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Special Theme: Research, Exhibitions, and Education Related to the Cultures of the Chinese Region

In this issue, five authors present the results of their long-term research on the cultures and histories of China and Taiwan. Led by Professor Han Min, who will retire from the National Museum of Ethnology in March 2026, the event will also showcase a selection from her invaluable 26 years of collected materials.

Reflecting on Twenty-six Years at Minpaku: Research, Collaboration, and Curatorial Practice

HAN Min

National Museum of Ethnology



On Qingming Festival, seven branches of the Li lineage gathered at the tomb of their ancestor from 300 years ago to restore the ancestral gravestone that had been taken during the Great Leap Forward to build a bridge (HAN 1991).

In April 2000, as Minpaku sought an anthropologist specializing in Han Chinese society, I was invited to join as an Associate Professor while teaching at Toyo Eiwa University. Since then, until my retirement in March 2026, I have spent 26 deeply fulfilling years here—working alongside outstanding staff and encountering remarkable researchers from Japan, China, East Asia, and beyond.

Throughout this time, I have dedicated myself to research, museum curation, and education.

My pursuit of anthropology stemmed from a desire to critically examine the socialist revolution and modernization in China—experiences I personally lived through—and to explore cultural continuity and change.

To prepare for comparative anthropological research on China, I initially planned to study Japan during my master’s program at the University of Tokyo. Following the advice of my advisor, Professor Funabiki Takeo, I shifted my focus to Europe and selected Hungary, recognizing its parallels in peasant society and socialist modernization, as well as its rich research base. In December 1988, I completed my thesis, *Transformation in the Social Structure of Hungarian Villages: Under Socialist Collectivization*, demonstrating the effectiveness of ethnographic methods in analyzing social and cultural change under socialism.

From 1989 to 1991, I conducted

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HAN Min is a professor at Minpaku. Her research includes ethnographic studies of rural society, cultural representation in tourism, historical memory and cultural heritage. Her main publications include *Mao Zedong as Memory and Symbol* (2022 in Japanese), *Anthropological Perspectives on History, Culture and Museum: Theoretical Practice in Japan and China* (with SE Yin 2018 in Chinese), *Family, Ethnicity and State in Chinese Culture Under the Impact of Globalization* (with KAWAI, H. and WONG, H. W. 2017), *Aspects of Cultural Transformation in Chinese Society: Glocal Perspective* (Fukyosha 2015 in Japanese), *Discourses and Dynamics of Family, Ethnicity, and State in Chinese Society: Theoretical Explorations by East Asian Anthropologists* (with SUENARI, M. 2014 in Chinese), *Tourism and Glocalization—Perspectives on East Asian Societies* (with GRABURN, N. 2010), *Revolution in Practice and Representation: An Anthropological Approach to Contemporary China* (2009 in Japanese), *Social Change and Continuity in a Village in Northern Anhui, China: A Response to Revolution and Reform* (Minpaku SES 58 2001).

fieldwork in a Han Chinese village in northern Anhui, which became the basis of my 1993 Ph.D. dissertation, *Social Continuity in a Village in Northern Anhui*. Based on interviews with about 300 informants and a wide-ranging literature survey, the study examines how land reform, collectivization, and the household responsibility system shaped family structures, gender roles, rituals, and religious practices over Lijialou Village's 600-year history, highlighting generational responses to political change.

In 2001, following my appointment at Minpaku, the revised dissertation was published as *Social Change and Continuity in a Village in Northern Anhui, China: A Response to Revolution and Reform* (Senri Ethnological Studies 58) and it received international recognition. Reviews by anthropologists in Hong Kong and Canada described it as a representative ethnography in contemporary Chinese studies in Japan. Later, on the recommendation of Professors Ma Guoqing and Liu Dong at Peking University, it was translated into Chinese, and published in the *Overseas Chinese Studies Series* by Jiangsu People's Publishing House (HAN 2007). In China, it has been widely read across anthropology, sociology, and political science.

Through this work I gained three key insights. First, while participant observation is indispensable in anthropological fieldwork, personal and family life history approaches provide equally powerful tools. Second, the use of material objects—photographs, furniture, graves, genealogies—as mediators offers unique ways to explore memory, narrative, and social continuity. These approaches have since shaped my museum practice, archival collections, and teaching. Third, grassroots fieldwork alone cannot fully explain cultural change and continuity; it is also necessary to analyze how the state regime produces and circulates discourses and symbols for social mobilization, and how these evolve under globalization. This critical perspective led me into tourism anthropology, expanding my research into the commodification of Mao Zedong—long regarded as a symbol of the socialist revolution—alongside studies of social memory and the transformation of history into a cultural resource.

Minpaku is an inter-university research center where scholars can propose collaborative projects, which are implemented upon approval. Between 2004 and 2013, I led two

such projects focusing on the forces shaping modern China: the democratic revolution promoting ethnic and socioeconomic equality, the socialist revolution after the founding of the PRC, and globalization driven by market principles.

The first project, *Social Change and Reconstruction in China*, examined revolutions not just as historical events but as cultural systems. Since its founding, the PRC has seen socialism reshape society, law, culture, arts, and religion, while the revolution, rooted in daily life, has itself become another tradition in modern history. This project shed light on topics such as “representations of revolution in clothing, film, and art,” “the reconstruction of social institutions and cultural rituals,” and “the memory of revolution and structural transformations in the global era.” The second project, *Socio-cultural Reconstruction in China: Perspectives on Glocalization*, investigated how globalization generated new forms of localization—Sinicization, ethnicization, regionalization, and individualization—and how regional, ethnic, and Chinese values and ideas are expressed and circulated globally.

Between 2009 and 2014, I led two institutional and international collaborative projects. The first, *Tourism and Glocalization: From East Asian Perspectives*, involved a team of 11 early-career researchers. Findings were presented at ICAES in Kunming, China, examining how tourism constructs and consumes landscapes, histories, and cultures across East Asia, and its impact on host communities and glocalization processes (Han and Graburn 2010).

The second, *Generation and Dynamism of Discourses on Family, Ethnicity and State in China* (2009-2014) was based on an academic agreement signed in 2012 between Minpaku and the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (IEA).

Supported by the then-director, Sudo Ken'ichi and the deputy director, Sasaki Shiro, Professors Tsukada Shigeyuki, Yokoyama Hiroko, Associate Professor Kawai Hironao, and IEA Professors Se Yin, Zhang Jijiao and Liu Zhengai, the project brought together researchers from mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, and the U.S. Three international symposia were held (2012 and 2014 at Minpaku, 2013 in Beijing), featuring 64 presentations and 334 participants from nine Japanese universities and ten

Chinese institutions, including Peking University, Tsinghua University, Minzu University, Sun Yat-sen University and Nankai University.

These papers have already been published in two Chinese-language volumes (HAN and SUENARI 2014; HAN and SE 2018), one English-language volume (HAN, KAWAI and WONG 2017) and one Japanese-language volume. Through collaborative research with overseas scholars and institutions, we have worked to strengthen networks among East Asian researchers and to ensure scholarly contributions from Asia to the global academy.

