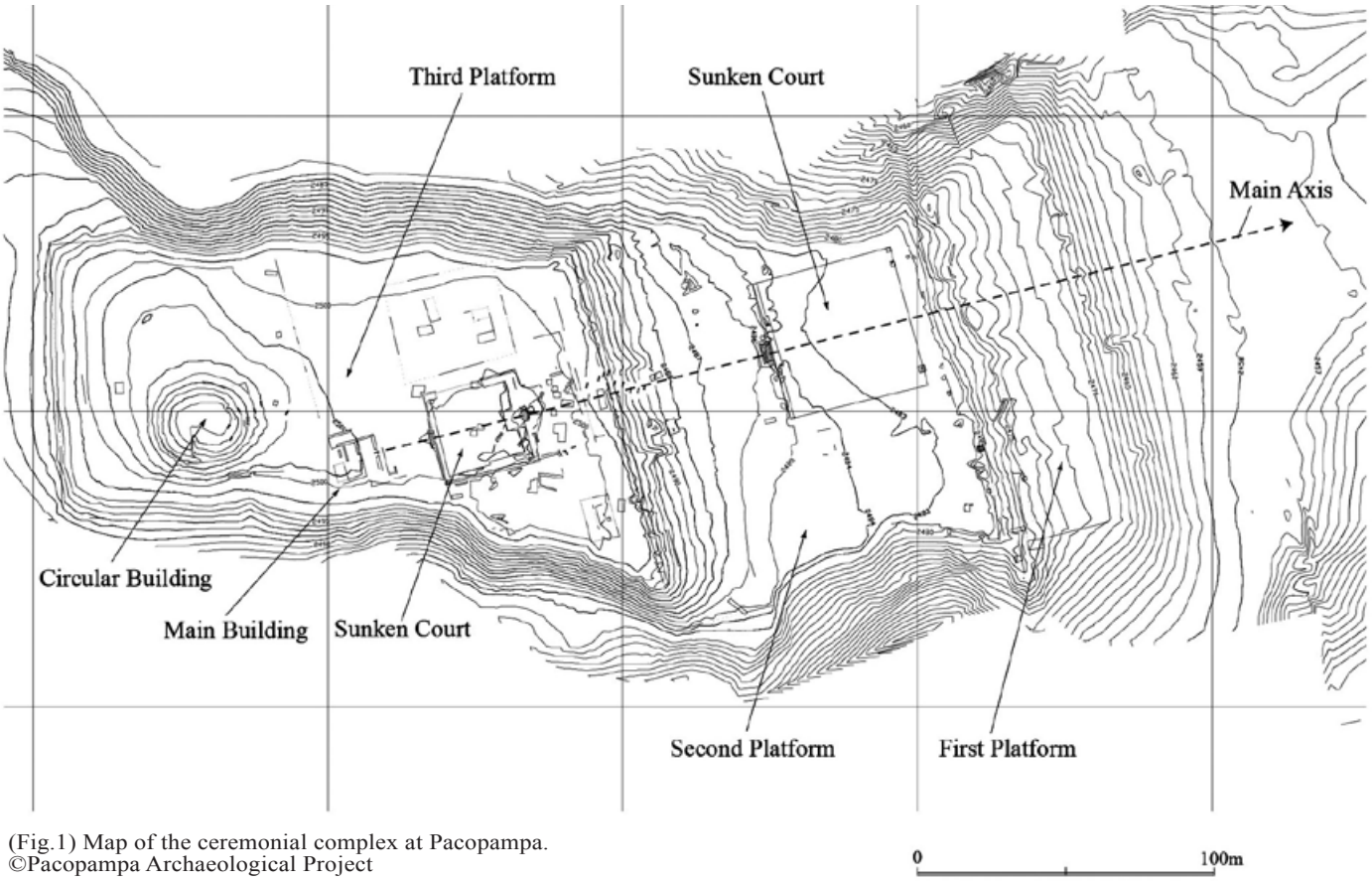
NAGAOKA Tomohito
Aomori Public University

Introduction

A collaborative team of Japanese and Peruvian archaeologists, directed by Yuji Seki of the National Museum of Ethnology, has been excavating the ceremonial architectural site at Pacopampa since 2005 (Fig.1). Pacopampa is one of the largest Formative Period sites in the northern highlands of Peru and sits at an altitude of 2500m. Based on archaeological artifacts, architectural styles, and stratigraphy, the site has been divided into two cultural phases: the Middle Formative Period (Pacopampa I phase, 1200-700BC) and the earlier half of the Late Formative Period (Pacopampa II phase, 700-400BC).

The author's previous studies have focused on social stratification, dental diseases, *cribra orbitalia*, and interpersonal violence.

Tomohito Nagaoka is a professor of anthropology at the Faculty of Management and Economics, Aomori Public University. His research focuses on the bioarchaeology of human skeletal remains from the Central Andes. He has participated in the Pacopampa research project since 2007 and published several articles, including "Early evidence of violence at a ceremonial site in the northern Peruvian highlands" in *PLOS ONE* (2017) and "A case study of a high-status human skeleton from Pacopampa in Formative-Period Peru" in *Anatomical Science International* in (2012).



(Fig.1) Map of the ceremonial complex at Pacopampa.
©Pacopampa Archaeological Project

Social stratification at Pacopampa

The Pacopampa Archaeological Project has uncovered the remains of more than 100 individuals. One of the most notable discoveries is an elite tomb with a boot-shaped cross-section excavated in 2009. This tomb contained a pair of gold earplugs, a pair of gold earrings, and shell objects acquired through long-distance trade. These materials date to the beginning of the Pacopampa II phase. The buried individual, a middle-aged female nicknamed the "Lady of Pacopampa," exhibited a fronto-occipital artificial cranial deformation. The tomb's central location and the presence of precious offerings indicate her symbolic importance and belonging to a high-status group.

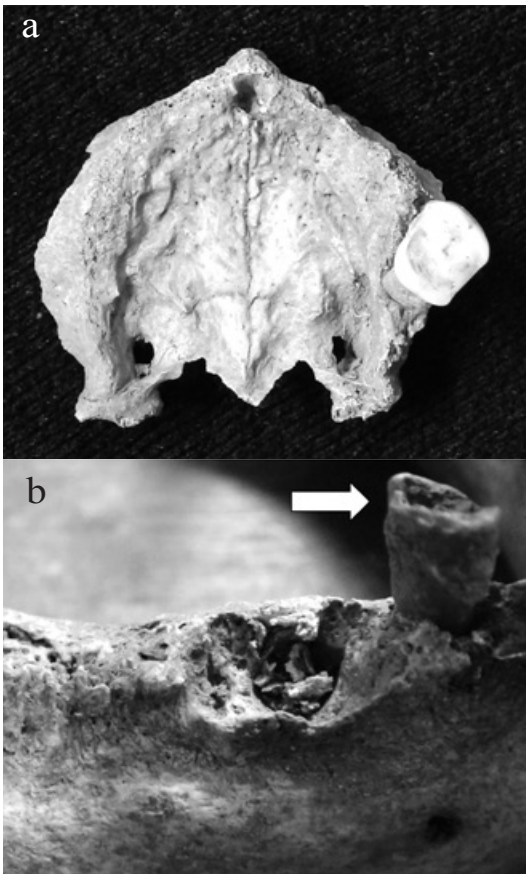
Further excavation revealed another elite tomb with two individuals at the center of the site, also with a boot-shaped structure and a broad bottom in the cross-section. It contained the remains of a 15-year-old male buried wearing a gold necklace made of ovoid beads and an oval pendant. Various mineral pigments - red cinnabar, dark red hematite, blue azurite, green malachite, dark silver magnetite, and white barite - were spread on the cranium. Overlying him was a middle-aged female. A ceramic stirrup bottle depicting a jaguar's head and a serpent's body earned this burial the nickname, "Serpent-Jaguar Priests." The occipital bone was vertically flattened, likely due to a fronto-occipital type of artificial cranial deformation. Like the "Lady of Pacopampa," the presence of artificial cranial deformation, as well as a rich repertoire of grave goods in the "Serpent-Jaguar Priests" tomb supports the existence of social differentiation during this period.

