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Minpaku's Coming of Age

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Director-General

National Museum of Ethnology

In November this year, we will celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the opening of Minpaku. In this context, we are preparing a special exhibition, entitled 'Images of Other Cultures', which will be held from 25 September 1997 to 27 January 1998. The exhibition will be held under cooperation with the British Museum. In addition, there will be many other events to commemorate this important anniversary in the history of Minpaku.

In modern Japan, people come of age when they are twenty years old. At this age, the young are integrated into society as responsible adults. It is our great pleasure to declare that Minpaku has finally come of age and entered a new chapter in its history as a fully-fledged academic institution. To take the analogy further, we can say that Minpaku has been growing at a very rapid pace for the past two decades, exactly as children do to reach adulthood.

For example, at the time of opening, Minpaku had only four permanent exhibition halls, surrounding the central building. Since then, new facilities have been added one after another. Currently, we have eight exhibition halls for permanent and special exhibitions, and one auditorium for lectures and performances. When people grow physically, it is essential that this development is in harmony with their mental and spiritual growth. At Minpaku, it is time for us to give more effort to enhancing the quality and use of our resources, rather than simply seeking further physical expansion of facilities.

Today, we are proud that our institution has a highly computerised information management system. Of the 215,000 ethnographic artefacts and samples held at Minpaku, 147,000 are recorded in a special database called the 'Artefact Database for Research'. The data are stored and managed as images and texts. In addition to this, a major project is in progress to compile another sixteen kinds of database. During the growth period, strenuous effort was needed to construct an infrastructure for data processing and management, and this effort included work on the development of hardware, database design, data input, and expansion of the quantity of data. Some databases have been accessible for researchers outside Minpaku for many years. However, we regret that we have not always made full use of these information resources for research activities or exhibitions. During the growth phase until now we have been more committed to the collection of information than to the creation of a scheme for its use. We are now determined to promote better and easier use of the database system. The valuable resources at Minpaku should be accessible not only to



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Anthropology Newsletter

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academic circles but also to the general public. We fully understand the importance of open access to Minpaku for society in general. We are also planning to make information resources more accessible internationally for the benefit of students and researchers in other countries.

At school, children need to acquire knowledge, the ability to use knowledge, and the ability to learn independently. When they have grown up, what is important is not the quantity of information they possess, but the ability to use acquired information, and to continue learning. The essential issue is how the information and knowledge can be translated into human wisdom, and how successfully that wisdom can be communicated to others.

Today, an increasing number of researchers in this institution is challenging contemporary global issues such as ethnic conflict, environmental management and so

forth. These specific and contemporary issues cannot be properly represented by the conventional means of simple display of artefacts from different geographical regions. A concerted effort is urgently required to promote wisdom by developing innovative methods for conveying, to the public eye, the exact situation of ethnic groups in today's world.

I was appointed head of this institution in April this year. Taking this opportunity, I sincerely hope that readers of *Minpaku Anthropology Newsletter*, as well as the general public, will continue to advise and support us so that this organisation can improve itself and become a mature ethnological museum. While reflecting on the steps taken since the foundation, and looking forward to our future progress, I wish to declare that Minpaku aspires to remain mature without ever becoming senescent!

'Images of Other Cultures', a Special Exhibition *Joint Project with the British Museum*

Kenji Yoshida

National Museum of Ethnology

This year (1997), the National Museum of Ethnology (Minpaku) celebrates the twentieth anniversary of its opening to the general public. Since its establishment, the social environment around the Museum has changed substantially. As is well known, many ethnological museums in the world including Minpaku used to focus on 'other cultures' from the cultural perspectives of those who ran the museums. Much effort was given to the collection and display of physical materials to represent various ethnic groups. Recently, however, the approaches used have changed significantly. Many ethnic groups have come to value more and more their own culture and history, in line with the increasing awareness of their identity. Many groups have voiced opposition to the conventional way in which ethnic cultures were unilaterally as well as externally, defined, examined and displayed at world museums. In this context, a strong momentum has arisen for new initiatives in Asia, Africa and Oceania. In these regions ethnological museums are being built with the primary purpose of presenting not 'other cultures' but their 'own cultures'. The days are already behind us when ethnological museums were mainly meant to offer convenient facilities for an easy pseudo-trip around the world. These institutions are now expected to reconsider their manner of constructing 'other cultures' through collection and presentation of ethnological materials.

In recognition of these concerns, Minpaku has conducted joint research projects with the Department of Ethnography at the British Museum, since 1994. The British Museum has the longest history in the world as an ethnography-related museum. Our joint effort has taken various forms, but the main thrust has been examination of images or profiles of 'other cultures' represented in ethnographic exhibitions and photographs.

In 1994, we celebrated the twentieth anniversary of foundation of Minpaku, an event that preceded the public opening by three years. For that anniversary we held a public symposium called 'Ethnology and the Museum towards the Twenty-first Century: the Way in which Other Cultures should be Presented'. At the opening session, we heard a keynote speech by Dr John Mack, Keeper of the Department of Ethnography at the British Museum. Vigorous discussion followed, focusing on the problems faced by ethnology as an academic discipline and by ethnological museums. There was also discussion of challenges and potentials for representing 'other cultures'.

Following the 1994 symposium, a new research project was initiated at Minpaku in 1995. This project was entitled 'Construction of Images of 'Other Cultures' in Modern History'. During the same year, we also began an international research project on ethnographic photographs. Most of the participants are from Minpaku and the British Museum. This project continues and

will be completed this year.

Stored at the British Museum is an enormous collection of photographic materials with as many as 250,000 individual items in total. These come from many places around the world and date from the 1840s, when photography was first invented. In the international project mentioned above, a major effort has been made to identify and describe historical changes among world ethnic groups during the past one and a half centuries, as evidenced by the British Museum photographic collection. At the same time, we are also reviewing how Western perceptions of 'other cultures' have been transformed over the years. 'Images of Other Cultures', this year's special exhibition at Minpaku, has been organised in conjunction with this project.