This research combined empirical and discourse-based methods to explore historical ties among family, ethnicity, and the state. Comparative studies revealed how identity and state-society relations vary globally. In contrast to Western resistance theory, the Chinese case demonstrated cooperation, competition, and compromise—evident in ritual revivals and transnational lineage networks. We traced how ethnic narratives become cultural assets in tourism and identity, while noting risks of standardization. Folk beliefs once labeled “superstition” are now recognized as “cultural heritage.” The project clarified cultural change under socialist modernization and helped build a multilingual research network across East Asia and the U.S.

Upon joining Minpaku, I noted two exhibition gaps: a lack of Han Chinese ethnographic materials—many outdated and undocumented—and an absence of artifacts reflecting everyday life under socialism. To address this, I led a collection project from 2007, acquiring items such as genealogical records, wedding garments, a bridal palanquin, ancestral worship tools, and Mao-era propaganda posters, badges, picture books and ration coupons.



A bride travels from her parents' home to her husband's house in a traditional bridal palanquin. This bridal palanquin used in this wedding is now on display at Minpaku (HAN 2008).

Many of these are now displayed in the permanent exhibition, with Mao badges catalogued in a multilingual online database. I also produced eight ethnographic films, including *Ancestor Worship among the Han Chinese* and *Fujian Tulou: Hometown of the Hakka*. Three of these films include audio descriptions for visually impaired audiences.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the professors Deng Xiaohua, Ruan Yunxing, Kalina, Wang Lianmao and Chen Xiahan, who supported the collection of materials and video interviews.

I was also responsible for proofreading the Chinese translations of audiovisual materials used across 14 exhibition halls at Minpaku. As a co-investigator, I contributed to the planning and implementation of the special exhibition, *Profound Earth—Ethnic Life and Crafts of China* (led by Professor Tsukada, 2008) and the “Cultural Database of Chinese Regions” project (led by Professor Yokoyama, 2022). Currently, under the leadership of associate professor, Nara Masashi, the China team is exploring new exhibition methods and undertaking partial renovations in response to changing times.

At SOKENDAI, I have supervised six doctoral students as principal advisor and co-supervised six others from China, Japan, Korea, Belarus, and Poland. I also guided nine additional doctoral students from other institutions in Japan and China, supporting them in fieldwork, writing, and dissertation completion.

I've participated in 10 preliminary reviews and 14 final defenses, working with students whose research spans East Asia, Southeast Asia, and Africa, and topics ranging from kinship and gender to cultural heritage, religion, food culture and urban communities.

Many of them now serve as researchers, educators, or cultural professionals. Collaborating with them has been a profound source of inspiration and energy.

Looking back, I feel that my past 26 years at Minpaku have been immensely fulfilling. It has provided an ideal environment for intellectual creation and expression. I am deeply grateful to my colleagues in the research department, staff from other divisions, secretaries, local collaborators and researchers, and above all, my family, who have supported me over the years.

The Exhibition Related to the Cultures of the Chinese Region as an Ongoing Project

NARA Masashi

National Museum of Ethnology

NARA Masashi is Associate Professor at the National Museum of Ethnology and the Graduate University for Advanced Studies. He specializes in cultural anthropology and has conducted fieldwork among the Hui Muslim minority in China, focusing on Islamic revival in the post-Mao era. More recently, he has conducted field research on the relationship between mobility and religiosity among Sinophone Muslims in Taiwan. His recent publications include “Caring for piety: doing Muslim among Hui people in contemporary China” (*Journal of Contemporary East Asia Studies*, 1–15, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1080/24761028.2025.2555077>), “Entanglement between religiosity and ethnicity: Matchmaking activities as a resilient practice among Hui Muslims in contemporary China” (*Social Compass* 72(3): 1-18, 2025).

The National Museum of Ethnology (Minpaku) completed a comprehensive renovation of its permanent exhibition halls in 2016. Yet even after that major undertaking, the museum has consistently maintained a policy of ongoing renewal in response to new research developments. The exhibition hall devoted to the cultures of the Chinese region is no exception. This particular gallery was last fully renovated in 2014; although no major updates followed immediately, it underwent a large-scale renewal in the fiscal year 2022. This essay has two aims: first, to provide an overview of the exhibition related to the cultures of the Chinese region, and second, to introduce the content and significance of the 2022 renewal.



Exhibition renewal in progress (Masashi Nara, 2023)

The gallery related to the cultures of the Chinese region is organized around nine themes: “Subsistence,” “Costume,” “Musical Instruments,” “Zhuang Stilt Houses,” “Crafts,” “Religion and Writing,” “Transmission of Chinese Tradition,” “Taiwan Indigenous Peoples,” and “Chinese Overseas.” Together, these themes highlight the cultural diversity of the Chinese region—a diversity nurtured

by its vast geography and remarkable range of natural environments. The Han Chinese, who make up the majority of the population, are largely concentrated in the plains and fertile basins, while minority groups often reside in highland areas, grasslands, and frontier regions in the southwest, northwest, and northeast. Taiwan is home to Austronesian-speaking Indigenous peoples, and Chinese migrants and their descendants—the *Huaqiao* and *Huaren*—have settled in communities across the globe. The gallery presents this multiplicity of cultures in their historical and regional contexts, organized around the nine themes.

The 2022 renewal focused on six thematic sections: “Subsistence,” “Costume,” “Zhuang Stilt Houses,” “Crafts,” “Religion and Writing,” and “Taiwan Indigenous Peoples.” In preparing for this renewal, the project team deliberately integrated members’ research outcomes since the 2014 renovation, while also reflecting on areas for improvement. Earlier concerns had noted that the exhibition was “too quiet,” “lacking dynamism,” “overcrowded and difficult to view,” and that “too many artifacts were placed behind glass, contrary to Minpaku’s principle of open display.” Another recurring issue was that “the exhibition offered relatively few interactive features for visitors.”

With these issues in mind, the team sought not only to showcase newly acquired artifacts and research, but also to enhance visitor interaction. In the “Taiwan Indigenous Peoples” section, Professor Atsushi Nobayashi, who has long conducted research on Taiwan’s Indigenous peoples, contributed new displays of Siraya and Bunun peoples’ garments. Glass partitions were removed, allowing closer and more intimate viewing.

Similarly, Professor Min Han, a team member engaged in the systematic collection and study of Mao Zedong badges, developed a database cataloguing this vast material. In the renewal, a simplified version was installed on a touch screen, enabling

visitors to explore the collection interactively linking scholarly achievement with public engagement.

The “Subsistence” section was enriched with digital media. A new monitor displays footage of traditional cormorant fishing, based on long-term ethnographic research by Professor Sosuke Uda. Likewise, in the “Crafts” section, monitors now show ethnographic films documenting craft-making processes, situating displayed items in their living cultural contexts.

In the “Religion and Writing” section, Associate Professor Kaoru Suemori applied his expertise in digital printmaking technologies to reconstruct and present the production and use of Tibetan protective amulets. Complementing the physical display, a touch panel features a database of Tibetan amulets, enabling visitors to explore materials beyond what is visible in the cases. To reflect the rapidly changing religious landscape across the Chinese region, the team introduced a new digital installation: a touch screen showing recent images and explanations of contemporary religious life in the region, encouraging reflection on religion’s shifting role in contemporary society and its entanglement with broader social transformations.