Dental diseases at Pacopampa

The author examined the prevalence of carious lesions and antemortem tooth loss in skeletal remains from Pacopampa. The study sought to identify variations within and between groups to reveal insights into subsistence and social stratification. The analysis targeted permanent teeth and alveoli from both the Pacopampa I and Pacopampa II phases, examining the relationship between dental pathologies and variables such as cultural phase, age, sex, and burial type.

Findings showed that rates of antemortem tooth loss increased with age, and females exhibited higher rates of carious and antemortem tooth

loss than males. Individuals buried with valuable grave goods had lower rates of both conditions than those without (Fig.2). These results suggest significant variation in oral health related to cultural and biological factors from the earliest stages of Andean social stratification. The author also identified differences in the appearance of carious lesions and antemortem tooth loss rates during the emergence of social stratification in the Formative period.



(Fig.2)(a) Maxilla showing antemortem tooth loss (AMTL); (b) right mandible showing AMTL and caries on the lower second premolar (white arrow). ©Pacopampa Archaeological Project

Cribra orbitalia at Pacopmapa

Cribra orbitalia is characterized by an aggregation of small apertures in the orbital roof caused by marrow hypertrophy. The author examined 41 orbits from 27 adult individuals (13 males, 14 females), recording the presence or absence of the condition. Among the 14 individuals with both orbits preserved, the condition appeared bilaterally or not at all.

Cribra orbitalia was present in 2 of the 13 males (15.4%) and 1 of the 14 (7.1%) females, with an overall prevalence of 3 cases in 27 individuals (11.1%). This rate is lower than in the comparative data of coastal populations, likely due to lower rates of parasitic infections at the high-altitude Pacopampa site. The condition was absent in elite individuals, limited to individuals from non-elite tombs, suggesting a link between social status and health.

Evidence of Violence at Pacopampa

The author examined trauma to explore early evidence of violence at the ceremonial centers. Of 103 individuals analyzed, 6 (5.8%) displayed traumatic injuries from the Pacopampa I and II phases. One individual from the Pacopampa I phase had a depressed skull fracture. In the Pacopampa II phase, two individuals had both cranial and facial fractures, two had lower-limb fractures, and one had an elbow dislocation. All observed trauma showed signs of healing, indicating that they were antemortem and the individuals survived.

None of the elite individuals displayed trauma; all cases were found in non-elite burials. While the relationship between social stratification and violence remains unclear, the location of these burials at ceremonial sites, along with the absence of defensive structures, suggests that ritual activity may have been the cause of the injuries. Notably, secular trends in trauma became more severe over time. The depth of depressed skull fracture was limited to the outer table of the cranium in the Pacopampa I phase, whereas it reached the cranial cavity in the Pacopampa II phase.

Further evidence of violence includes trophy heads in later eras. Pacopampa provides early osteological evidence of decapitation from six individuals dating to the latter half of the Late–Final Formative Periods (500-50BC) and the Early Cajamarca Period (AD200-450). Osteological evidence, when taken together with archaeological, and settlement data, indicates that these individuals were not likely to have been involved in organized battles.

Conclusions

From a bioarchaeological perspective, the construction and renovation of ceremonial architecture served as a foundation for social development in Andean civilization and had a significant impact on the overall health and lives of the population.

Architectural Axes at the Pacopampa Temple: Intersecting Landscape Design with Astronomical and Geomorphic Agency

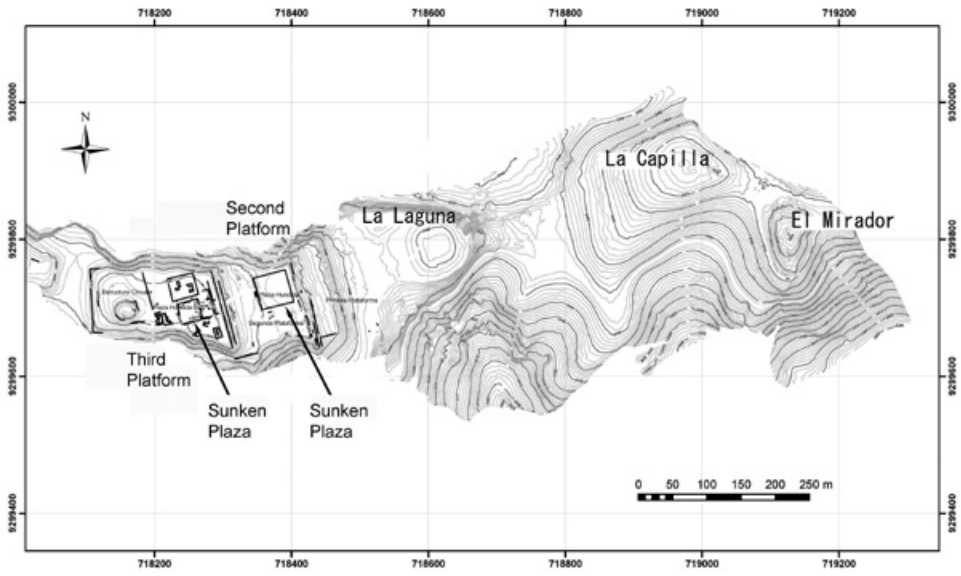
SAKAI Masato
Yamagata University

Masato Sakai was born in Chiba, Japan, in 1963. After completing all coursework for the doctoral program at the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, University of Tokyo in 1996, he joined the Faculty of Humanities at Yamagata University as an Associate Professor. He was promoted to full Professor in 2009 and became Deputy Director of Yamagata University's Institute of Nasca in 2012. Since 1989 he has conducted archaeological research at sites throughout Peru. He has participated in projects at Kuntur Wasi and Pacopampa and has led investigations at Chan Chan, Limoncarro, and Espíritu Pampa. His current work focuses on the Nasca Lines on Peru's southern coast. His honors include the Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendation (2017) and the Cozzarelli Prize from the U.S. National Academy of Sciences (2025).

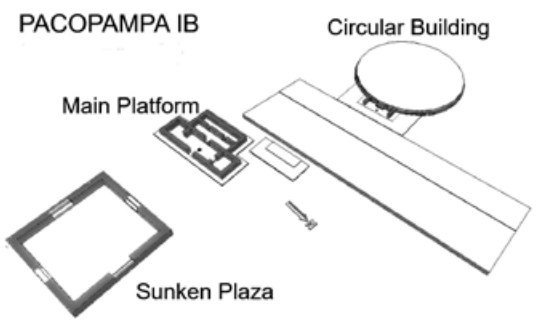
The Pacopampa Temple, situated on the eastern slopes of the Andes at an elevation of approximately 2500m, is one of the representative Formative-period temples in the northern Peruvian highlands. Construction activity at the site is divided into two broad phases. Phase I is further subdivided into IA (c.1200–1000BC) and IB (c.1000–700BC), while Phase II comprises IIA (c.700–600BC) and IIB (c.600–400BC). Across these phases the orientation of the principal architectural axes not only facilitated astronomical observation and the constitution of authority but also served as a contested arena where the intentional design choices of architect–priests intersected with the counter-agency of stars and mountains. These axes form the core subject of this study.

