



National
Museum of
Ethnology
Osaka

Number 38
June 2014

Special theme: An Anthropological Study of 'Control' and 'Public' in Myanmar

Myanmar has a long and rich history and enjoys unique cultural traditions. Society in this country is changing rapidly in the modern world. At Minpaku, the Inter-University research project 'An anthropological study of "control" and "public": Community, information and resources in Myanmar' (2012-2016) has been organized in 2012 by Keiko Tosa, a contributor to this special section. The following essays offer personal views on local society, politics, media, folk belief, and religion in Myanmar.

Control and Division in Village Life: Field Experiences in Burma

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Since the beginning of my study of Myanmar (Burma), the country was under military government or that led by the army except for the short interval of the democracy movement in 1988. In 1977 when I visited for the first time, Burma was under the regime of 'Burmese Way to Socialism'. The government controlled many aspects of peoples' life by many means, that is, the socialistic economic system, dictatorship by one party, media control by censorship, a system of surveillance, and so on. In this situation, I conducted field research while staying in a village from 1979 to 1980.

During that work, two kinds of intellect approached me. One was from the intelligentsia and the other was intelligence. The government was watching not only over its people but also over foreigners. This was sometimes accompanied with kindness and protection for foreigners, which was appreciated as Burmese hospitality. According to their social custom, it was not proper for women, children,



Villagers travelling by ox-cart to join a ceremony, central Burma (Tamura, 1979)

MINPAKU
Anthropology Newsletter

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or guests move about alone. They were socially 'weak' persons, they should be kindly protected, and were not allowed to move freely. The Burmese government might have considered it a duty to watch over and protect foreigners. In fact, when I started to stay in the village, a troop of policemen also began to stay, in order to patrol the village, although they disappeared after around a week.

My stay and research were comparatively free. At that time, foreign researchers were very rare, so there was no systematic control. I had no obligation to report the process and results of my fieldwork, and had no counterpart assigned by a concerned authority. I could enjoy friendly and peaceful relationships with the villagers.

However, more problematic was self-control. I often heard of foreigners being accused of wrong-doing and being expelled from the country. At the time, I had no specific permission for research. I had only the permission for travelling to the particular village. I should return to Yangon to renew my visa every three months, and each time I also had to obtain the permission for travel. I was anxious about this, so was implicitly under self-control. I refrained from doing research on politics of the

national level. I also did not conduct detailed research on economic and social systems, for such topics sometimes were taken as related to the 'socialist regime'.

The other intellect met was from the intelligentsia, that is, persons concerned with the academic world, culture, and arts. While ordinary Burmese often hesitated or feared to have contact with foreigners, contact with intelligentsia became a gateway for foreigners. Such people approached foreigners with intellectual interest. Under the regime of Ne Win, the country was nearly closed and people could get little information from abroad. For them, connection with foreigners also had social purposes, such as raising prestige, or economic benefit.

In fact, one historian, a former university professor, became a gateway for my research, allowing me to work in the village of his parents, while staying in the house of his relative.

In a Burmese village, people gather to talk while drinking tea in the night time, according to divisions of gender, generation and closeness. This is called *lapeik-waing* (a tea-circle). The topics of conversation cover a wide range, from national level politics to gossip concerning the neighbors. Some young men go around in the village, dropping in at various gatherings to gain information, especially from seniors. While most villagers go outside the village residential area for agricultural work, school, or for other reasons during the daytime, people enjoy talking and social life in the village becomes busy at night, from sun-set to about nine o'clock. A tea-circle gathered regularly under the eaves of the house where I stayed, and became a main resource for collecting information and the data of my research.