It is not possible here to describe every aspect of the 2022 renewal. What should be emphasized, however, is that the work did not end in 2022. Since then, the project team has continued to implement smaller updates and refinements. This ongoing renewal reflects recognition that the cultures and societies of the Chinese region are constantly transforming under shifting political and economic circumstances. The gallery is therefore not conceived as a static representation, but as a dynamic exhibition that evolves alongside the realities it portrays.

As members of the exhibition project team, our aspiration is to ensure that the exhibition remains a living and ever-evolving space. By committing to the principle of ongoing renewal, we aim to translate the dynamic cultural processes of the Chinese region into the language of museum display. In doing so, we not only present objects and knowledge but also embody anthropology’s commitment to reflecting societies in motion. The 2022 renewal was a milestone in this ongoing process, not a final destination. It marked another step in ensuring that the exhibition continues to resonate with current scholarship and the lived experiences of the peoples it represents.

Introduction to *The Anthropology of China: One Hundred Trajectories and Prospects*

KAWAI Hironao

Tokyo Metropolitan University

Anthropology has traditionally focused on regions once described as “primitive” societies. Consequently, many Japanese anthropologists are unfamiliar with trends in anthropological research on China—that is, the *anthropology of China* (here, we distinguish between “anthropology of China” and “Chinese anthropology.” The former refers to research on China; the latter to anthropology conducted within China).

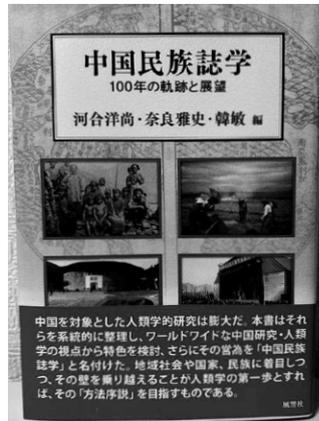
In Japan, introductory works on the anthropology of China include

Chinese Cultural Anthropology: A Bibliography (edited by SUENARI Michio, University of Tokyo Press in 1995), and *Readings in Chinese Cultural Anthropology* (edited by SEGAWA Masahisa and NISHIZAWA Haruhiko, Fukyosha in 2006). These volumes introduced classic works in both English and Chinese. While they enriched the understanding of the anthropology of China, the literature they presented was largely pre-1990. Moreover, despite being published in Japan, they gave only minimal attention

KAWAI Hironao is Associate Professor at Tokyo Metropolitan University. His research interests include the anthropology of landscape, urban anthropology, and the ethnology of Han Chinese. His publications include *The Challenges of Landscape Anthropology: Urban Landscape Representation and Revitalization in Guangzhou, China* (in Japanese, Fukyosha Publishing, 2013), *Family, Ethnicity and State in Chinese Culture under the Impact of Globalization* (in English, Bridge 21 and Routledge, co-edited with HAN Min and WONG Hueng Wah), and *The Social Production of "Hakka Space": An Ethnography on the Creation of "Homeland" in Meixian, China* (in Japanese, Fukyosha Publishing, 2020).

to the significant contributions of Chinese anthropology itself to Japanese scholarship.

Since the 1990s, the anthropology of China has developed rapidly. The number of books and articles has surged, and research topics have diversified. Yet, the extensive achievements of Chinese anthropology since the 1990s have scarcely been introduced systematically into Japanese anthropology. This book was therefore compiled to present key trends in the anthropology of China, organized thematically. While covering developments from the first half of the 20th century to the present, it places particular emphasis on literature since the 1990s, and it draws on sources in English, Chinese, and Japanese.



Book Cover of *The Anthropology of China: One Hundred Trajectories and Prospects* (edited by KAWAI Hironao, NARA Masashi, and HAN Min, Fukyosha Publishing, 2024)

The volume contains 16 chapters and 8 columns. Each chapter title highlights a specific topic, while the subtitle reflects its perspective or approach. The contents are as follows:

Introduction: Retrospective and current issues in the anthropology of China (KAWAI Hironao and HAN Min)

Chapter 1: The anthropology of China in the first half of the 20th century: The genealogy of Chinese social studies (NAKAO Katsumi)

Column 1: Pre-war research on Taiwan's Indigenous peoples (NAKAO Katsumi)

Chapter 2: Kinship—Elucidating the principles that regulate Chinese society (KAWAGUCHI Yukihiko)

Chapter 3: Gender—Transcending the yoke of “patriarchy” (HORIE Mio)

Chapter 4: Ethnicity—Research trends in China's *Minzu* category (INAZAWA Tsutomu)

Column 2: Domestic migration—China as an immigrant nation (BAO Shuangyue)

Chapter 5: Community—Experiments in holism and the non-collectivist turn (KAWASE Yoshitaka)

Chapter 6: Urban—The genealogy of

a spatial turn (KAWAI Hironao and SAKURAI Sou)

Column 3: Transnational migration—Research trends on Chinatowns (BIAN Qingyin)

Chapter 7: Feng Shui—The genealogy of research on cosmology (KOBAYASHI Hiroshi)

Column 4: Landscape—Transdisciplinary developments in the field of China (CHEN Zhao)

Chapter 8: Folk belief—Unity and diversity of “China” in Han Chinese folk religion studies (YOKOTA Koichi)

Chapter 9: Religion—The politics surrounding institutional religion and global connections (NARA Masashi)

Column 5: Media—New developments from pre- to post-COVID (FUJINO Yohei)

Chapter 10: Food—What connects, what transcends (SAKURADA Ryoko)

Column 6: Healthcare—Research trends centered on ethnic medicine (ISOBE Misato)

Chapter 11: Tourism—From Host-Guest Relations to Tourism Mobilities (TANAKA Takae)

Chapter 12: Art—Beyond resources, subjects, and collaboration (NIWA Tomoko and CHEN Zhao)

Chapter 13: The Performing Arts—Developments and prospects in anthropological Chinese theater studies (SHIMIZU Takuya)

Column 7: Music—From the perspective of ethnomusicological research (FUSHIKI Kaori)

Chapter 14: Cultural heritage—The cultural politics of heritage formation (ZHOU Xing and HUANG Jie)

Column 8: Museums—The development of museum anthropology in China (HAN Min)

Final Chapter: A tentative essay on the “anthropology of civilization” (KAWAI Hironao and NARA Masashi)

Each contribution introduces research trends on a specific topic from a particular perspective and situates them in dialogue with broader anthropological theories such as functionalism, structuralism, postmodern anthropology, and ontological anthropology.

In Japanese anthropology, studies of China have often been regarded as a “peculiar” field. They have either avoided prevailing anthropological theories or developed distinct frameworks. Until just over a decade ago, presentations on Chinese studies at the annual conferences of the Japanese Society of Cultural Anthropology were grouped into separate sessions, informally referred to as the “China Room.” Theories “unique” to Chinese

studies, emerging from the Chinese field itself, certainly exist. Yet, the trajectory of China's anthropology demonstrates its strong connection to general anthropological theory. Debates in the anthropology of China have been shaped by dominant anthropological paradigms of their respective times, even as they evolved independently.