I begin by examining the selection of Pacopampa's location, focusing on its surrounding topography of mountains and hills. I then analyze changes in the orientation of the rectangular plaza-and-platform complex. Structures from the sub-phase IA are aligned to approximately 80.1°, whereas from IB through IIB the axis shifts to approximately 75.6°, a difference of roughly 4°. Interpreting this realignment requires a holistic view of the landscape that includes both terrestrial and celestial phenomena. In other words, this study aims to clarify the dynamics through which architect–priests actively laid out axes while stars and mountains, acting as co-agents, constrained and guided human design thinking.

Approximately 20km to the southwest, the conical peak of Cerro Pozo Negro rises, encompassing a high-altitude lake that feeds the Leche and Reque Rivers, which eventually flow into the Pacific Ocean. About 1km northeast of the Pacopampa Temple lie the mound complexes of El Mirador, La Capilla, and La Laguna (Fig.1). El Mirador functioned as a quarry for finely dressed stone and was the material source for the temple. Pacopampa is situated precisely along the line connecting the sacred water source of Cerro Pozo Negro and the stone source at El Mirador. This spatial arrangement is best understood not as a purely human decision, but as the result of a process shaped by the sacrality attributed to both mountain and water. Accordingly, the Pacopampa Temple should be interpreted as a hybrid sanctuary whose spatial layout was not only deliberately planned by human agents-particularly architect–priests guided by religious and political intentions—but also shaped and constrained by the material agency of the surrounding natural environment, especially its mountains and water sources.



(Fig.1)Plan of the archaeological complex at Pacopampa. ©Pacopampa Archaeological Project



(Fig.2)The Circular Building and the Central Sunken Plaza from IB phase at the Pacopampa site. ©Pacopampa Archaeological Project

Within this carefully constructed landscape, architect–priests built a rectangular structure on the uppermost Third Platform during the earliest IA phase. Its axis aligns, within ±0.5°, with the rising azimuth of the Pleiades at that time (c.80.1° clockwise from true north), demonstrating astronomical knowledge embedded in architectural design. Here, the celestial body acted as an active agent, shaping and guiding the design intentions of the architect–priests. The open construction of the upper terrace suggests that the structure was accessible to the entire community and held social significance. Ethnographic reports from the contemporary Andes describe farmers observing the annual June heliacal reappearance of the Pleiades to predict rainfall and crop yields, a practice also attested archaeologically for the pre-Hispanic period. It is thus plausible that the IA rectangular building functioned as a communal observatory, strengthening social cohesion through shared knowledge and practice.

By the IB phase, the temple landscape had undergone a marked transformation. Due to axial precession, the alignment between the IA axis and the Pleiades' rising point had drifted by approximately 1°, a discrepancy visible to the naked eye and disruptive to the existing cosmological order. The architect–priests abandoned the unstable sky as a reference and instead adopted the more stable terrestrial landmark of the La Capilla Mound to the northeast. The IA rectangle was buried, and a large circular building approximately 28m in diameter, was erected on the summit. This decision transferred agency from the ever-moving heavens to a relatively immobile mountain, once again constraining human design. The azimuth from the circular building to the summit of La Capilla (c.75.6°) became the new canonical orientation: the 30m-square Central Sunken Plaza and surrounding platforms and chambers were laid out parallel to it (Fig.2), and massive perimeter walls restricted access to the uppermost terrace. These works both centralized ritual authority within the priesthood and embodied a shift in worldview from astronomical to geomorphic anchors.

The IB template persisted into the IIA phase. The sightline from the circular building to the peak of La Capilla remained the cardinal bearing, and the architectural axis continued to structure space. Just before the IIA phase, an elite tomb known as the "Lady of Pacopampa," furnished with gold grave goods, was interred along the axis of the Central Sunken Plaza, underscoring its political potency. The circular building was remodelled with added stairs and a heightened summit to enhance its observational capacity, extending the priests' visual command over the landscape and visitor movement. Thus, the axis functioned simultaneously as a physical benchmark and as a medium for reproducing distinctions between rulers and ruled through the agency of the mountain.

In the IIB phase, fractures appeared in the previously stable spatial order. Precession now caused the Pleiades to rise near the summit of La Capilla as viewed from the circular building, so that the La Capilla-based axis accidentally almost coincided with the stellar azimuth. This near coincidence suggested an alternative, ostensibly more rational reading of the axis as deliberately stellar, thereby undermining the esoteric knowledge claimed by the priests. It also threatened to destabilize the religious power structure in which La Capilla had become the central landmark. In short, the fortuitous near-overlap of astronomical and geomorphic references re-constrained the architect–priests' design logic and disrupted the locus of agency. The priests responded by blocking the axial staircase in the Central Sunken Plaza, severing the visual link between the rectangular structure and the Pleiades in order to protect their authority and re-establish order.

Around 400BC, at the close of sub-phase IIB, the interregional network that had supplied prestige goods, such as *Spondylus* shells, collapsed, depriving local elites of their material foundation. At this pivotal moment, the rectangular axis and the Pleiades' rising azimuth perfectly coincided once again. This event was likely interpreted as a threshold marking the end of an era and may have precipitated the cessation of monumental construction at Pacopampa. The accidental alignment reframed the Pleiades as an active agent once more, guiding architectural decisions and marking a cosmological–social turning point.

Pacopampa thus emerged as a hybrid space in which natural topography, celestial motions, and social structures

were intricately interwoven. Changes in its architectural axes were more than shifts in orientation: they resonated with precession-driven astronomical drift and fluctuations in priestly authority, catalyzing broader transformations in worldview and power. The site embodies continuous negotiation between the deliberate design actions of architect–priests and the constraining–guiding agency of stars and mountains, acting as co-agents in the construction of a complex, intellectually wrought landscape.

Pacopampa and Kuntur Wasi: The Implications of Two Ceremonial Centers

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(Fig.1) Kuntur Wasi archaeological site (Photographer&©:Kuntur Wasi Investigation Team, in 2019)

Kuntur Wasi (Fig.1) is an archaeological site from the Formative Period of the Central Andes, located in the northern highlands of Peru, approximately some 90km south of Pacopampa. A Japanese research team has been conducting long-term excavations at both sites in collaboration with Peruvian archaeologists. Their findings have had a profound impact on the study of early Andean civilization. These excavations have not only clarified the specific chronological changes in ceremonial architecture and artifacts but have also provided empirical evidence of social transformation during the Formative Period. This includes the expansion of social complexity and regional interactions, the development of subsistence economies, craft production technologies, and specific ritual activities.

The first temple at Kuntur Wasi was built around 950BC during the Middle Formative Period: known as the Ídolo phase in the chronology of the site. The fine pottery from this phase shares a style common to the northern highlands of Peru, including Pacopampa. At the beginning of the second phase, the Kuntur Wasi phase - corresponding to the Late Formative Period around 800BC - all ceremonial architecture from the previous phase was buried and replaced by a new temple complex. Stone sculptures conveying religious messages through concrete imagery were also installed within the temple space. The ceremonial fine pottery from this phase shows striking similarities to that of the Cupisnique Culture on the northern coast of Peru. During the third phase, the Copa phase, the ceremonial architecture was modified several times, and cooperative labor, craft production, and ritual activities in the temples became more prominent. Eventually, the ceremonial architecture was gradually abandoned, and during the Sotera phase, corresponding to the Final Formative Period, the ceremonial center lost its

Kinya Inokuchi is a professor at Saitama University specializing in Andean archaeology and cultural anthropology. His research focuses on the development of Andean civilization from the perspective of ceremonial centers. Since 1988, he has been conducting archaeological investigations at the Kuntur Wasi site in Peru. Concurrently he has provided academic support to the Kuntur Wasi Museum. His major publications include *"Gemelos prístinos - el tesoro del templo de Kuntur Wasi"* (co-authored with Yoshio Onuki, Fondo editorial congreso del Perú, 2011) and "Transformation Process of Ceremonial Center and Interactions at Kuntur Wasi in the Northern Highlands of Peru" (*Senri Ethnological Studies* 112, 2023).

function and became an area of habitation.