The main thrust of the Exhibition will be the display of materials from Africa, Oceania and Japan. Africa and Oceania often inspire in people's minds very contrasting images. The former is often seen or imagined as Wilderness, while the latter is seen as Paradise. It probably would be right to say that these two regions have historically been the two most commonly represented examples of 'other cultures', being located in cognitively far reaches of the world from Europe. These regions have been pivotal areas for ethnology, anthropology, and ethnological museums, in terms of the study and collection of artefacts and images. Although Japan was always an other culture from the Western point of view, Japan has somehow and somewhere in her history come to regard herself as a member of the West. To a large extent, Japan follows Western approaches to 'other cultures' when looking at other parts of the world.

Although significant contributions will be made by the British Museum, in terms of materials and photos, Minpaku and many other Japanese institutions are also making a concerted effort to contribute materials. The other contributors include fine art museums and media organisations. It is particularly important that the exhibition helps Japanese people realise exactly what sort of perspective is carried in their minds, when they approach other cultures in the world. At the exhibition, they will be able to reflect on past and present approaches. The exhibition will also make clear how, in the modern history of the world, the West, Africa, Oceania and Japan have viewed each other. We are thus aiming to show the history of interaction of perspectives among different peoples in these regions. We will offer a very extensive and diverse range of the 'arts' and 'artefacts' generated by different cultures, as well as ethnographic photos and images.

Within the exhibition, the historical journey will start with a reproduction of the display at the Ethnographical Gallery of the British Museum about one hundred years



The British Museum Ethnographical Gallery in 1907. Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum

ago, where exhibits from Africa, Oceania and Japan were on view. Already represented then was a large section on what we appreciate today as superb 'African arts' and 'Oceanian arts'. For Japan, all that was shown was a small collection of swords and suits of armour. In fact, 1910 was one of those years in which Japan, after experiencing victory in the Russo-Japanese War, felt pride in thinking that she had already joined the band of great world powers in the West. Viewing this early ethnographic presentation will naturally lead people to realise the large degree of subjectivity that can be associated with any attempt to exhibit or perceive other cultures. This experience will provide a positive opportunity for us to reflect on our own perspectives on other cultures in the present world.

In Room 1, visitors will learn how the West has defined other cultures from the Western perspective. By contrast, in Room 2, what the West has not cared to look at in those other cultures is revealed. More specifically, this room presents aspects of African, Oceanian and Japanese cultures in which elements of Western culture are apparent after processes of introduction and assimilation. These processes have added innovative and positive dimensions to existing traditions. For many years, the 'non-traditional' dimensions of other cultures have been excluded from the scope of ethnological exhibitions, having been labeled 'inauthentic'. However, it is precisely in these particular dimensions of culture that modernity in human history is best seen. The presentation in Room 2 will reveal these dimensions, which have often been neglected in the ethnological sphere to date.

It would be fair to say that, in Rooms 1 and 2, the exhibitions are aimed at redefining African, Oceanian and Japanese cultures, all of which have been subject to Western gaze—while simultaneously gazing at the West as an external entity. As noted

above, Japan has gradually identified herself as part of the West, and has somehow psychologically distanced herself from Africa and Oceania. Japan has increasingly applied the Western perspective of 'other cultures' when observing Africa and Oceania. In Room 3, this specific aspect of Japanese transformation is apparent in diverse items such as newspaper articles, books, cartoons, cinema posters, TV programmes and other materials.

The final section of the Exhibition, Room 4, will be titled 'The Borderless Culture of Today'. Global exchange and communication today are advancing rapidly, and many cultural elements are now shared by people regardless of where they live. This does not mean, however, that human culture has been totally homogenised. Although the same cultural elements are widely shared by different ethnic groups, distinct cultures based on unique traditions are also being created. We can observe 'new traditions' emerging everywhere in the contemporary world. In Room 4, we will display hybrid arts and artefacts that reflect the culmination of interactions between cultures across

national borders. We will also display street-retail kiosks from Africa, Oceania, Japan and Europe, to symbolise the sharing of cultural elements across the world. We would be very happy, if the various presentations help people to understand that we all coexist and interact in the present world, and that we have a shared future. These are nothing but simple facts that anybody can understand easily. We hope sincerely that our effort will allow people to reconfirm their own appreciation of these facts.

I wish to emphasize that this Special Exhibition will definitely be more than what people usually expect of exhibitions from the British Museum or even those which focus on contemporary or new dimensions in African and Oceanian cultures. Most importantly, this exhibition is committed to exposing and examining what Japanese people are, in contrast to 'other cultures'. We hope very much that new discussions will be triggered in society by this commitment, bringing focus to the extremely vital issue of how we can or should communicate with 'other cultures' in the future.

The Connection between Early Medieval History and Noun Categorization in Eurasia

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At first glance, there does not seem to be much of a connection, if any, between the history of early medieval Central Eurasia on the one hand and noun categorization systems, including classifiers and other forms of categorization, in the languages of East and Southeast Asia, on the other. Yet these two fields, in which I have worked—sequentially—over the past twenty years, are linked for me via my underlying academic interest, a subject that has fascinated me since high school, namely the comparative-historical linguistics of the languages of eastern Eurasia.

It was while working on the Old Tibetan language with my teacher, the late Professor Helmut Hoffmann, that I became interested in the historical subject matter of the texts we were reading. After that, it was not difficult to become involved in the problem of the history of the Tibetan Empire, then an extremely obscure, almost unheard-of subject. From the Tibetan Empire's outposts in Central Asia I looked out over the whole early medieval Old World, and conceived the idea of trying to discover the once long-sought link between East and West. I found what I was looking for in the history of the lands along the Silk Road, and wrote about it in several publications, particularly in a

book, *The Tibetan Empire in Central Asia*.¹⁾

In researching the history of early medieval Eurasia, one of the salient discoveries I made is that the period is remarkable for exactly the opposite quality that has been attributed to it by European historians since the Renaissance. Far from having been a dark age, this was the age when nearly all of the nations who were to become politically significant in international history up to our own century developed writing systems and a written literature, as well as important nation states. And, as attested eloquently by the Old Turkic inscriptions, they were fully conscious of the idea of national identity (contrary to the view of many political historians). Moreover, it appears that the level of development, not only in literacy and political structures, but in art and technology as well, was remarkably consistent across Eurasia. Although I thus found, to my own satisfaction, the solution to a very old historical question, I hoped that my work would stimulate a revival of interest in the field of early medieval Central Eurasian history, which has been neglected since the early part of the twentieth century. Despite all the talk about the Silk Road, and despite books such as my own that focus on the

1) Beckwith, C.I. 1987. *The Tibetan Empire in Central Asia: A History of the Struggle for Great Power among Tibetans, Turks, Arabs, and Chinese during the Early Middle Ages*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (revised edition, 1994.)

lands and peoples along the economic trade routes, exceedingly little has yet been written about the commercial activity—particularly the high-volume trade in silk—that is thought to have stimulated, or linked together the fates of, the great nation states of the Early Middle Ages. The material is there, in Arabic, Chinese, Greek, Sogdian, Old Tibetan, and numerous other languages, waiting to be collected and analyzed.