In fact, the anthropology of China often anticipated theoretical currents in general anthropology. For example, when studying China as a "civilized" society, anthropologists initially examined the state and market economies, and analyzed both micro-level village phenomena and macro-level processes that transcended local boundaries. Although the frameworks

differed, such discussions predated the rise of political economy and transnationalism in anthropology during the 1980s. Similarly, questions central to the ontological turn—rethinking dichotomies such as human/non-human, nature/culture, and subject/object, and privileging non-Western perspectives—were already emerging in the anthropology of China as early as the 1990s.

This book highlights previously unexplored connections between general anthropological theory and Chinese anthropological debates. It also raises a key question: how can Chinese case studies contribute to the development of anthropological theory in the future?

A Decade of Zhejiang University's "Minpaku Library"

RUAN Yunxing

Zhejiang University

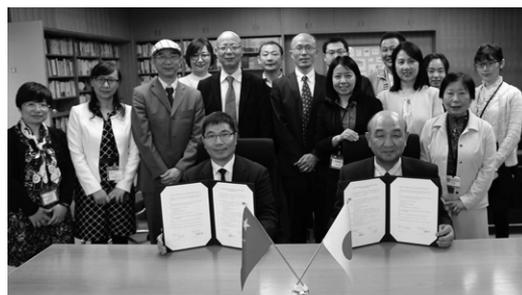
The *Minpaku Library* (民博文库)—the Contemporary Multilingual and Multimedia Anthropology Database of Zhejiang University—is an interdisciplinary database jointly established by the Institute of Anthropology and the Library of Zhejiang University, with support from Japan's National Museum of Ethnology (Minpaku). It was named in commemoration of Minpaku's contribution of the initial collection, consisting of four comprehensive sets totaling approximately 500 high-quality, multilingual journals specializing in anthropology. This donation provided a valuable foundation for the library's mission to support cross-cultural research and promote global academic exchange in the field of ethnology.

The origin of the *Minpaku Library* lies in the inspiration drawn from the establishment and development of Minpaku, distinguished by its global, comprehensive, and research-oriented approach to contemporary anthropology. At the turn of the century, Minpaku hosted an outstanding team of China studies scholars (including Professors Tsukada Shigeyuki, Yokoyama Hiroko, Han Min, Kawai Hironao, and Nobayashi Atsushi) who specialized in the study of the Han, Zhuang, Bai, and Yami

ethnic groups. This team fostered close ties with scholars, including many Chinese international students, engaged in anthropological and ethnological research on China across East Asia and beyond.

Professor Ruan Yunxing, the anthropological supervisor responsible for Zhejiang University's *Minpaku Library*, studied in Japan as a doctoral student at Kyoto University, under Professor Tamura, Katsumi (Minpaku) and simultaneously served as a shared-use researcher for international students at Minpaku. After completing his studies in 2004 and returning to China, he was appointed as a Visiting Researcher at Minpaku in 2010, collaborating with Professor Han Min. Through his efforts to promote academic exchange, mutual visits,

Yunxing Ruan (PhD, Kyoto University, Japan) is currently an Emeritus Reappointed Professor at the Department of Sociology, and the Responsible Anthropological Professor for Zhejiang University's "Minbo Library". His research focuses on Political Anthropology, Cultural Heritage Studies, and Cyborg Anthropology. His major works include: *Chinese Lineage and Political Culture: A Political Anthropological Study of Yixu Village in Eastern Fujian (1930-2000)* (in Japanese, Sobunsha, 2005), *Political Anthropology: Asian Fieldwork and Writing Culture* (Co-edited, in Chinese, Zhejiang University Press, 2011), *Cyborg Anthropology: A Review of Global Research and Contemporary Paradigm Shifts* (Co-authored, in Chinese, Zhejiang University Press, 2021).



Signing of the first "Academic Exchange Agreement" between Zhejiang University and Minpaku (2016)

and institutional cooperation between Zhejiang University and Minpaku, the idea of establishing *Minpaku Library* gradually took shape.

In October 2015, Minpaku Director Sudo Ken'ichi and Zhejiang University Vice President Luo Weidong jointly unveiled the plaque at the inauguration ceremony of the *Minpaku Library*. In April 2016, Luo led a delegation to Minpaku, where the first "Academic Exchange Agreement" between Zhejiang University and Minpaku was signed. Since then, the library has developed into a contemporary anthropological database built to national library standards. It now houses more than 3,360 volumes of valuable documents in Chinese, Japanese, English, and German, along with dozens of anthropological films and videos in Chinese, Japanese, and English.

Its holdings include Minpaku's four institutional journals, *Quarterly Ethnology* from the Senri Foundation, English-language anthropology journals donated by Professor Kawai Toshimitsu, and Chinese-Japanese folklore materials donated by Professor He Bin. The library has also established special collections on themes such as "Cyborg Anthropology" and "Aesthetic Anthropology," and plans to incorporate the distinctive "Chinese Charity Archives" founded by public anthropologist Professor Zhu Jiangang. Work is underway to advance the digitalization of the *Minpaku Library*. Over the past decade, with its emphasis on interdisciplinary, multilingual, and multimedia collections, combined with international academic exchange and collaborative development, the library has secured a unique place among anthropological databases in Chinese universities.

The development of *Minpaku Library* has gone hand in hand with new knowledge production driven by international academic exchange and cooperation, especially Sino-Japanese

exchange. A milestone was the jointly funded 2011 publication of *Political Anthropology: Asian Fieldwork and Writing* (edited by Ruan Yunxing and Han Min), a collection of papers by East Asian anthropologists that laid the groundwork for continuing exchange. In 2016, *Cultural Heritage in Chinese Regions: An Anthropological Perspective* (SER 136, edited by Kawai Hiroshi and Iida Taku) was published, based on a research workshop involving scholars from both institutions.

In 2018, Minpaku Director Yoshida Kenji, Professor Han Min, and Associate Professor Kawai Hiroshi were invited to Zhejiang University to visit the *Minpaku Library*, participate in the international seminar "Knowledge Production, Cultural Communication, and Integration in East Asia," and deliver lectures. In 2023, a Chinese translation of Professor Iida Taku's essay on the anthropology of cultural heritage (translated by Chen Yixin and revised by Ruan Yunxing) appeared in the Chinese journal *Heritage* (Vol.8: pp.1-50). In 2024, *Heritage* (Vol.10, pp.241-258) published Ruan Yunxing's article "The Social Mechanism of Knowledge Production: A Case Study of Academic Publishing at Japan's 'Minpaku'," based on his personal experience and fieldwork at both Zhejiang University's *Minpaku Library* and Minpaku itself. Together these works document the collaborative social mechanism of the production of anthropological knowledge in East Asia alongside the growth of the *Minpaku Library*.

On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of Zhejiang University's *Minpaku Library*, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to former and current Minpaku directors Sudo Ken'ichi, Yoshida Kenji, and Seki Yuji; to Professors Han Min and Kawai Hiroshi; and to the many departments and staff members whose support made this achievement possible.