One of the important archaeological discoveries common to both Pacopampa and Kuntur Wasi is the presence of numerous graves built within the temple precincts, including tombs with outstanding grave goods. In Kuntur Wasi, the temple complex was innovated during the Kuntur Wasi phase. Excavations revealed four individuals who were buried with gold artifacts and other rich grave goods during the construction of the "Central Platform," the main structure of the complex. The gold artifacts, such as the "Gold Crown with Fourteen Human Faces" (Fig.2), demonstrate highly advanced goldworking techniques and mythological messages. Nearby, the grave of a sacrificed individual was also discovered. Based on pottery styles, goldworking techniques, and iconography, it is likely that the burial of this special individual and the innovation of the temple were carried out in collaboration between the people of the northern coast of Peru and the people of the highlands of Kuntur Wasi.

(Fig.2) "Gold Crown with Fourteen Human Faces" from the A-TM1 of Kuntur Wasi site, Kuntur Wasi phase (800BC) (Photographer:Alvaro Uematsu, ©Kuntur Wasi Investigation Team, in 2012)

In the third phase, the Copa phase, the main parts of the earlier ceremonial structures were reused while constructing new ceremonial architecture, with deliberate architectural and flooring modifications. Approximately 60 tombs were found within the temple space - three times the number from the previous phase. The shapes and stratigraphic contexts of the graves and the composition of grave goods were diversified. Two graves contained gold artifacts, but nearly 30% of the tombs contained no grave goods at all. This diversification points to differences in social rank and the fact that the roles of individuals had expanded in the latter half of the Late Formative Period.

At the La Capilla site - located approximately 600m east of the Pacopampa site and forming a single ceremonial center complex with Pacopampa - two tombs with special grave goods from the Middle Formative Period were discovered. This provides crucial evidence suggesting the emergence of a leadership class earlier than previously thought, pushing back its origin from the Late Formative Period to the Middle Formative Period. The burial of a special individual at Kuntur Wasi, on the other hand, reflects new coastal-highland exchanges during the Late Formative Period. However, because Pacopampa is located on the eastern slopes of the Andes, it had relatively little interaction with the western coast. This suggests that there were differences in the process of power formation within the local society. The insights gained from these two Formative Period temple sites provide critical regional perspectives and concrete data that were previously lacking in a scholarly discourse largely focused on the outstanding temple site of Chavín de Huántar.

A significant difference between Kuntur Wasi and Pacopampa is the timing of the camelid (Llama) domestication, which began in the northern highlands during the Formative Period. Zooarchaeological research by Kazuhiro Uzawa indicates that camelid domestication began at Pacopampa during the Middle Formative Period. In contrast, evidence of camelid domestication first appears in Kuntur Wasi only in the Late Formative period, continuing into the Final Formative Period. Mai Takigami is currently conducting research on camelid domestication groups by analyzing the isotope ratios of collagen from camelids at both sites.

One promising avenue for future research is the clarification of direct interactions between Kuntur Wasi and Pacopampa. For example, large jars depicting the faces of felines and humans were excavated at both sites in the Late Formative contexts. These jars were excavated in feasting contexts at both locations, suggesting that not only pottery styles but also ritual concepts may have been shared. Additionally, gold decorative beads found in a special tomb at Pacopampa are remarkably similar in technique and motif to grave goods from the Copa phase at Kuntur Wasi (Fig.3). Although Pacopampa is slightly older in terms of chronology, there may have been a direct network between the leaders of the two ceremonial centers.

(Fig.3) Gold beads from the G-TM5 of Kuntur Wasi site, Copa phase (550BC) (Photographer:Alvaro Uematsu, ©Kuntur Wasi Investigation Team, in 2012)

At Kuntur Wasi, after the temple had been abandoned for some time, more than 100 graves were installed along the front wall of the former temple during the post-Formative Period of the Cajamarca Culture. The "ancient ruins" of Kuntur Wasi represented new values and memories that were brought to the people at that time and served as a monument.

Kuntur Wasi and Pacopampa are also notable examples of archaeologists working collaboratively with local communities to implement sustainable activities for the preservation of archaeological sites and the social utilization of cultural heritage. The Kuntur Wasi Museum, established in 1994, with financial support from Japan, is situated in the village adjacent to the site. The museum attracts many visitors, and is administered by local residents. Yuji Seki, who has participated in excavations at Kuntur Wasi and played a significant role in the museum's operations, is the leader of the Pacopampa archaeological investigation team. He is actively involved in various initiatives, including planning the construction of an archaeological park and visitor center, and supporting local residents in identifying and developing tourism resources in the present-day village of Pacopampa.

Considering the Legacy of the Japanese Projects from the "Periphery" of the Andean Formative

MATSUMOTO Yuichi
National Museum of Ethnology

Yuichi Matsumoto
National Museum of Ethnology/Graduate University for Advanced Studies, Japan
He received his PhD in 2010 from the Department of Anthropology at Yale University. Following his doctorate, he held a fellowship at the Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection (Trustees for Harvard University), served as a research fellow at the National Museum of Ethnology, and was an associate professor at Yamagata University. He became an associate professor at the National Museum of Ethnology and Graduate University of Advanced Studies in 2022. His archaeological research focuses on the Peruvian south-central highlands, particularly during the Formative Period (3000–50BC). His main interests are the formation of civilization and early monumental architecture in the Andes.

My research area, the Peruvian south-central highlands, lies more than 1000km from the Pacopampa site in Peru's northern highlands. These two regions - the south-central and northern highlands - have traditionally been considered quite differently studies of the Andean Formative Period (3000BC-1AD). While the former has (and still is) regarded as one of the core areas of socioeconomic development, the latter was until recently viewed as a periphery isolated from it. The presence of large-scale ceremonial centers represented by Kuntur Wasi and Pacopampa has been well-known since the mid-20th century. Long-term research projects led by Japanese teams at these sites continued to demonstrate the importance of the north highlands in the formation process of Andean civilization.

Map of Peru showing the locations of important archaeological sites mentioned in the text (author, 2018)

One of the key characteristics of the Japanese projects in the north highlands is their critical perspective, which provides a counterweight to narratives focused on Chavín de Huántar - the key site associated with the "Chavín Phenomenon" and one of the most important centers during the Formative Period. Since the late 1990s, till now, these teams have successfully demonstrated that Chavín de Huántar was not the sole core site responsible for triggering simultaneous socioeconomic transformations across

the wide geographic area of the central highlands. Instead, they argue for the existence of coeval peer centers such as Kuntur Wasi and Pacopampa. In other words, these projects provide a counter narrative of "peer polity interaction" in contrast to the traditional Chavín -centered "core-periphery perspective."

In this context, the Peruvian south-central highlands, long considered as peripheral during the Formative Period, have been reevaluated by recent research. Since the 2000s, evidence has emerged for several ceremonial centers contemporaneous with Chavín de Huántar, Kuntur Wasi, and Pacopampa – most notably Campanayuq Rumi and Atalla. This new research, including my own with Yuri Cavero from the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos del Peru in the Ayacucho region, argues against the image of the south-central highlands as a "periphery."