One or two of the (probably very simple) things I learned in my historical sojourn came to be extremely useful in my linguistic research: the ability to imagine several possible solutions to a problem, or to accept an unexpected solution when given one unequivocally by the sources. In the case of the Early Middle Ages, a period that has rarely been conceptualized for Eurasia as a whole by any historian, it is normal for each separate national historical tradition to analyze the same event differently—for example, the great rebellions and upheavals which shook, or overthrew the dynasty, in every empire on the Eurasian continent in the middle of the eighth century. It is clear from looking at the history of Eurasia as a whole—and even clearer from looking at the history of two or more neighboring states at once—that the timing is no mere coincidence. But what is the reason for it? In order to discover the answer to this particular puzzle, it will undoubtedly be necessary to consider numerous possibilities, including interconnected economies, epidemics, international intrigue (my favorite), and many other things.

After discovering that the university where I had settled to spend my first sabbatical year had insufficient library resources for my intended research on the economic history of early medieval Central Asia—or indeed, on any topic of medieval history—I turned back to historical-comparative linguistics and so came home again. After my experience working on the historical missing link between East and West, I found myself looking at the relationships among the languages of East and Southeast Asia in a different way. In particular, I have long been puzzled by the Sino-Tibetan hypothesis, which proposes to connect in one family the Chinese and Tibeto-Burman families of languages. Although there are many good reasons for linking the two language families in some way, I thought if Sino-Tibetan were so clearly and obviously a divergent (genetic) language family, why do so many problems remain with the data on which the hypothesis is supposedly founded, namely the etymologies of cognates? And why are there only cognates? That is, why are there no loanwords from Chinese into the Tibeto-Burman languages, when all the other languages neighboring Chinese are saturated with them? Why are so many problematic etymologies either explained through the addition of otherwise unknown morphophonological elements that

disappeared leaving little or no trace, or are said to be Austro-Tai loanwords? Why is there so much unexplainable variation, particularly between the Chinese and Tibeto-Burman branches? Are there really any non-problematic etymologies? Why are there such fundamental differences in syntax, morphology, and phonology between the Chinese and the Tibeto-Burman branch? These differences are particularly odd if Chinese and Tibetan are considered to be especially close to each other. The differences are overwhelmingly obvious if only attested, old, literary languages (including Old Tibetan, Pyu, Old Burmese, Zhang-zhung, Tangut, and Newari, among others) are compared. Furthermore, many of the body-part terms in Tibetan seem to be Indo-European.

It was my subsequent study of body-part terms, and an article by Professor Hajime Kitamura on Tibetan honorifics (which refer exclusively to humans, human things, and human activities), that got me interested in the question of classifiers. Tibetan has no classifiers, but does have vestigial gender classes, mainly in the pronominal system. In addition, there are honorifics, which form a kind of concord-triggering register (gender-like) class syntactically. The typical honorific noun is a compound consisting of an honorific qualifying term and a class term (noun stem head). Such class nouns, however, are unlike ordinary (non-honorific) class nouns in Tibetan, where the head noun is formally and semantically the head of a taxonomic class of nouns built on the same class term. The honorific term, syntactically a qualifier, is the register-class marker and also the head of a semantic class of nouns having the same morpheme, which class is built on configurational or kinesthetic-image-schema criteria. Honorific terms in Tibetan can thus be seen as the heads of categories akin to the categories implied by the classifiers typical of the languages of East and Southeast Asia. In my attempts to understand class nouns, I looked into classifiers and noun categorization phenomena in many Eurasian languages—but especially Arabic, Burmese, Chinese, English, Evenki, Finnish, Hungarian, Japanese, Mongolian, Russian, Thai, Turkish, and Uzbek—and some non-Eurasian languages.

The results of my research—which I am currently writing up at Minpaku with the generous assistance of my sponsor, Professor Yasuhiko Nagano, and the gracious cooperation and hospitality of the other colleagues and staff—led me to conclude that classifiers and related categorization systems do, as long suspected, reflect humans' direct interaction with the natural world. Pondering this concept—new to me—I found myself up against questions about the grounding of language, the historical basis of language development in humans, and the nature of cognition itself. While I certainly cannot

pretend to have fully understood, let alone solved, all of these great problems, again I have satisfied my desire to understand them for myself, concluding eventually that basic categorization—a kind of quasi-digital sorting done through primary cognition (i.e. emotional logic)—is the foundation of animal mentation and, consequently, of human mentation and human language, in which we find our interesting noun categorization systems. Moreover, it appears that sociolinguistic categorization is simply a further mental extension of the same categorization process done at the most primitive level by humans and by many (if not all) animals. It is particularly interesting

and illuminating to be living in Japan while writing on this topic, due to the intricate Japanese categorization of the world—a remarkably clear categorization that is very different from the typical American system. In short, my basic interest in comparative-historical linguistics has so far given rise to serious, long-term work in two disparate fields: early medieval history and noun categorization. As I continue to work toward a solution of what remains to me a major puzzle—the origin and early history of the Sino-Tibetan relationship, whatever it may be—it should not be too surprising if I find yet another new field to explore along the way.

A Brief Review of Anthropological Research in Brunei

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1) Shamsul A. B. 1995. 'Anthropology and the State and the State of Anthropology in Malaysia', *Minpaku Anthropology Newsletter*, No 1.

2) Professor Donald Brown: personal communication, 17 March 1997.