Research and Education on Chinese Food Culture at Minpaku

LIU Zhengyu

Ryukoku University

Research on Chinese food culture in Japan began in the 1970s, earlier

than in mainland China, and has since developed in diverse directions.

Scholars such as Osamu Shinoda, Seiichi Tanaka, Tokiko Nakayama, Dasheng Zhou, and Haruhiko Nishizawa conducted pioneering studies from historical, literary, ethnological, and anthropological perspectives, laying the foundation for the study of Chinese food history, culinary culture, and the foodways of both Han and ethnic minority groups. In this process, the National Museum of Ethnology (Minpaku) played a particularly important role, becoming a center that has long promoted interdisciplinary research and graduate education on food culture.

Naomichi Ishige, the museum's third director, pioneered a comprehensive anthropological approach to the study of human food, establishing a globally oriented framework for food culture studies. He organized a collaborative research team of scholars from Japan, China, and Korea to conduct a systematic comparison of food cultures across East Asia. Through this comparative methodology, Ishige highlighted the distinctive features of East Asian foodways—encompassing ingredients, cooking techniques, commensal practices, and underlying values—in contrast to Western food culture and tradition.

This framework has also proven highly effective for understanding Chinese food culture, enabling scholars to identify its distinctiveness not only through culinary techniques and dining customs but also within broader comparative contexts. Inspired by Minpaku's approaches and theoretical perspectives in food studies, I entered the doctoral program in 2013 and began anthropological research on Chinese food culture.

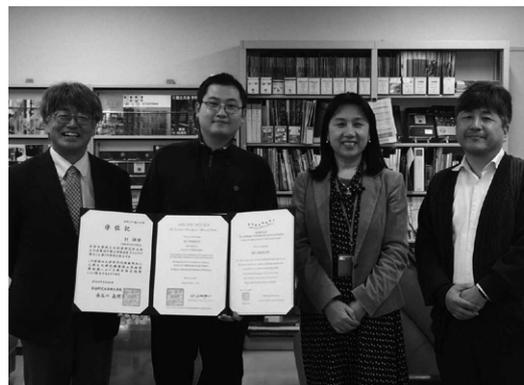
The doctoral program at Minpaku, established in 1989 under the Graduate University for Advanced Studies (SOKENDAI), is uniquely positioned to offer postgraduate students exceptional educational and research training facilities supported by rich human and material resources. The program emphasizes a strong combination of fieldwork and interdisciplinary approaches, offering an ideal environment for advanced research.

My research has long focused on food and everyday life in contemporary China, with particular interest in how the food rationing system (1953-1993) shaped the dietary experiences of urban residents. The graduate education I received at Minpaku provided the essential theoretical and methodological training that enabled me to develop this research focus into

structured ethnographic fieldwork.

Alongside core anthropological theory, the program emphasized distinctive practical approaches to studying food culture. We learned to analyze household foodways diachronically by integrating perspectives on family meals, kinship systems, and social change—using methods such as in-depth interviews, life history collection, and the gathering of domestic archival materials. Training also highlighted the importance of understanding cultural change historically: studying human interactions with plants and animals in relation to local ecologies and livelihoods, as well as tracing the circulation of foodstuffs and cooking techniques through processes of trade, migration, and conflict. In addition, we were encouraged to approach food as a social practice by analyzing its symbolic meanings within annual festivals, life-cycle rituals, and religious observances.

Among the faculty, I was especially fortunate to receive guidance from Professor Min Han, a specialist in Han Chinese society, who treated me with exceptional generosity and intellectual care. She provided detailed supervision throughout my dissertation process—from research design and key informant selection to data organization, analysis, and thesis structuring. Her advice was invaluable, and her emphasis on understanding continuity and change in modern Chinese society through the lens of state-society relations became a foundational intellectual framework for my subsequent research.



Commemorating the completion of doctoral studies at Minpaku (from left: Prof. Kazunobu Ikeya, the author, Prof. Min Han, and Prof. Atsushi Nobayashi). (Photo by Yang Liu, 2020)

In addition to its rigorous training in theory and methodology, Minpaku has a strong commitment to public engagement, opening avenues for research and education to broader society. The museum's permanent exhibition on China includes numerous

Zhengyu Liu is an adjunct lecturer in the Faculty of Agriculture at Ryukoku University and Deputy Secretary-General of the Society of Asian Food Studies (SAFS). His research explores urban dietary practices in contemporary China, with recent interests in street food tourism and the use of wild plants. He is the author of *Food and Everyday Life in Tianjin: A Historical Anthropology under Socialism* (Tokyo: Fukyosha, 2025, in Japanese) and co-editor of *Food Culture and Daily Life in China under the Socialist System* (Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology, 2018, in Chinese).

food-related artifacts. I actively participated in collecting such materials and compiling database entries—an experience that allowed me to contribute directly to the museum's mission of sharing academic research with the public.

Symposia and public lectures serve as vital platforms for graduate students to present emerging findings and engage in international scholarly dialogue. A notable example was the 6th Asian Food Studies Conference in 2016, where I collaborated with Professor Hironao Kawai to co-organize a panel examining the relationship between socialist institutions and everyday food practices in China. The discussions from this panel later culminated in co-editing an academic volume, which significantly expanded my international academic network and reinforced the global relevance of our research.

The culmination of these research efforts was my doctoral dissertation, which investigated dietary life in contemporary urban China through ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Tianjin. Over approximately 14 months, I gathered extensive empirical materials, including: dietary records from 62 households (156 individuals); participant-observation notes from 29 households; life histories of 20 residents aged 50 and above; testimonies from three former employees of state-run grocers involved in ration distribution; as well as archival materials such as ration coupons, government documents, and local gazetteers. Drawing on these diverse sources, I analyzed continuities and transformations in urban food practices over a period of nearly 70 years (1949–2018) from three interrelated perspectives.

First, I traced the continuity and

reconfiguration of Tianjin's distinctive culinary culture. I examined how traditions rooted in local ecologies and regional products were reshaped under shifting national institutions and economic systems.

Second, I analyzed how transformations in family structure—such as women's entry into the workforce and the implementation of the one-child policy—influenced dietary practices. These changes altered ingredient selection and cooking methods. They also underscored the evolving social meanings of shared meals and contributed to a redefinition of familial relations.

Third, I explored how residents adapted to transitions in the food supply system, from the introduction to the abolition of rationing. They mobilized social networks and applied traditional preservation knowledge to secure food. These adaptive strategies continue to inform contemporary consumption patterns and lifestyle choices.

This dissertation received the Dean's Award of the School of Cultural and Social Studies at SOKENDAI in March 2020 and was published as a monograph, *Food and Everyday Life in Tianjin: A Historical Anthropology under Socialism* (『天津市民の食生活: 社会主義制度下の歴史人類学』), by Fukuyoshi in March 2025. By making the work publicly available, the everyday food practices of ordinary people during the Mao era (1949–1976)—previously little known—have now become shared internationally. By tracing records of past meals, the study provides new perspectives for considering the future transformations of Chinese society. This represents one example of the academic endeavors at Minpaku that embody the integration of research and education.