We are currently carrying out an excavation project at one of the representative ceremonial centers of the south-central highlands called Campanayuq Rumi. This site is situated at an altitude of 3600m and flourished as a major ceremonial center during the Middle and Late Formative Periods (1000-450BC). It is safe to say this site is one of the largest and most important centers in the south-central highlands. The monumental core of Campanayuq Rumi features a U-shaped layout composed of stone masonry platforms surrounding a sunken rectangular plaza, clearly emulating architectural conventions seen at Chavín de Huántar.

Through the adoption of a geochemical approach beginning in the 1970s, it became clear that all obsidian found at major northern and north-central highland centers - such as Chavín de Huántar, Kuntur Wasi, and Pacopampa-originated from a series of quarries spread out over a broad swath of the south-central highlands. Since 2007, our work at the site has produced robust data sets that show Campanayuq as an important center of obsidian distribution in the central Andes, including the north highlands. This highlights Campanayuq Rumi's function as an important node of interregional interactions during the Middle and Late Formative Periods. At Campanayuq Rumi, the influence of Chavín de Huántar triggered important socioeconomic changes. Several material correlates suggest that the relationship between Campanayuq Rumi and Chavín de Huántar was significant, even in light of the counter-narratives provided by the data from Kuntur Wasi and Pacopampa.

Despite these two contrastive narratives, archaeologists seem to agree on several key trends: the simultaneous socioeconomic transformation, the spread of shared material styles and iconographies, and intensified interregional interactions on a pan-regional level around 800BC. These two narratives might not be mutually exclusive, but rather complementary to one another. I propose that societies in the Late and Middle Formative Periods should be considered as a complex entity of multiple regional spheres of interactions, represented by the one centered in the north highlands and the other one in south-central highlands. I tentatively call the former one as "Cajamarca Sphere" and the other as "Ayacucho Sphere" based on the region names where the representative sites of Pacopampa and Campanayuq Rumi are located. The Cajamarca Sphere includes two representative sites, Pacopampa and Kuntur Wasi that are monumentality comparable to Chavín de Huántar and experienced radical socioeconomic transformations around 800BC, such as the emergence of marked hierarchical organization, technological innovations in metallurgy, and/or expansion of monumental architecture. Despite the same timing of socioeconomic change, the relationships between these major centers in the north highlands and Chavín de Huántar are quite different from those of Campanayuq Rumi and Chavín de Huántar in the Ayacucho Sphere. Many cultural elements at Campanayuq Rumi can be better interpreted as emulations or acceptance of Chavín de Huántar conventions. This is because they appeared as intrusions to the local cultural matrix. Monumental architecture and religious iconographies are two representative

Monumental architecture at the Campanayuq Rumi site in the Peruvian south-central highlands (author, 2008)

features which appeared without any local antecedents at Campanayuq Rumi and in the Ayacucho sphere in general.

In contrast, Chavín de Huántar, Kuntur Wasi and Pacopampa were already established as large-scale civic-ceremonial centers during the Middle Formative Period. They shared somewhat similar religious iconographies rooted in the north coast, central coast, and north highlands. On the other hand, the pottery styles, architectural styles, and religious iconographies of Kuntur Wasi and Pacopampa maintained local characteristics. In this context, the Chavín Phenomenon in Cajamarca sphere should be understood as a process of peer polity interaction rather than core-periphery relations, which may be more applicable to the sites in the Ayacucho sphere. In this way, I think it is possible to reconcile these two contrasting perspectives; one that sees Chavín de Huántar as the core and source of influence, and the others that consider Chavín de Huántar as one of the "peers" among important coeval centers.

Japanese projects in the north highlands contribute enormously to demonstrating the regional diversity of the societies distributed around the central Andes during the Formative Period. Their contributions have made it possible to reconsider a long-lasting problem in Andan Archaeology-the "Chavín Phenomenon"-with greater nuance. They open up new opportunities to develop broader comparative frameworks for understanding regional historical trajectories in the Andes and enable us to create more nuanced and coherent narratives.

Column

Far away and close to home: ethnobotany and archaeology in Asia and the Pacific

P. J. Matthews
National Museum of Ethnology

For many years at my Minpaku office, and until very recently, I was surrounded by books, research papers, correspondence, plant samples, maps, photographs, paintings and other reminders of finished and unfinished projects. The office was a continuously-changing temporary exhibition, neither fully planned nor fully unplanned, responding to the vagaries of funding, work responsibilities, and research interests. Like the museum as a whole, it was both a meeting place and a refuge. The office reflected a life lived for fieldwork, far away and far from home.

Fresh out of high-school, before starting my first year of university in Aotearoa New Zealand, I escaped from Auckland city to join an archaeological dig at the Warea Redoubt on the coast of Taranaki district. The site had been a British fort built in the 1860s during a period of rapid colonial expansion in Aotearoa, and the excavation was led by Nigel Prickett, an archaeologist at Taranaki Museum and later Auckland Museum. The "New Zealand wars" were not something I had learned about at school, and seemed far from the peaceful summer days we spent as an odd crew of students and teachers in an old farmhouse and at the site. From a snow-capped volcano named Taranaki, cool melt-water flowed to the coast. We welcomed swimming in Stony River after days of hot, gritty and windy excavation. We learned about boulders inscribed with Maori carvings. We visited the sand dunes of Kaupokonui where the bones of moa (a now-extinct bird) could still be seen.

For as long as I can remember, archaeology has always been an interest for me, absorbed from the long-occupied landscapes that surrounded us wherever our family travelled, from the volcanic hills of Auckland to remote beaches in the Bay of Islands. From every vantage point we looked out to the Pacific Ocean, and enjoyed telling and hearing stories about friends, family, places, animals, plants, boats, the sea and other times. Stories

about the living landscape and history were joined together from the earliest moments of my life. At university, my interests in archaeology and biology were united when I realised that very little is known about the crop plants introduced to Aotearoa by ancestors of the Maori, and by my own European ancestors.

Understanding crop history is critical in a world where crop diversity has been minimised. The risk to global food supply has been maximised by our modern dependence on just a few major commodity crops. Archaeology gave me a key to thinking about the past without cultural, temporal or geographical boundaries. Assumptions about the nature and culture we see today can be tested by an awareness of the depth of human history on a planetary scale. When we consider the wealth of human experience over millions of years, and all the ways that resilience can be achieved, it may be possible to face imminent changes in our global climate with more confidence. Hindsight can also be foresight, to some extent.

Dragonboat and wild taro on a river bank in Hue city, Vietnam (author, 2018)

Archaeology, geology and palaeobiology show us that humans have lived through huge changes in climate, sea level, flora and fauna, and social organisation. We can surely imagine new ways of living as circumstances change. Our ancestors survived by being open to new ideas, materials and techniques, by being mobile, by taking plants and animals as commensal partners, and by creating new opportunities through social and cultural exchange.

In 1990, I worked for Japan's *Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries,* deep in the rural landscape of Mie Prefecture. There I could directly experience and observe life in the surrounding gardens, fields and forests. Later, during a year-long stay at Kyoto University in 1994, I dived into centuries of accumulated botanical knowledge in books and herbarium collections to trace how the paper mulberry (*Broussonetia payprifera*) was carried from eastern Asia to the most distant islands of Remote Oceania, using ocean-going canoes to cover vast distances. Today, with new methods of chemical and genetic analysis, knowledge of past relationships with plants and animals is accelerating backwards in time. Since the early 1980s, I have mainly studied taro (*Colocasia esculenta*, sato-imo), a root crop with deep history in Asia and the Pacific.