Until recently Brunei Darussalam, the oil-rich kingdom of Southeast Asia, suffered from a dearth of research activity. Anthropological research was no exception. Before the 1970s published literature on cultural, sociological, and linguistic aspects of the Brunei sultanate was sparse and confusing. There has been some improvement since full independence from British Protectorate Rule in 1984 and since the founding of Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) in the following year. Interest is growing among local and foreign scholars on aspects of the country's history, politics and culture. Last year UBD co-sponsored the biennial conference of the Borneo Research Council.

Anthropology as an academic subject is the latest addition to the UBD curriculum. A trial is being made with one course on anthropology that is temporarily managed by the Department of Critical Thinking in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. For comparison, it may be noted that in neighbouring Malaysia, which gained independence in 1957, anthropology was introduced as a university subject in 1970. In the old or developed universities of the West, anthropology has flourished as a formal academic discipline since the late nineteenth century.

Anthropological research in British Malaya and British Borneo, however, is of old vintage. The colonial administrations in Malaysia (1819-1957) and British Borneo (1841-1957) did encourage anthropological research in the subject territories both on account of intellectual discourse and as a means of gaining knowledge about the native population. As Professor Shamsul A.B. commented with regard to Malaysia, 'anthropological knowledge was perceived as critical in the implementation of the policy of British 'indirect rule'.¹ Initially, the anthropologically conscious colonial officers became researchers and published

their findings. Borneo also attracted anthropological and ethnological research. Borneo is the third largest island in the world, and was exotic and mystical for many visiting foreigners in the bygone era. The island was also home to a variety of ethnic groups, including the head-hunting tribes of Borneo, and the sea nomads who once roamed as pirates in the China Sea. Darwin's contemporary Alfred Russel Wallace, popularised Borneo as the island of durian, the orangutan and Dayak. Of the three territories in British Borneo, namely Sarawak, Sabah and Brunei, only the first two received significant attention from anthropologists or ethnologists.

After the Second World War, the British Colonial Office was spurred by the Social Science Research Council to send Edmund Leach to British Borneo to identify needed areas of social research.² His suggestions helped some anthropologists to study Sarawak. Leach's suggestion to study Malays in Brunei was never followed, although Tom Harrisson (as curator of the Sarawak Museum) did study the Malays in Sarawak, during the 1950s.

Only since the 1960s has Brunei witnessed extensive long-term research of an anthropological nature, albeit by a very small number of scholars. In the early 1960s, George McT. Kahin, Professor of Government at Cornell University (and an authority on politics in Indonesia) visited Brunei, had an audience with the Sultan, and suggested that a scholar be sent to Brunei for a social scientific research. The Sultan, Haji Omar Ali Saifuddin III (1914-86), agreed. This paved the way for Donald E. Brown's visit to Brunei in 1967-68 to conduct fieldwork for his PhD thesis in Anthropology at Cornell University. Brown gave up his original intention to work in Indonesia, because the unsettled conditions following the attempted coup of late 1965 rendered all research activities impossible at the time. On Kahin's

recommendation. Brown contacted the Brunei State Secretary, Pengiran Setia Negara Yusuf Pengiran Rahim who gave permission for Brown to conduct research with the cooperation of Pengiran Shariffuddin, then Director of the Brunei Museum.

In 1969, Brown completed his PhD dissertation, and this appeared as *Brunel, the Structure and History of a Bornean Malay Sultanate*.³⁾ This was the first serious research on Brunei by an anthropologist whose work has subsequently appeared in the form of more than dozen research articles. Having analyzed the history of socio-political changes in Brunei, Brown was able to probe vital areas of Brunei's constituent social structural units, social strata, ethnic groups, and political offices from royalty downwards to village chiefs. In studying the political and social structure of a Malay kingdom, Brown already had a model in John Gullick's celebrated work, *Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya*.⁴⁾

Just before Brown left Brunei, Allen Maxwell, a post-graduate student from Yale University (presently at the University of Alabama) arrived. Neither had knowledge of each other's research until then. Maxwell stayed in Brunei for almost four years, and studied the Muslim-Kedayan community in Temburong; Brown had studied the Brunei Malays in Kampong Ayer (Water Village). Maxwell's doctoral dissertation deals with change in the Kedayan community, i.e. the slow transformation of indigenous pagan peoples to Muslim agriculturists around the capital. Maxwell has remained an important contributor and critic of Brunei-oriented research.

Linda Kimball (presently at Western Washington University) was the next to do anthropological research in Brunei. She stayed for about four years. She has even been adopted by a Brunei family and is quite fluent in Brunei Malay. Her PhD dissertation is also about the Malays of Temburong.⁵⁾ She subsequently published a monograph on traditional healing among Brunei Malays. She makes annual visits to Brunei, and nowadays seems to specialise in folk literature, folklore, and similar topics.

Lately, local scholars too have completed their post-graduate theses on anthropology. Pehin Dato Lim Jock Seng (presently the Permanent Secretary at Brunei's Foreign Ministry) has studied a Brunei fishing community and the interaction between the Malay fishermen and Chinese Taukeh's. Next was Awang Bantong bin Antaran who completed a MA dissertation on a Dusun community. Recently, Haji Hashim bin Hashim Hamid, a lecturer in UBD, investigated Islamic practices in Kampong Ayer.⁶⁾ The present Director of the Academy of Brunei Studies, Haji Latif Haji Ibrahim, obtained his MPhil degree from Cambridge University in the same year for work on Islamic practices in a Temburong village. Haji Latif's anthropological experience goes

back to the 1960s when he served on the staff of Brunei Museum. He worked closely with visiting anthropologists, and even without any formal training he produced valuable articles which appeared in the *Brunel Museum Journal*. There are also several minor dissertations submitted by local scholars as part of their BA course exercises in universities of the United Kingdom.

At UBD, Peter Martin and Peter Sercombe of the Department of English Language and Applied Linguistics and other staff are doing useful research especially in the area of anthropological linguistics. They have focused on indigenous communities such as the Lembawang and Penan. Dr Iik Ariffin, a trained anthropologist and the current head of the Department of History, has contributed valuable articles on the study of Islam in Brunei. I myself visited Minpaku for three months from August to November last year to develop a foundation for future anthropological research on state formation in Brunei Darussalam.