Column

Sharing Past Research Data with Source Communities

Makito Minami

National Museum of Ethnology

Although I am retiring at the end of March 2026, I am currently preparing for the thematic exhibition *Dolpo: A*

Tibetan Cultural Sphere in the Western Nepal Highlands, which will open that same month. Dolpo is the name

of a highland region in western Nepal, administratively part of Dolpa District. Scattered villages at elevations between 3,200 to 4,200 meters, connecting to the Tibetan Plateau, are home to the Tibetan Nepali people known as the Dolpo-pa. There, they cultivate barley and buckwheat, practice transhumance with yaks, sheep and goats, and historically formed caravans using yaks as pack animals to trade salt and grain.

The impetus for organizing this thematic exhibition came from the opportunity to display the beautiful photographs taken by Kaori Inaba, a photographer who has extensively explored Dolpo since 2007. At the same time, the National Museum of Ethnology (Minpaku) holds a collection of approximately 300 folk tools collected in 1958 at Tsharka village in upper Dolpo by the “Japanese Scientific Expedition for Northwestern Nepal,” led by the late Jiro Kawakita. Additionally, about 3,600 photographs taken in Dolpo and elsewhere by expedition members such as the late Ryuzo Takayama are mainly publicly available on the museum's website as the *Nepal Photo Database*. These are invaluable as they depict the Tibetan cultural sphere of Nepal prior to the 1959 Tibetan uprising. The exhibition aims to show both the transformation and the enduring nature of Dolpo society by juxtaposing materials and photographs from 68 years ago with contemporary photographs.

In January of this year, as I began developing the exhibition concept, *Himalayan Travel Diary: A Record of Staying in Pongmo Village, Nepal* (Yasaka Shobo, 2025), edited and authored by Zenjiro Tamura, was published. It documents the two-month fieldwork conducted in 1968 by the “Western Nepal Ethnic Culture Research Expedition,” led by Tamura, in Pongmo Village located in lower Dolpo. Remarkably, it appeared 57 years after the original research. Through reading it, I learned that over 200 folk tools collected in Pongmo Village are held in the Museum and Library (Folklore Materials Room) of Musashino Art University in Tokyo. I immediately contacted Professor Tamura, now 92 years old. Unfortunately, he was hospitalized and we were unable to meet, but I was able to borrow the materials from Musashino Art University and obtained permission from the publisher to reproduce photographs from the book for the exhibition.

Although I have been conducting research in various regions of Nepal since 1980, I had never before visited

Dolpo. If I was going to create a thematic exhibition, I felt I absolutely had to see Dolpo at least once. I decided that my destinations could only be Pongmo (today called Pungmo) Village and Ringmo (Phoksumdo) Lake in lower Dolpo. My purpose was to deliver the *Himalayan Travel Diary* to the people of Pungmo Village on behalf of Tamura's research team. Meanwhile, Ringmo Lake was a place I had long wished to visit ever since I saw a photograph of it 45 years ago in the Ringmo Restaurant in Kathmandu.

This September, I finally managed to visit both Pungmo Village and Ringmo Lake for a short period. Pungmo Village had grown from 20 households and 130 people in 1968 to 42 households and 240 people today. The villagers no longer engage in yak caravan trade, but they continue to cultivate wheat and buckwheat and practice transhumance, primarily with female yaks. Of the 24 color portraits of 27 individuals (excluding infants) featured in the book's frontispiece, only three people are still alive. The villagers gazed intently at the 57-year-old photographs, animatedly discussing them. One man, deeply moved, said, “This is the first time I've seen my mother's face since she died when I was three.”



A man pointing at his late mother in the book. Photo by Makito Minami (Pungmo, 2025)

New insights also emerged regarding the materials to be exhibited. Minpaku's Dolpo collection includes numerous wooden utensils with handles, which Takayama named “powder kneaders.” These specialized tools were used to mix Tartary buckwheat with lukewarm water and to knead the dough thoroughly with a wooden spatula to make pancakes. It is said that even the bitter buckwheat loses its bitterness when processed with these wooden tools. Strangely, the museum had not collected the spatulas themselves, so until I saw them in use, it was unclear how the kneading process was performed.

I have previously carried out a

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abroad. Co-authored
works include
*Politics and Society
in Modern Nepal:
Democratization and
the Expansion of the
Maoists' Influence*,
2015, Akashi Shoten
(in Japanese), and
*Transnational
Migration in East
Asia: Japan in a
Comparative Focus*
(Senri Ethnological
Reports 77), 2008.
Articles include
“From Tika to Kata?:
Ethnic Movements
among the Magars
in an Age of
Globalization.” In
H. Ishii, et al. (eds.)
*Social Dynamics in
Northern South Asia
Vol.1: Nepalis Inside
and Outside Nepal*,
Manohar, 2008 and
others.

number of projects to share past research data with the source communities. For instance, in response to inquiries about the *Nepal Photo Database*, I provided photos of the Bhairav Dance taken in 1958 to members of the Bhairav Dance Preservation Society in Pokhara. I also distributed DVDs of Minpaku's 1982 video footage from Nepal to the people featured in those films. In Batulecaur, near Pokhara, home to Gandharba musicians, I organized a "returning-home screening" of the 1982 film and later produced a new documentary titled *Revisiting Batulecaur after 34 years: A Village of Musicians in Nepal*.



Screening a 1982 film at its original location. Photo by Makito Minami (Batulecaur, 2016)

Furthermore, I created a database of Sarangi music recordings made during the 1980s by a research team led by the late Professor Emeritus Tomoaki Fujii, an ethnomusicologist at Minpaku (*Database: Sarangi Music in Nepal*), and worked to share these materials with the people involved.

By coincidence, my final work in Nepal for Minpaku has also taken the form of a museum-specific endeavor: sharing past research data with the source communities. I hope that someday, people from Tsharka Village will visit Minpaku and that people from Pungmo Village will visit Musashino Art University to study the folk tools collected in their villages. Professors Kawakita, Takayama, and Zenjiro and the late Machiko Tamura were the teachers who guided me when I first began my research in Nepal, and this Dolpo exhibition is, in a small way, a gesture of gratitude to repay their academic kindness. Dolpo has brought back fond memories of many friends and acquaintances: the late Tamotsu Onishi, who poured his passion into Dolpo; the late Koji Mizutani who attempted to climb Mount Kangchunne (6444m) visible from Pungmo; and Govind Prasad Thapa Magar, the liaison officer for that 1976 expedition. This thematic exhibition feels a fitting culmination to my career.

In Memory of Dr. Akiko Sugase

Yuriko Yamanaka

National Museum of Ethnology



Dr. Akiko Sugase at Summer Vacation Children's Workshop in 2017

Studies (SOKENDAI), School of Cultural and Social Studies, entering the doctoral program in April 1999. She was awarded a doctoral degree in March 2006. Later that year, she was appointed Senior Research Fellow at the Hayama Center for Advanced Studies of SOKENDAI. In April 2011, she joined the National Museum of Ethnology as Assistant Professor and was promoted to Associate Professor in 2016.

