

Survey and Guide for 2014–15

(Fiscal year April 1, 2014–March 31, 2015)

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Cover: Young woman's fine dress, Qiang people, China.



Preface

The National Museum of Ethnology (Minpaku) is a research institute and museum that provides graduate-level training in anthropology and ethnology. It was founded in 1974 as an Inter-University Research Institute. Since April 2004, it has been a member of the National Institute for the Humanities (NIHU) as a part of the Inter-University Research Institute Corporation. This year, Minpaku is celebrating its 40th anniversary of the founding.

Minpaku researchers conduct research on societies, cultures, and the changes brought about by globalization at sites worldwide. They also organize Core Research Projects, Inter-University Research Projects, International Symposia and other academic meetings, and contribute to expanding the boundaries of research by hosting more than 1,000 researchers from Japan and other countries. In pursuit of deeper understanding of cultures and values in the places where research is conducted, they also collect and preserve artifacts, audio-video, and documentary materials.

Minpaku displays those research results in new types of exhibits. It also provides information about them through publications, lectures, symposia, our website and mass media. Functioning as a center for academic information, Minpaku also makes materials and information widely available for use by researcher communities and private citizens. As an Inter-University Research Institute committed to fostering young talent in cultural anthropology and related fields, Minpaku also offers Ph.D. programs through the School of Cultural and Social Studies of the Graduate University for Advanced Studies.

People, goods, and information now flow freely around the globe, making it easy to obtain what we want. As a result, our lives have become more convenient. At the same time, however, dominant values and cultural elements are affecting societies and cultures everywhere, resulting in dramatic changes that affect not only the contexts of our daily lives but also how we think about them. As globalization advances, local and ethnic tensions and conflicts intensify, gaps in access to wealth and information increase, and friction and disputes arising from cultural and religious differences are becoming ever more common.

As humanity confronts these issues, the importance of cultural anthropology and of the evidence provided by anthropological research on other cultures as well as our own is growing. How we will respond to the spirit of inquiry and the thirst for knowledge that more and more people bring to our work is an issue with which we must grapple seriously.

We want Minpaku to be a “forum for learning,” where everyone can enjoy new discoveries, enrich their knowledge, and become better informed.

Your ongoing guidance and support for Minpaku are profoundly appreciated.

SUDO Ken'ichi
Director-General