All in all, as far as anthropology in Brunei is concerned, most research has been concentrated on the Brunei Malay community. But Brunei is also home to a number of small ethnic groups such as the Belaits, Muruts, Tutongs, Dusuns, and others of interest to scholars. Those who undertake to do bona fide research in this direction should first seek approval in writing from the Brunei Research Council.⁷⁾ With the introduction of a course in anthropology at UBD, circumstances may become very favourable for anthropologists wishing to work in Brunei Darussalam, especially if the course leads to the formation of a fully-fledged Department of Anthropology.



A Brunei noble in the nineteenth century
©Brunei Museum

3) *Brunel Museum Journal*, Monograph No 1, 1970.

4) London: University of London Press, 1958.

5) 'The Enculturation of Aggression in a Brunei Malay Village', Ohio State University, 1975.

6) His PhD thesis was submitted to the University of Malaya, 1995.

7) c/o The Vice Chancellor, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, BSB 2028, Brunei

Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin Mosque at Brunei's capital city, Bandar Seri Begawan



The Role of Anthropology in Contemporary China

Ma Rong

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It is always a surprise that no discipline to study human culture has ever developed fully in China, despite the long history of civilisation in this country. In the past several decades, neither anthropology nor sociology could be included in university system and research institutions because of ideological concerns. The 1980s' system reform was a turning point in the development of anthropology in China.

Now the key issue is: what can anthropology do for Chinese society in its process of transition and modernisation? If the new generation of Chinese anthropologists fail to answer this question, this discipline will still not win understanding and support in Chinese society. Chinese people at present know very little about anthropology.

Since the 1980s, the Chinese government has made economic development the national priority, and this has led to a more pragmatic way of thinking among governmental officers and community leaders. Will anthropology benefit regional and national economic development? This question often arises when budgets are tabled to establish teaching or research institutions, or to support research projects.

Societies at different development levels have different requirements. In developed countries, the many people who have a middle class income and a high-consuming life style can pay more attention to cultural affairs. One indicator is their frequent travel as tourists. Foreign and domestic travel can be motivated by the wish to experience colorful cultural diversity or by a desire for in-depth cultural understanding. But for developing countries, the greatest concern for leaders, intellectuals, and ordinary people is economic prosperity and a higher income. Professor Fei Xiaotong, Beijing University, gave a speech at the ceremony of the Malinowski Memorial Award in Denver in 1980 when anthropology was just re-established in China. In his speech 'Toward A People's Anthropology',¹⁾ he emphasized that anthropology must meet people's needs in China to win their support. Anthropology should help people to understand the historic development of China and factors affecting its development in the future.

It is thus very clear that Chinese anthropologists need to pay more attention to the present dynamics of social change, and participate in social system reform and development. This is why the Institute of Sociology and Anthropology at Beijing University has focused on these issues since it was established by Professor Fei in 1985.

Although economic development is our national priority, economic activities are practiced by people, in different forms of organisation, and regulated by laws and

governmental policies, and all these are strongly influenced by value systems and behaviour norms that are deeply rooted in the nation's cultural traditions.

Anthropology can help not only to interpret the past with its comprehensive understanding of cultural tradition, but also to analyze present social interactions as well. This is the great advantage of anthropology compared with other disciplines and anthropologists should employ this in their contribution to society.

In the past few years, three key topics have been studied by Beijing University:

(1) Cultural roots of rural organisations, past and present, especially at village and township levels. During the last one hundred years, there have been several fundamental changes in China's rural administrative system and among non-governmental organisations (involving kinship networks, place of origin, economic partnership, and so on). Cultural linkages between the various organisations were of course interrupted by political or group conflict and administration. There is rationality behind the various forms of organisation and in their transformations. A commune system was one of the dreams of Chinese farmers for centuries, in a search for pure and absolute equality. The prosperity of small towns and township enterprises in the 1980s and 1990s followed from the release of the energy of the same peasant entrepreneurship that supported cultural and economic prosperity in China's ancient civilisations. History cannot be cut off and the study of cultural roots and linkages between these organisations will allow a better understanding of present system reform and may even contribute to policy-making processes. Research on the traditional topics of anthropology such as kinship, family, marriage, religion, customs, life style, folklore, and so on are needed for a more systematic and comprehensive understanding of society.

(2) Social change and development among ethnic minorities. China has 55 ethnic minority groups which make up 9% of the total population. The autonomous areas established for these minority groups occupy 63% of China's total territory. These minority groups have distinct cultural traditions despite the strong influences of majority Han culture through one thousand years of interaction. Recent system reform and economic development have stimulated interactions between regions and between ethnic groups. Improved educational systems for minorities have led to a higher ethnic consciousness among their intellectuals. Nationalism among minority groups in China is also supported by some international organisations. Since the Soviet

1) Fei Hsiao Tung 1981. *Toward A People's Anthropology*. Beijing: New World Press.

2) Ma Rong 1995. 'Re-establishment of a Societal Fundamental Culture of China', in Tong Qingding, et al. (eds.) *One Culture: A Cultural Strategy in Current China*. Beijing: China Industry-Trade United Press, pp. 23-39.

Union disintegrated, many people have worried about what will happen in China. What have been the main linkages keeping the various groups together for thousands of years? What is the best future for minority groups, regarding social harmony, economic prosperity, and cultural development? What lessons can be learnt from the recent sharp changes in the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia? Can China overcome the difficulties that arise from system reforms that lead to decentralisation of power, more democracy and political freedom, and greater openness to the outside world? How can we achieve economic prosperity while keeping social stability? What kind of development projects in minority regions will serve this national goal? What are the main characteristics of ethnic relations in China during the transition? These are the questions we bear in mind when we study development in minority areas such as Inner Mongolia, Tibet, and Xinjiang.