Her research focused on religious minorities in Israel and Palestine, with particular attention to Arab Christian communities. Based on long-term ethnographic fieldwork, she examined the complex and layered identities of these groups in a context shaped by overlapping histories, religious traditions, and political realities. Her monograph *Arab Christians in Israel: Society and Identity* (Keisui-sha, 2009) analyzed the multifaceted identity of the Melkite Catholic community in Israel. This was

Yuriko Yamanaka is Professor at the National Museum of Ethnology and the Graduate University for Advanced Studies (SOKENDAI).

Dr. Akiko Sugase, Associate Professor at the National Museum of Ethnology, passed away on March 31, 2025 after a courageous battle with cancer. Her passing is a profound loss to the ethnological study of the Middle East, a field in which she made enduring contributions through her scholarship, and curatorial work.

Dr. Sugase began her academic career at the Graduate University for Advanced

followed by *The Cross Shines Even on Nights of the New Moon: Christians in the Middle East* (Yamakawa Shuppansha, 2010), which brought broader attention to Christian communities in the region. Together, these works articulated what she described as “a cultural study of Palestine and Israel not defined solely by conflict.” This perspective marked a significant contribution to Middle Eastern studies by shifting focus toward cultural and social life beyond the prevailing narratives of political confrontation.

At the National Museum of Ethnology, Dr. Sugase further developed her research along three interrelated themes. The first investigated practices of saint veneration across Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, examining how such practices operate as mechanisms of coexistence and exclusion within and between religious traditions. The second concerned the relationship between religious minorities and Arab nationalism, with attention to the ways in which minority groups engaged with and contributed to nationalist movements. The third theme addressed food culture, where she explored how culinary practices reflect identity, heritage, and social change. These areas of research were pursued not only through academic publications but were also shared with wider audiences through lectures, seminars, and public outreach programs.

Dr. Sugase also played an active role in curatorial and exhibition projects at the museum. She contributed to the 2017 *Mr. Shimegi's Coffee Collection* exhibition, which presented the diffusion of coffee culture from the Middle East and North Africa to the wider world. Building on this work, she helped develop the “Coffee as Global Culture” section in the West Asia gallery. In 2019, she served on the organizing committee for the Thematic Exhibition *Exploring 50 Years of Livelihood and Landscape Change in Wadi Fatima, Saudi Arabia: Ethnographic Collections of Motoko Katakura, a Japanese Female Cultural Anthropologist*, which documented

transformations in the lives of Saudi women, drawing upon the research of the late Professor Emeritus Motoko Katakura.

More recently, despite the challenges of illness, she contributed substantially to the planning and execution of the Thematic Exhibition *Dots and Lines: The Aesthetic Journey of Arabic Calligraphy*. She also collaborated with Dr. Hatsuki Aishima on the development of the new Min-pack educational kit *Urban Life in Arab Cities*, making conceptual contributions as well as providing photographs and explanatory materials drawn from her fieldwork.

From 2016 to 2020, Dr. Sugase was also a dedicated member of the steering committee for the annual Intensive Course on Museology, which was part of the JICA Knowledge Co-Creation Program “Museums and Community Development,” under the sponsorship of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). She had cared for and supported many participants of this program from all over the world, during their stay in Japan.

Her final publication, *Umm Azar's Kitchen* (Fukuinkan Shoten, 2024), is an illustrated children's book that portrays the everyday life of an Arab Christian woman with whom Dr. Sugase formed a close friendship during her fieldwork in Haifa. This work exemplifies Dr. Sugase's commitment to presenting the lived experiences of religious minorities with honesty, empathy, and care. Shortly before her passing, the book was selected for inclusion in the “BRAW Amazing Bookshelf 2025-Sustainability: 17 Goals for a Better Future” at the Bologna Children's Book Festival. This recognition stands as a testament to the lasting value of her scholarship and its relevance beyond academia. The news of this honor was made public on the very day of her passing. While we wish she were here with us to celebrate this achievement, we take solace in knowing that her work will continue to inspire readers, young and old, around the world.

Exhibition

Lines and Dots: The Aesthetic Journey of Arabic Calligraphy

A Thematic Exhibition for the 50th Anniversary of the Museum's Founding
March 13 – June 17, 2025

Calligraphy, or the art of

handwriting, has acquired renewed value in our digital and mediated world where written communication is increasingly electronic. While calligraphy is close to the hearts of many Japanese, this was the first exhibition in Japan to feature Arabic calligraphy in a museum. Together with the late Akiko Sugase, we—three social anthropologists of the Arab world—served as the main

curators.

The exhibition traced the transformation and rebirth of Arabic calligraphy throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. In the golden age of the mid-twentieth century, the advent of mass media such as print, photography, and film created a demand for highly skilled calligraphers, some of whom even achieved star status. In the 1980s, the invention of

Arabic computer fonts marked a pivotal moment, enabling anyone to type and reproduce highly legible Arabic letters at minimal cost. Although digitisation initially deprived calligraphers of an important source of income, it also further spurred their transformation from artisans to artists.

In addition to a prologue and epilogue, the exhibition comprised four chapters: 1. *Harf* (Letter): The World of Arabic Letters, 2. *Kitāba* (Handwriting): The Golden Age of Calligraphers, 3. *Khatt* (Calligraphy): Modern Engagement with the Classics, and 4. *Fann* (Art): Contemporary Calligraphy. Chapter 1 introduced the basics of Arabic writing and the historical and geographical spread of the script. Chapter 2 illustrated how mass media redefined the role of calligraphy in the twentieth century. Chapters 3 and 4 presented calligraphy as fine art, highlighting how calligraphers situate themselves within global art discourses.

When the Paris-based Iraqi calligrapher Hassan Massoudy expressed his wish to donate sixty pieces of his artwork in spring 2022, we were inspired to plan an exhibition to showcase this new acquisition. As Minpaku is an ethnological museum, its holdings of items with Arabic script were minimal. Of the 154 artefacts displayed, the majority came from acquisitions made in FY 2022 and FY 2023.



Honda and his *Pyramids of Mankind*
(Photo: Christian Goeschel 2025)

In April 2023, Sugase contacted her former Arabic professor from the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Fuad Kouichi Honda, a household name in Arabic calligraphy in Japan. Sugase

and Aishima were invited to his home in Kamakura, where he recounted how he became interested in Arabic calligraphy while living in the deserts of Saudi Arabia, working as an interpreter. He also discussed his style in relation to both past masters and his contemporaries. He dedicated two impressive works to Minpaku, *The Pyramid of Mankind* and *The Blue Ark*, both of which emphasise the importance of human coexistence. Pointing to the phrase *li-ta'arafū* ("to know one another," Qur'an [49:13]) in *The Pyramid of Mankind*, Honda remarked, "Such understanding is the key to many issues of our time."