As a raw material for high-quality paper and barkcloth, the paper mulberry may have had a transformative role in human relations, not just as a medium for cultural expression and knowledge transfer, but also as a store of value that is light, durable, and easy to transport. Canoes mobilised exchange, and barkcloth provided something to be exchanged, a means and a reason (if any reason is needed) for human contact and communication. As demonstrated by many of the studies carried out by Minpaku staff, food plants and their consumption are also key elements in human relationships. Supported by the Museum, our long-term study of taro – supported also by colleagues and other institutions in other countries – has led to a greater awareness of its global distribution in diverse cultural and ecological contexts. The history of this crop is especially deep in Southeast Asia and lower-montane Himalaya, where our research points to the geographical and genetic origins of cultivated varieties.

Peter Matthews is Professor Emeritus at Minpaku and also a Research Associate (Geosciences and Archaeology) at the Australian Museum, Sydney. After majoring in natural sciences and archaeology at the University of Auckland (1978-1983), he completed a PhD in prehistory and population genetics at the Australian National University. In 1991, he was a visitor at Minpaku for seven months, before joining the staff in 1996. He continues to study the culinary and genetic history of edible aroids in Asia and the Pacific. Publications include: (articles) Matthews (1996) "Ethnobotany, and the origins of *Broussonetia papyrifera* in Polynesia" in Davidson et al. (eds.), *Oceanic Culture History: Essays in Honour of Roger Green* (NZ Archaeological Association); Ahmed, Matthews, et al. (2020) "Evolutionary origins of taro (*Colocasia esculenta*) in Southeast Asia. *Ecology and Evolution* 10; (chapter) Matthews (2023) " "Plants as Records of Human and Biological History" in Han et al. (eds) *Rethinking History*, SES 110 (Minpaku), and (edited books) Yoshida and Matthews (eds, 2002), *Vegeculture in Eastern Asia and Oceania*. JCAS Symposium Series, 16 (Japan Center for Area Studies), and Spriggs, Addison and Matthews (eds., 2012), *Irrigated Taro* (Colocasia esculenta) *in the Indo-Pacific: Biological, Social and Historical Perspectives,* SES 78 (Minpaku).

Boys with boats – is this a scene of work, study or play? Madang coast with Manam island on the horizon, Papua New Guinea (author, 2024)

It is easy to overthink why human history has unfolded as it has: we look for reasonable reasons when there might be whimsy and emotion at the base of many actions and ways of living (see photos). We surely see whimsy and emotion in modern human relationships, and in how technology and knowledge develop, for better or worse. We can't assume that our ancestors were pure economic rationalists, driven by necessity in all decisions. It is not a necessity today for us to be at war with ourselves and the beautiful planet we have inherited. It is possible to build new relationships and care for the forests, gardens and oceans that made us, that are ever-changing, that can be made new again, day-by-day.

A common sight on canoes in Southeast Asia and Oceania are plants attached as signs or symbols or carried as foods for home, gifts, trade or the journey. Seeds, tubers and cuttings have also been carried from place to place for planting. Some of these have spread widely as genetic individuals, breathing at the tips of their branches for centuries or thousands of years. Personally, I remain caught between far southern and northern shores of the Pacific Ocean, but home is a garden, wherever it may be.

Why We Should Reexamine the Concept of Gender Today

Taeko Udagawa
National Museum of Ethnology

Over the course of my career, one of my specializations has been cultural anthropology studies related to gender. On the occasion of my retirement from the National Museum of Ethnology at the end of March, I would like to offer a brief reflection on the trajectory and future of gender studies, based on my own experience.

Gender Studies: Beginnings and Present

Gender studies in anthropology began in the 1970s. In the early 1980s, the term "gender" began to be discussed among Japanese researchers. Seminal papers by scholars such as S. Ortner and M. Rosaldo-now considered classics of anthropological gender studies-were translated into Japanese, and Japanese researchers began publishing collections of ethnographies focused on women in various regions. It was during this time that I entered graduate school and began to engage seriously in cultural anthropology.

My own interest in gender emerged somewhat later. Initially, I focused on patronage and other social relations in Italian local communities. However, during fieldwork in a town near Rome in the late 1980s, I developed a keen interest in gender. Italian society is often described as patriarchal, with women having low social status. While this is true in some respects, I noticed a certain form of "power" among Italian women, especially when compared to Japanese women. To put it differently, even in seemingly patriarchal societies, their internal

Taeko Udagawa specializes in cultural anthropology and gender studies. She has conducted fieldwork mainly in Italy, focusing on issues of family and kinship, gender, public/private relations, and more recently, food. Her main publications include, *Joheki-nai kara miru Italia: Gender o toinaosu (Italy through the Life in a Local Community: Rethinking Gender)* (Rinsen-Shoten 2015), *Gender jinruigaku wo yomu: Chiiki betsu, tema betsu bunken review (Reading Anthropology of Gender: Regional and Thematic Literature Reviews)* (Sekaishisosha 2007). She retired from the National Museum of Ethnology in March 2025.

realities are often complex and varied. I felt that clarifying this complexity was essential for understanding issues related to the status of women-not only in Italy but also in Japan. At that time, the subordination of women was one of the most prominent topics in gender anthropology.

Around the same time in Japan, the so-called "Agnes controversy" sparked debate over whether a mother should be allowed to bring her child to work, and media attention focused on the statements of Ueno Chizuko, now considered a pioneer in Japanese gender studies. It was at that time that gender studies, especially those centered on sociology, began to develop in earnest here. When I returned to Japan at the end of the 1980s, I continued my research on gender in Italian society while organizing a study group of anthropologists interested in gender issues. My goal was to contribute to the further development of gender anthropology, which was already exploring a wide range of issues. In the early 2000s, I launched an Inter-University Research Project with the National Museum of Ethnology and published the results as *Gender jinruigaku wo yomu: Chiiki betsu, tema betsu bunken review [Reading Anthropology of Gender: Regional and Thematic Literature Reviews]* (2007).

Today, almost fifty years after its inception, gender studies has developed significantly. Research incorporating gender perspectives has proliferated across all academic fields, and gender studies has become institutionalized, with specialized departments at universities and research institutions. Even among the general public, the term "gender" is frequently mentioned by governments and media and is often used as a key indicator in various policies. Of course, there have been many challenges along the way. Backlash against feminism, sometimes manifested as resistance to the word "gender" itself, has occasionally surfaced as a serious social issue. However, especially in the last few decades, gender studies have advanced to such an extent that, to someone like me who witnessed its inception, it feels like entering a whole new world (although some argue there is still a long way to go).

Remaining Issues Surrounding the Concept of Gender

At the same time, I have noticed that the concept of gender itself-which gives this research field its name-is rarely discussed anymore. This could simply indicate that the term has become established and widely accepted over the past fifty years. However, critical debates over the term have persisted in various forms since the beginnings, and many remain unresolved. This is an issue that cannot be overlooked.

As is well known, "gender" was originally a linguistic term used referring to grammatical sex. Since the 1970s, feminist researchers have used it in opposition to the term "sex," which refers to biological sex differences, to emphasize the idea that certain sex differences are not biologically determined but socio-culturally constructed. However, there was no immediate consensus on what gender really means or what gender studies aims to achieve, which led to considerable confusion. Ambiguity also existed about whether gender refers to particular groups or categories (such as men and women) or to a research perspective or conceptual framework.

Initially, research focused primarily on women and femininity, partly because the field stemmed from feminist concerns and was collectively referred to as "women's studies." Gradually, awareness grew that men and masculinity should also be studied, and that the ideas of sex differences underpinning the categories of women and men deserved more critical attention. Consequently, the name shifted to "gender studies" to indicate that the field was not limited to the study of women. However, the significant resistance to abandoning the word "women" should not be dismissed lightly. Indeed, one reason for the resistance was fear that using the word "gender" might diminish attention to "power"-one of the most essential problems in women's issues. This remains a significant point of contention today.