(3) Analysis of core societal value systems and behaviour norms and their transitions. These have changed in several fundamental respects during the past century. Confucianism and its norms were the core of moral norms in China for centuries. The authority of Confucianism was challenged by

western ideologies that accompanied imperialist invasions. When China failed in the Opium War and in following wars against western countries and Japan, Chinese intellectuals had serious debates on whether we should adopt western social and cultural norms as Japan did or maintain our tradition. The victory of communist revolution in Russia encouraged Chinese peasants and radical intellectuals to adapt the communist ideology which paralleled the dreams of Chinese farmers for equity. By this 'equity' ideology and appeal to patriotism, the communist party won the support of peasants, radical youth, and patriotic gentry, and finally won the civil war in 1949. The leading core societal culture then became a mixture of communism and Chinese peasant ideology. The extreme development of this amalgam/mixture was the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s which became a national disaster for the economy and moral order. We should not be surprised to see corruption and amoral attitudes in today's China. There is no Confucianism, communist influence has decreased, and there are no stable social norms—in one word, there is no core societal culture to guide and regulate people's behaviour.²⁾ This is the most serious crisis in contemporary China.

To understand changes in social norms in different historical periods, we need to discover their linkages. Then we can search for ways to establish a new core societal culture which is based on our own historical heritage and which also accepts all necessary elements from other cultures. This is the most important task for anthropologists in contemporary China. Many theoretical and field work studies are needed to identify and understand the key issues affecting social norms at different social levels and in different regions. We also can learn from countries such as Japan, which has adopted many western ideas while maintaining its own cultural heritage.

Anthropological research on many different topics has been carried out by Xiamen University, Zhongshan University, the Central University of Minority Nationalities, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and other institutions. These efforts together indicate that anthropology is returning to the stage in China. By working on the fundamental social issues that concern people most, Chinese anthropologists can contribute positively to social, economic, cultural transitions in our country. The discipline must prove its value to society in order to win support.

Conferences

Political History of Land Ownership

8th International Symposium, Comparative Study of Asian and Pacific Cultures, 28-31 October 1996

A symposium entitled 'Political History of Land Ownership' was held at the National Museum of Ethnology. This was the eighth annual symposium of a long-term joint research project entitled 'Comparative Study of Asian and Pacific Cultures', and sponsored by Monbusho, the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture.

Historically, many anthropologists in Asia and the Pacific have studied relationships between land ownership and social organisation. Anthropologists who worked on particular societies in these regions have been concerned with how

rights to land are assigned to kin groups or local communities. In comparative analyses, anthropologists have also looked at land ownership within geographical regions that are rather arbitrarily defined, from an anthropological perspective: Indonesia, Melanesia, Polynesia, and so forth.

This previous research brought to the fore a number of important themes such as the magico-religious bonds of indigenous people to their land, the ritual complementarity between original inhabitants and strangers from abroad, and affinal alliances between groups with different origins. However, the research often neglected relatively recent processes of change in land ownership. The relationship of people to land in Asia and the Pacific during pre-colonial times included many rights which could not be translated as land ownership. These rights changed significantly under colonial rule and as a result of modern development policies. Some rights were forcibly

abolished, others were acknowledged as land ownership in terms of state law. Thus, present land ownership is generally the product of complicated entanglements between indigenous land tenure systems and recent external influences.

Until recently, anthropologists have not paid sufficient attention to these entanglements. Anthropologists have depended heavily on the concept of an internally integrated unity referred to as 'social structure' or 'cultural system'. Consideration of the recent complexity in land ownership requires an alternative to the paradigm of integrated social structure. The principal aims of this symposium were to analyse ethnographic and historical data, and to formulate a new anthropological paradigm that is more receptive to history.

The symposium participants were anthropologists and historians working on societies in Micronesia, Melanesia, Polynesia, Indonesia,

Thailand, India, and Madagascar. Papers were circulated in advance and covered a wide range of topics. The papers and resulting discussions will be published in 1998 by Fukyosha, a publisher in Tokyo.

Takashi Sugishima
Symposium Convenor
National Museum of Ethnology

Community in the Twentieth Century

5th International Symposium, The Tradition and Change of Ethnic Culture in the Twentieth Century, 7-9 November 1996

What has happened to community during the twentieth century, and what will become of community in the future? These topics were addressed during a three-day symposium. The participants consisted of fifteen speakers and nine discussants, and included three foreign visiting professors at Minpaku.

The symposium addressed five subtopics: (i) religious communities, (ii) communities within socialist systems, (iii) communities within nation states, (iv) communities within the context of modern mass culture, and (v) urban communities and virtual communities in the information age. In relation to (i) and (ii), we examined Catholic and Islamic religious communities, and the socialist systems in Romania and China. In relation to nation states, we discussed Canadian Inuit society, several ethnic groups forced to move across borders in Northeast Africa, the indigenous Mayan community, various communities in Indonesia, as well as regional and company communities in Japan. In relation to mass culture and the information age, we investigated trends in Japan, Italy, the United States, and elsewhere.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the theme of community attracted little attention within mainstream Japanese anthropology. Recent acceleration in the globalisation of culture gives urgency to the need to investigate communities and the effects of globalisation on social organisation. How will communities be formed and maintained in the future? It cannot be simply assumed that societies will become borderless. The symposium results are now being edited for publication in the near future, and we hope that the symposium will promote a more general concern with community issues.

Hirochika Nakamaki
Symposium Convenor
National Museum of Ethnology

Alcoholic Beverages and Japanese Civilisation

15th International Symposium, Division of Civilisation Studies, Taniguchi Foundation, 3-8 December 1996

The fifteenth international symposium on Japanese civilisation in the modern world was titled 'Alcoholic Beverages and Japanese Civilisation' and was held at the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka over six days. This symposium was sponsored by the Taniguchi Foundation, and four foreign and nine Japanese scholars participated. The main aim of the symposium was to investigate Japanese civilisation, by discussing alcohol industries, alcohol-related technology, drinking venues, popular drinking behaviour and alcohol taxation.