We placed this work at the entrance so that its beautiful blue hues and bold jet-black strokes would draw visitors from afar. Honda characterises Arabic calligraphy as "music without sound." Just as one can enjoy *La Traviata* without understanding Italian, Arabic calligraphy captivates viewers regardless of their knowledge of Arabic script or language. By introducing Arabic calligraphy to the Japanese public, we hoped that this art would serve as a window through which visitors might discover new ways of engaging with the atrocities currently unfolding in the Middle East. Calligraphers challenge the boundaries between writing and drawing by creating a new language in which images and letters exist in unison. This is a language that has the potential to nurture the capacity to "know one another" while appreciating the diversity of humanity.

Hatsuki Aishima, National Museum of Ethnology
Aymon Kreil, Ghent University

MINGU Design Expo: Discovering Sources of Wisdom

*A Special Exhibition for
the 50th Anniversary of the
Museum's Founding*
March 20-June 3, 2025

This special exhibition was co-organized with Musashino Art University. One of the exhibition's core elements was

a collection of ethnographic materials gathered from around the world for display in the *Underground Sun* space — dedicated to the theme of human origins—within the Tower of the Sun, the theme pavilion of the 1970 Osaka World Exposition. Another core element featured the folk objects in the collection of Musashino Art University, which had been assembled from across Japan during the same period as the Expo. The exhibition invited visitors to view these materials from a particular perspective, offering an opportunity to appreciate the aesthetic forms found within everyday life. For the purposes of this exhibition, the term *MINGU* was used to designate tools created for daily use.

In producing the exhibition, we benefited from the participation of Musashino Art University students. As part of their museum practicum, they took on the task of designing the workshop programs held in the exhibition space. During this process, the students proposed one creative idea after another. Their rich imagination deeply impressed me and convinced me of the exhibition's success.

Ultimately, three workshops were realized at the venue. The first was the *Favorite MINGU Election*, in which visitors voted for their preferred MINGU by placing stickers on the display panels. The winner of this election was a liquor pot from Uganda. The second workshop, *MINGU Sketch*, invited participants to sketch their favorite MINGU and share their drawings with other visitors, transforming the space into a gallery filled with lively and diverse sketches. The third workshop, *MINGU ŌGIRI*, asked participants to respond



Ugandan wine jar (Photo: Shizuka Suzuki-K0006728)

with humor and wit to prompts provided by the organizing committee. The many playful and imaginative responses contributed greatly to the lively atmosphere of the exhibition hall.

Created as tools of daily life, MINGU embody the condensed wisdom of everyday living. They encourage us to reflect on what it means to live a truly rich life. By observing MINGU anew, we can learn from the past, contemplate the present, and envision the future. Amid the hustle and bustle of modern life, such encounters allow us to pause, reflect on our daily routines, reassess ourselves, make adjustments, and then move forward again. This exhibition was designed in the hope that it might encourage visitors to rediscover the significance of these ordinary, everyday moments.

Shingo Hidaka
National Museum of Ethnology

Information

Award

Nobuhiro Kishigami
Professor Emeritus, National Museum of Ethnology

Has been awarded the 20th JASCA Distinguished Scholar Award.

Over many years, Professor Kishigami has energetically advanced research and fieldwork in cultural anthropology and Inuit studies in North America, as well as actively publishing and exhibiting his findings. He has not only achieved outstanding academic accomplishments but has also consistently devoted himself to making cultural anthropology more accessible to society through education and the public dissemination and social application of his research results. His significant contributions to the development of cultural anthropology in Japan have been highly recognized, leading to this award.

Yuki Konagaya
Professor Emeritus, National Museum of Ethnology

On October 18, 2025, Professor Emeritus Konagaya was named a Person of Cultural Merit for fiscal year 2025. This honor recognizes individuals who have made outstanding contributions to culture. As a cultural anthropologist, she has long conducted pioneering research on social change and the lived worlds of people in Mongolia. Her fieldwork-based studies on the transition from socialism to a market economy have been influential. Her achievements have advanced Japanese cultural anthropology and contemporary Asian studies.

Ken'ichi Sudo
Professor Emeritus, National Museum of Ethnology

On November 3, 2025, the recipients of the Autumn Imperial Decorations were announced, and Professor Emeritus Sudo received the Order of the Sacred Treasure, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon. The Cabinet Office awards these decorations twice a year to individuals who have made contributions in their fields. This order honors those devoted to public service. Professor Sudo's achievements and many years of service to research were recognized through this distinction.

Ippei Shimamura
Professor, Department of Human Civilization Studies National Museum of Ethnology

On November 7, 2025, Professor Shimamura was appointed as a Cultural Envoy of Mongolia by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The ceremony took place at the Consulate General of Mongolia in Osaka, where Consul General Enkh-Amgalan presented him with the certificate. Professor Shimamura and the Consulate also concluded a cooperation agreement to deepen future cultural collaboration and bilateral exchange between

Mongolia and Japan.

Kota Suzuki
Associate Professor, Department of Modern Society and Civilization National Museum of Ethnology

Associate Professor Suzuki's monograph *A Social History of Hiba Kojin Kagura: Kagura Dayu within Historical Context* (Hozokan, 2025) has received the 47th Suntory Prize for Social Sciences and Humanities in the Social and Cultural Studies category. The prize recognizes outstanding scholarly work that advances understanding of society and culture. Suzuki's study traces the historical development of Hiba Kagura and the roles of kagura performers, offering perspectives on religious practices and transformations.

Kojiro Hirose
Professor, Department of Advanced Human Sciences National Museum of Ethnology

Professor Hirose has won the 19th Hanawa Hokiichi Award Grand Prize. He has pursued research in cultural anthropology, Japanese religious history, folklore, and disability studies. He has promoted the "universal museum" where everyone can enjoy themselves and new possibilities for museums can be explored.

Retirements

After many years at Minpaku, the following staff members will retire in March 2026.

HAN Min
Professor,
Social Anthropology; China Anthropological Research on Society, History and Symbols

MINAMI Makito
Professor,
Ecological anthropology; South Asia
Impact of COVID-19 on Nepalese migrant workers

Publications

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



Senri Ethnological Studies

Vol.114: “Gyres”, Indian Ocean and Beyond / Discovering the Indian Ocean World edited by Hideaki Suzuki & Minoru Mio

Senri Ethnological Reports

No.158: Report on the Research Workshop “Results and Challenges of the Info-Forum Archives Project on the

Performing Arts and Festivals of Tokunoshima and Amami Oshima” edited by Ryoji Sasahara

No.159: The *Khalong Sangdöo* Ritual of the Tibetan Bon Religion edited by Shin’ichi Tsumagari, Yasuhiko Nagano, Tridhe Tshultrim, Musashi Tachikawa

Forthcoming Exhibitions

Special Exhibition

Echoes of Silk Road Traders: Samarkand’s Relics and Eurasian Ties

March 19 – June 2



Citadel area of the Kafir-kala ruins (2014, Samarkand (Uzbekistan), photo by Hirofumi Teramura)

Thematic Exhibition

Dolpo: A Tibetan Cultural Sphere in the Western Nepal Highlands

March 12 – June 16



A family in Saldang village (2019, photo by Kaori Inaba)

MINPAKU Anthropology Newsletter

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“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.

Available online at:
www.minpaku.ac.jp/newsletter



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