Moreover, even if gender is a socio-cultural construct, the question of whether it can truly be created freely, apart from the biological body, has haunted the field from the start. This issue was brought to wide attention by works such as *Gender Trouble* by J. Butler, which revealed that introducing "gender" actually preserved the existence of biological "sex." This debate is still ongoing. This issue may not arise if we consider the body as a socio-cultural construct and sex as part of gender. However, the counterargument is that the body-and the construction of gender identity tied to the body-is not as simple as Butler's notion of "performativity" might suggest. Indeed, Butler herself revisited this issue in *Bodies that Matter*, and the relationship between sex and gender-including questions of how to

conceptualize the body's role in sex differences, why the link between the sexual body and identity is so strong, and what this means – remains up for debate.

Another unresolved issue concerns the concept of sexuality. Critics have recently pointed out that a major problem with the concept of gender is that it is often framed as a binary question of man and woman. This binary is rooted in the idea of "compulsory heterosexuality," which regards heterosexuality oriented toward reproduction as normal and correct; even the concept of gender assumes the binary of man and woman based on heterosexuality, thus rendering diverse genders and sexualities invisible and subject to discrimination.

A shot during my first fieldwork in an Italian local community. Women making pasta together. (Udagawa, 1987)

This criticism is valid. However, debates on how to reshape the concept of gender to incorporate diverse genders and sexualities are still in their early stages. While there is vigorous discussion about diverse sexualities, these debates tend to be limited to queer studies or sexuality studies-such as lesbian, gay, and transgender studies-which remain insufficiently linked to gender studies. This division of labor, where heterosexuality and other sexualities are divided between gender studies and queer studies, means that both fields have yet to fully escape heterocentrism. This clearly shows that issues remain, not only regarding the concept of gender, but also the concept of sexuality.

These are just some of the ongoing questions about the concept of gender today. Even from this brief overview, it is clear that many challenges surrounding the term, deeply intertwined with issues concerning the body, reproduction, identity, power, and more. Although, the field of gender studies has developed remarkably, considering that the term "gender" only came into widespread use fifty years ago, now is an opportune time-while research in the field is thriving – to tackle the debates over this term head-on. I believe that this will offer an opportunity to enrich and advance gender studies to a new level. I hope to contribute to such debates in the future.

Exhibition

Hakka and Japan: Another History of East Asian Relations Created by Chinese Overseas

A Thematic Exhibition for the 50th Anniversary of the Museum's Founding
September 5–December 3, 2024

This thematic exhibition introduced the culture and history of the Hakka people, as well as their historical relationship with Japan. The Hakka people trace their roots to China and are a branch of the Han Chinese, the country's largest ethnic group. Traditionally based in the mountainous regions of southeastern China, the Hakka have migrated widely within China and across the world, forming an important part of the overseas Chinese community. Japan is no exception. Through 166 related items, this exhibition attempted to shed light on a little-known aspect of East Asian history by focusing on the relationship between the Hakka and Japan.

The exhibition was co-organized with the Hakka Culture Development Center of the Hakka Affairs Council in Taiwan, which generously loaned over 50 items for the exhibition. In addition, Hakka associations in Japan contributed to Minpaku around 30 items related to the Hakka experience in Japan. Some of these items were featured in the exhibition.

The exhibition was organized into five sections. The first section, "Images of Hakka," was an introduction to the history of Hakka migration and their current distribution, as along with a general introduction to their culture, including Hakka language, agriculture, cuisine, clothing,

Exhibition entrance (Masashi Nara, 2024)


Workshop: Making and Eating *Lei cha* (ground tea) (Masashi Nara, 2024)

and music. The second section, "Hakka in Guangdong / Fujian and Japan," examined the early interactions between the Hakka and Japan, focusing on the Hakka migrants from Meizhou in Guangdong Province who began visiting Japan in the late 19th century, as well as the cultural connections between Fujian Tulou and Japan. The third section, "Taiwan Hakka and Japan (1895-1945)," showed the situation under Japanese colonial rule in Taiwan and its impact on Hakka communities. It highlighted their livelihoods and landscape of Taiwan, the overseas study of Taiwan Hakka in Japan, and cultural exchanges through sport and music. The fourth section, "Hakka Associations in Japan," gave an overview of the history of Hakka immigration to Japan and the roles of five key Hakka associations in Japan. The last section, "Living in Japan, Living in Transnational Networks," presented the clothing, cuisine, and housing of Hakka living in Japan, including their crafts and performing arts. It also showed academic exchanges and representations of Hakka in Japan in the media.

As mentioned above, this exhibition was held in collaboration with the Hakka Cultural Development Center in Taiwan and the Hakka associations in Japan. From the planning stage, we strived to co-create the exhibition with Hakka community members. At the National Museum of Ethnology, we emphasize the importance of dialogue with source communities as part of our commitment to concept of the Info-Forum Museum. For this reason, we held a round-table discussion titled "Hakka in Japan Discussing the Exhibition," where Hakka residents in Japan shared their thoughts and perspectives on the exhibition. To deepen visitors' understanding of Hakka culture, we held public events, such as a screening of a film related to Hakka people, a *Lei cha* (ground tea) workshop - a traditional drink common among Hakka in Taiwan, and a seminar on Hakka architectural culture.

Masashi Nara
National Museum of Ethnology

Information

Award

Hiroya Noguchi
Assistant Professor, Center for Cultural Resource Studies
National Museum of Ethnology

Received the Poster Presentation Award for Early Career Researchers on March 14, 2025, for his outstanding poster presentation at the final results briefing of the *Arctic Challenge for Sustainability II (ArCS II)*, which was conducted from June 2020 to March 2025. The award is presented to a young researcher who delivers an exceptional poster presentation at the *ArCS II Final Symposium*, held on March 13-14 at the National Institute of Polar Research. Title of Presentation: *Hope Created by Alien Species: Musk Ox Introduction and Its Impact on the Native Community on Nunivak Island, Alaska*

Tomoki Ikebe
Assistant Professor,
Department of Modern Society and Civilization
National Museum of Ethnology

On May 17, 2025, Tomoki Ikebe received the 37th Japan Association for African

Studies (JAAS) Research Encouragement Award for his well-documented and consistently argued research. This award is given to a research paper or book on Africa authored by a young researcher – under the age of 40, and a regular member of JAAS – based on a process of recommendation and selection. Title of the book: *Baay Faal, the Religious Movement in Senegal: Ethnography of the Muslims Who Work for God*, Akashi Shoten, 2023.

In Memoriam

With Regret We Note the Following:

Akiko Sugase
Associate Professor, Department of Cross-Field Research

A specialist of Cultural Anthropology and Middle Eastern Studies. She conducted research on Arab Christians in Palestine and Israel.
Minpaku 2011-2025
(d.March 31, 2025)

New Staff

Akira Ichikawa
Associate Professor, Department of Cross-field Research

Akira Ichikawa specializes in Mesoamerican Archaeology, and has a current interest in human-environmental relations, especially those concerning volcanic eruption and drought. He has conducted fieldwork in El Salvador, Mexico, and Guatemala since 2005. He was granted his Ph.D in history in 2014 from Nagoya University, in which he studied social process, resilience and innovative strategy in southeastern Mesoamerica. Before coming to Minpaku, he was a JSPS Overseas Research Fellow at the University of Colorado Boulder and then worked as an associate professor at Kanazawa University. His recent main publications include "Human responses to the Ilopango Tierra Blanca Joven eruption: excavations at San Andrés, El Salvador" (2022, *Antiquity* 96(386): 372-386), "Mesoamerican Civilization Guidebook" (2023, Shinsen-sha, in Japanese). He has received awards such as the Ikushi prize (2011), Ishida prize (2017) and Outstanding Postdoc of the Year 2024 University of Colorado Boulder (2022).