The keynote speech by Tadao Umesao was titled 'Alcoholic beverages from the viewpoint of the comparative study of civilisation'. The first session examined brewing industries and began with an account of Japanese brewing in the Edo period, by Chikayosi Kamatani. Shogo Asai then discussed the introduction of European brewing technology to Japan, and alcohol taxation. Tadashi Yoshida described the transfer of Japanese brewing technology to other countries in Eastern Asia, and Shiro Hanai compared Chinese and Japanese brewing industries. The social contexts of drinking were examined in the second session. Paul Schalow gave a paper on 'Dangerous pleasures: gender and drinking in early modern Japan' and Noritake Kanzaki discussed drinking in public houses and restaurants during the Edo period. Eyal Ben-Ali presented a paper on 'Sake and "spare time": management and imbibition in Japanese business' and Haruhiko Nishizawa discussed the drinking behaviour of people in China. The last presentation of this session was Kumie Inose's paper on 'The pub in England during the early modern period'. For the last session on civilisation and alcoholic beverages, Shuji Yoshida presented a paper on 'Alcoholic beverages and narcotics in the history of man'. One hour of discussion followed each presentation and the concluding discussion lasted three hours.

Several interesting comparisons

were made; for example, the early modern brewing industry in Japan was established in parallel with that in Europe. Such parallelism did not occur in other parts of Eurasia. Brewing as an industry was not well established in China because the development of technology for brewing was limited, and alcohol was not used for independent drinking. The popularisation of drinking only began in the early modern period, despite the ancient origins of alcoholic beverages. Much of the so-called Third World is naive with regard to alcohol, and this has contributed to widespread alcoholism. This phenomenon is in some ways similar to disease epidemiology or the spread of world religions. Disease epidemics do not develop in immunised areas and new religions are usually not accepted in areas where other religions are well established. The history of alcohol in many civilisations is not well understood, and it is expected that important new phenomena concerning alcoholic beverages will arise in the future. For example, the Near East and a part of India are now predominantly areas of abstinence, but this situation might not be stable.

Shuji Yoshida
Symposium Convenor
National Museum of Ethnology

Current Problems of Ethnic Minorities in East Asia

International Symposium, Political Economy of Culture among Ethnic Minorities of East Asia, 13-16 February 1997

To understand current culture, local community, ethnicity, and relations with state among the ethnic minorities of East Asia, an international symposium was held at the National Museum of Ethnology. Thirty-two speakers and discussants gathered, including fourteen scholars from institutions in Beijing, Taipei, Hualian, Moscow, Trier, Oslo, Honolulu, and other cities. Eighteen papers were presented.

The modern state's struggle to build a national culture or to balance ethnic relations through the policy of multiculturalism has often met with opposition from ethnic groups. A fixed and static image of traditional ethnic culture leads to the view of ethnic groups as discrete entities. This view has been reconsidered in anthropological studies of ethnicity during the past

three decades or so. Nevertheless, many social problems from now and into the next century are likely to be related to ethnic groups, and their cultures which support group identities in some way. What we need now is to perceive the actual conditions of ethnic groups and cultures, within the context of changing political economies, and then find new theoretical approaches to explain the transitions from past to present and likely future. At the present symposium, the above issues were discussed by scholars from the fields of anthropology, ethnology, politics, economics, linguistics, and history.

Many papers dealt with ethnic minorities in China, where drastic changes in modern times have influenced a wide variety of ethnic minorities. This led to a heated discussion on governmental policies and ethnic problems in China. Concrete suggestions and direct opinions were expressed, and differences of standpoint among the participants became clear. Crossovers between the different academic experiences of the participants brought a better understanding of the depth of ethnic issues in general. Examples of detailed local research elucidated some important points. To avoid ethnic conflicts, the possibility of differentiation between cultural and political identity was discussed with comparison to other areas such as South-East Asia. The situations of ethnic groups vary greatly according to state policies. In Japan, the first political action on ethnic issues has only emerged as a new legislation for the Ainu, and there is much to learn from the experiences of other states.

The titles of papers were: Tibetan Buddhism and Traditional Culture of Tibet (Jiang Ping), Cultural Pluralism and Counselling (Chiao Chien), Ethnic Revival, Ethnic Identity and Ethnic Conflict in the Process of Social Change: Processes of Nationalities Questions in the Shape of Economic and Social Development (Heberer, Thomas), The Culture of Minority Nationality in the Process of Modernization (Hao Shiyuan), Some Aspects of the National Problem in Southern China (Matsumoto, Kotaro), National Identity and Multiculturalism in China: Segmentary Hierarchy among Three Muslim Minorities (Gladney, Dru C.), Development of Ethnic-Society and Change in Ethnic-Culture (Jin Binggao), Learning to be Chinese?: Minority

Education and Ethnic Identity among Three Ethnic Groups in China (Hansen, Mette H.), Prospects of Minority Languages in China: From Socio-Political Perspective (Shoji, Hiroshi), Cultural Revitalization and Ethnic Identity of the Austronesian Peoples in Taiwan: 1980 to 1995 (Chiang Bien), Various Problems Concerning Contemporary Ainu Ethnic Independence Movements: From the Modern Policy of Assimilation to Current Discussions for Enacting a New Law (Ohtsuka, Kazuyoshi), Cultural Change of Zhuang in Jingxi Prefecture, West Guangxi, China: Under the Conditions of Economic and Social Change (Tsukada, Shigeyuki), Oroqen Culture and Modernization (Hong Shirong), Some Basic Questions of Modernization Concerning Chinese Minority Peoples (Tang Chi), Social-Cultural Changes and the Ethnic Development of Manchu (Guo Hongsheng), Culture and Ethnicity: A New Approach (Kryukov, Michael), Ethnic Culture and Economic Development Brought by Tourism: In the Case of the Dali Basin, Yunnan (Yokoyama, Hiroko), Social and Economic Changes among Highland Minorities of Caucasus (Arutiunov, Sergei).

A booklet of short summaries in Japanese, Chinese and English versions is still available on request. The full papers and a summary of discussions will be published by Minpaku as a volume of *Senri Ethnological Studies*.

Hiroko Yokoyama
Symposium Convenor
National Museum of Ethnology

The Foundations and Development of Weaving Culture in East and Southeast Asia

*20th International Symposium,
Division of Ethnology,
Taniguchi Foundation,
21-26 November 1996*

The symposium, convened by Shinobu Yoshimoto of the National Museum of Ethnology, dealt with the continuity of weaving culture across East and Southeast Asia, and future issues for weaving culture research. There were twelve participants, four from Japan and eight from overseas.

New Directors

In April, 1997, a new Director-General and new Deputy Director-General were appointed. There have also been new appointments among the research department directors:

Director-General
Naomichi Ishige (BA, Kyoto Univ. in 1963; D Agr. Tokyo Univ. of Agriculture in 1986) His main research interests are material culture and modes of living, and comparative studies of food habits in East and Southeast Asia, and Oceania.

Deputy Director-General
Shigeharu Sugita (B Eng. Kyoto Univ. in 1962; M Eng. Kyoto Univ. in 1964; D Eng. Kyoto Univ. in 1968) His main research interests are computer ethnology, multi-media computer systems, and comparative studies of civilisation.

Departmental Directors (department and year of appointment)

Isao Kumakura (1st Research Department, 1997)

Nobuyuki Hata (2nd Research Department, 1996)

Shohei Wada (3rd Research Department, 1993)

Shuzo Koyama (4th Research Department, 1996)

Tatsuhiko Fujii (5th Research Department, 1997)

New Staff Member

Masuya, Ms Tomoko joined the Museum in February 1997. She has investigated ethnic art in Muslim countries, especially in West and Central Asia. Her major interests are Muslim architecture and architectural ceramics.

Visiting Scholars

The following visitors were sponsored by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture (Monbusho):

Abhakorn, Dr M.R. Rujaya is from the History Department, Faculty of Humanities, Chiang Mai University, Thailand, where he teaches Southeast Asian history. He first came to the Museum in July 1994 to conduct a culture-comparative seminar entitled 'Chiang Mai and Kyoto: Cultural

Renewal of the Two Cities'. This time he will stay for six months from 1 April to 30 September 1997. His academic interests are in the cultural history of the Tai speaking groups in northern Thailand, Laos, Yunnan, and Myanmar. The current study is on cultural communication in the upper Mekong region.



Chun, Dr Kyung-soo

has been Professor of anthropology at Seoul National University since 1982. He was educated at SNU (Korea) and at the University of Minnesota (USA). He has mainly focused on ecological and environmental issues, and recently published a volume of *Essays in Environmental Anthropology* (1997, in Korean). His hope is that the current ecological crisis can be challenged by attention to the human life cycle 'from food to feces'. Now he is investigating the historico-legal anthropology of East Asian countries in the 18th century.



Jia, Professor Huixuan

is Deputy Director of the Japanese Studies Center at Beijing University, China. She will stay at the Museum from May 1997 to March 1998. Her main research field is comparative ethnology, and she is now investigating food culture in Japan and China.



Ma, Dr Rong

is Professor of Sociology and current Director of the Institute of Sociology and Anthropology (ISA) at Beijing University, China. He came to the Museum in early 1997 for three months. His major research interests are ethnic relations, rural education, social organisations, township enterprises, environment, migration and urbanisation in contemporary China. He has conducted several surveys in Tibet, Inner Mongolia, as well as in coastal regions of China.



Platenkamp, Professor Jos D.M.

is Professor of Ethnology and Director of the Institut für Ethnologie at the Westfälische Wilhelm-Universität Münster, Germany, and is a member of the Equipe de Recherche d'Anthropologie Sociale: Morphologie, Echanges, (ERASME/CNRS), Paris, France. He will stay at the National Museum of Ethnology from 15 April to 15 October, 1997. He is engaged in comparative studies of socio-political organisation, ritual, and mythology among Southeast Asian societies.



Publications

The following were published by the Museum during the period from December 1996 to May 1997:

- ◇ *Senri Ethnological Studies*, No.43, December 1996.
Shun Sato and Eisei Kurimoto (eds.), *Essays in Northeast African Studies*.
- ◇ *Senri Ethnological Studies*, No.44, March 1997.
Hiroshi Shoji and Juha Janhunen (eds.), *Northern Minority Languages*.
- ◇ *Bulletin of the National Museum of Ethnology*, Vol.21, No.2, January 1997. Contents: Osamu Akagi, Tomoya Akimichi, Akishinonomiya Fumihito and Yasuhiro Takai, 'An Ethnoichthyological Study of Pla Buk (*Pangasianodon gigas*) at Chiangkhong, Northern Thailand'; Taryo Obayashi, 'The Kucong in Yunnan and Hunter-Gatherers in Northern Indochina: Do They Represent an Old Cultural Tradition or a Case of Cultural Devolution?'; Yasushi Kosugi, 'Ethnographic Reconstruction from the Material Culture of the Kuril Ainu'.
- ◇ *Bulletin of the National Museum of Ethnology*, Vol.21, No.3, March 1997. Contents: Tomiyuki Uesugi, 'Gift-Exchange and Social Networks among the Murut of Sabah, East Malaysia'; Jingshu Han, 'Village Life of Korean Chinese: A Social Survey of X. Village in Jilin Province'; Haiying Yang, 'The Ritual of Ancestor Worship among the Ordus Mongols'.
- ◇ *Bulletin of the National Museum of Ethnology*, Vol.21, No.4, March

1997. Contents: Nobuhiro Kishigami, 'Socio-Economic Change in Canadian Inuit Society: The Case of Inukjuak Village, Nunavik (Northern Quebec), Canada'; Jeol Yull Park, 'The Social Acceptability of Strolling Players in Korea'; Makoto Oda, 'The Price of Postmodern Anthropology'; Futoshi Kinoshita, 'Uncounted Births: Estimating the Fertility of Tokugawa Peasants from Shumon Aratamecho'; Yoshitaka Terada, 'Effects of Nostalgia: The Discourse of Decline in Periya Mēlam Music of South India'.

◇ *Bulletin of the National Museum of Ethnology, Special Issue*, No.18, March 1997. Musashi Tachikawa and Akira Masaki (eds.), *Iconographic Studies of the Stupa of Gyantse*.

MINPAKU Anthropology Newsletter

The MINPAKU Anthropology Newsletter is published semi-annually, in June and December. 'Minpaku' is a Japanese abbreviation for the National Museum of Ethnology. The Newsletter will promote a continuing exchange of information with the 'Minpaku fellows' who have been attached to the Museum as visiting scholars, and who have visited us from overseas. It is also hoped that the Newsletter will become a forum for communication with a wider academic and anthropological audience.

MINPAKU Anthropology Newsletter Nos 1 to 3 are accessible through our home page at:
<http://www.minpaku.ac.jp/eng.htm>

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