Naoki Asada
Assistant Professor, Department of Cross-Field Research

Naoki Asada specializes in social and cultural anthropology. He carries out research on Romanian orphans and their agency in forming familial relationships with adults and peers. He received a PhD in international political economy from University of Tsukuba in September 2024 and worked as a junior researcher at University of Tsukuba. His main publications are; "Between Exclusion and Integration: Anthropological Research on Childcare in Romanian Hospital." (2020, *Anthropological Researches and Studies*, 10 (1): 20–37) and "'Doing Household': An Anthropological Study on Adoptive Family in Romania." (2022, *NEOS* 14 (2): 1–5). His research was awarded the FY2020 Award of Encouragement by the Japan Science Society in 2021.

Tomoki Ikebe
Assistant Professor, Department of Modern Society and Civilization

Tomoki Ikebe specializes in anthropology and African area studies, focusing on the relationship between oral traditions in local languages and written texts in West African Islamic societies. He conducted fieldwork in Dakar, Saint-Louis, Touba and several villages in Senegal since 2014. He received his PhD from Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies (ASAFAS) at Kyoto University. Before joining Minpaku, he held a JSPS Research Fellowship for Young Scientists (Tokubetsu Kenkyuin, PD). His major publications in Japanese include: "The Interpretation of the "Doctrine of Work" in the Mouride Brotherhood and its Orality: A Case from the Form and the Content of Religious Speech Practice (waxtaan)" *Annual Papers of the Anthropological Institute* 11: 73-95, 2020, *Baay Faal, the Religious Movement in Senegal: Ethnography of the Muslims who work for God*, Akashi Shoten, 2023.

Chunni Chiu
Research Fellow, Center for Cultural Resource Studies

Chunni Chiu specializes in museum studies, focusing on inclusive, co-curation activities. Her research explores methodologies for museums to promote cross-cultural dialogue in complex social settings, examining democratization and decolonization. She is particularly interested in the concept of "shared cultural heritage" and decolonization practices in Dutch museums, and is conducting research into DEAI (Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion) implementation in Japanese museums. Chiu earned her PhD from The Graduate University for Advanced Studies (SOKENDAI) in 2022. Her professional experience includes serving as a Researcher and Communication Coordinator for the ICOM Kyoto Conference 2019 (2017-2020), an Associate Fellow at the Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties managing the Japan

Consortium for International Cooperation in Cultural Heritage (2021-2023), and a Project Researcher (2023-2025) at Tokyo University of the Arts. This was an interdisciplinary project combining art, welfare, healthcare, and technology. The project also explored "cultural prescriptions" to promote health and wellbeing through art and cultural activities.

Yukie Nakao
JSPS Research Fellow (RPD)

Yukie Nakao is a specialist in African studies and sociology, with a focus on the social histories of people with bodily limitations in East African cities. While her primary research site is Dar es Salaam, Tanzania – where she explores the historical development of informal social welfare – her fieldwork also extends to other locations including the Gujarat region in India, and Nairobi, Kenya. She received her PhD from Kyoto University in 2020 and has been affiliated with Minpaku since 2018 as a visiting researcher and JSPS Research Fellow (PD, 2022-2025). Her book *Living in Africa with Different Bodies: An Urban Ethnography of Disability and Begging* (Sekaishisosha, 2022, in Japanese), was awarded the Research Incentive Award by the Japan Association for African Studies in 2023. She also contributed the chapter "Tanzania" to the *Global Social Welfare Yearbook 2023* (K. Usami et al. eds., Jumposha, 2023, pp.323–344, in Japanese).

Kenichi Tani
JSPS Research Fellow (PD)

Kenichi Tani specializes in Social Anthropology and Iranian Studies, and has a particular interest in religion. He has spent a total of 44 months conducting anthropological fieldwork in Iran, focusing especially on Shi'i rituals in southern Tehran. He received a PhD in Social Science from Hitotsubashi University in 2022. He was a visiting scholar at Oxford School of Global and Area Studies, University of Oxford from 2023 to 2025. He published *Āshūrā as Submission and Rebellion: An Ethnography on Religious Rituals in Contemporary Iran* (2023, Hosei University Press, in Japanese). He also published "Realizing the existence of blind spots in the 'West'" (with Kosuke Sakai, 2020, *Anthropological Theory*), and edited *Society Seen from Narcotic Goods* (with Reiko Otsubo, 2022, Shumpusha, in Japanese). His book, *Āshūrā as Submission and Rebellion*, received the Encouragement Award from International Institute for the Study of Religions in 2025.

Overseas Visiting Fellow

Lucy Riall
Overseas Visiting Fellow (Visiting Professor), Department of Globalization and Humanity

Lucy Riall is a Professor at the European University Institute in Florence, Italy, and an international fellow of the British Academy. Her current research focuses on migrant colonialism and informal Empire, focusing particularly on European colonies of settlement in South America. At Minpaku, she is working with Hatsuki Aishima on the project related to the Global Mediterranean. Riall's recent publications include "Offshore Nation: Italians 'Overseas' in the Nineteenth-Century World," *Storica* (83, 2023), and "Hidden Spaces of Empire: Italian Colonists in Nineteenth-Century Peru,' *Past and Present*, (254, 2022). She is also the author of *Under the Volcano: Revolution in a Sicilian Town* (Oxford, 2013), and *Garibaldi: Invention of a Hero* (New Haven and London, 2007), and co-editor of *Italian Sexualities Uncovered* (London, 2015) and *The Palgrave Handbook of Masculinity and Political Culture in Europe* (London, 2018).

Publications

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

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- S.Uda, "Techniques for Preserving and Improving

Long-crowing Chickens in Japan: A Case Study of the Tomaru in Niigata Prefecture and Koeyoshi in Akita Prefecture”
- E.Kawanishi, “Mediating Those on Earth and Those in Spirit: Interaction between Mediums and Spirits in the Contemporary UK”

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Kazunobu Ikeya, “Sedentarization and Subsistence Strategies among the Botswana San Mobility and Lifeway Transitions (1929-2010)”

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S.Schaaf, “The Memory of Glitch”;
(Special Theme) Landscape Memories, Archival Ecologies
Lee Douglas,“Introduction: Histories of Extraction, Toxicity, and River Ghosts on and Beyond the Page”
A. Cazenave, “Parallel Archives: Photographic Silver & Its Landscapes”
B. de Almeida, “A Complicated Portrait of the Portuguese River Paiva: A Photo-Essay”
A.Bordoli, “Remediating Visual Extractivism and the Geological Archive: Multimodal Perspectives from Subarctic Québec”
(Carte Blanche)
L.V.Lancker, “Why? As an Intention Scheme”

Forthcoming Exhibitions

Special Exhibition

Humans and Boats: Maritime Life in Asia and Oceania

September 4–December 9, 2025

Scene from a Kula canoe voyage (photo by Osamu Monden (Umi Inc), Trobriand Islands, PNG, 2011)

Thematic Exhibition

Formosa ∞ Art: Contemporary Indigenous Art from Taiwan

September 18–December 16, 2025

Kulele Ruladen’s Art Studio (photo by Atsushi Nobayashi, Taiwan, 2025)

“Our Blissful Paradise”, Etan Pavavalung, 2024

MINPAKU Anthropology Newsletter

The Newsletter is published twice a year, 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. It also serves as a forum for communication with the broader academic community.

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