The daily interactions outlined above lead to the formation of intimate relationships (*khin*), which become the base of various activities, such as mutual assistance in agricultural works, labor exchange, co-fellowship in religious events, political connections, and so on. Villagers have a network of intimate relationships centered on themselves — this is a common feature of societies in the plains of Southeast Asia. The village is recognized as the space where these networks have greatest density, overlapping with each other. In this way, the village can be recognized as a kind of community, that is, a social space with public aspects. Also, among villagers there exists an association for mutual assistance, *thaye-naye-athin* (literally, the association for auspicious and

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inauspicious events). The association was composed of groups divided according to gender and generation and individuals took their part in each group for ritual feasts, especially on the occasion of funerals. This led to closeness, as well as a common consciousness among the villagers (and perhaps also to the fact that marriage outside of the village was lowly evaluated).

I wonder whether intimate relationships and the personal networks among villagers can lead to a social public. Relationships do extend beyond the village boundary, but when they are formed between persons of 'superior' and 'inferior' status, they become patron-client relationships, which leads to the formation of factions. In the village, there were severe conflicts among factions, which caused delay in the introduction of electricity

until just two years ago.

Khin does not lead to common interest for the public but more directly to one's personal or factional interest, because it is based on closeness between two people. It can also be turned into a means of control, through mutual watching.

Myanmar has been changing rapidly in the course of democratization over the last two or three years. In the city, people are more able to get information through mass media and internet, and especially with online social networks. In rural areas people depend more on broadcast by television, newspapers, and journals instead of oral communications. Traditional social relationships will be forced to change in this process. We do not yet have an image of society in the future of this country.

A Decision in Distress: Aung San Suu Kyi

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On April 13, 2013, Aung San Suu Kyi visited Japan for the first time since her emancipation from house arrest. Her overseas trip was a symbolic occurrence showing that the democratic movement in Myanmar had reached a new stage. However, her facial expression on television was severe, and a certain suffering was held back.

The large-scale mass movement that occurred in August, 1988, put Aung San Suu Kyi at the front of the movement for democracy. Although this mass movement led the Ne Win's dictatorship to collapse, the new government was not a democratic one but a military regime established by coup d'état. From that time, Myanmar politics has been characterized by the relationship between two axes, the military regime and Aung San Suu Kyi. Her political stance came to have significant influence on the movement for democracy.

The military regime did not deny democratization at all. General Saw Maung at the top of the military promised to carry out a general election and permitted the formation of political parties. However, the military government divided politics into party politics and national politics, and the General proclaimed himself as an embodiment of national politics, fit to

represent the real interests of the nation and people. The military government allowed democratization within the framework of a military-guided democracy. Regarding this attitude of the military, Aung San Suu Kyi commented at a mass meeting that the military government pursued a 'Myanmar Way to Democracy' which was compared to the 'Myanmar Way to Socialism' of the Ne Win regime.

Despite the military's attitude, Aung San Suu Kyi did not accept participation of the army in politics and continued to pursue true democracy based on the principle of civilian control. This political stance strongly reflected her political thoughts. She aimed not for immediate political reform, but for fundamental human and social change through the 'Revolution of Spirit'. Her revolution of spirit was strongly influenced by Mahatma Gandhi, leader of the Indian independence movement, and Buddhism. She asked people for 'Freedom from Fear'. Human spirit can be corrupted by the feeling of fear in one's mind. In order to release oneself from fear, she insisted that people control themselves by practicing *metta* (compassion) in everyday life. Moreover, to establish true and stable democracy, she did not seek to choose a means for

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Aung San Suu Kyi addressed at the 30th memorial ceremony for Bo Aung Gyo of Democratic Party for New Society in Yangon on December 20, 1988 (Ino, 1988)

the end, but followed Gandhi who explained that means and end had the same inviolable connection as between seed and tree.

Aung San Suu Kyi strongly demanded respect for the result of the 1990 general election in which her party (the National League for Democracy) had a land-slide victory. However, the army ignored that election outcome and continued to draft a new Constitution aimed at democratization based on military initiatives.

For Aung San Suu Kyi, even though disregarding the election result would change the political situation, it remained a fundamental principle of Democracy that the general election result should be respected as an expression of public opinion. To disregard the election result would distort the original purpose of establishing a true and stable democracy through the Revolution of Spirit. She adopted a non-cooperative position for drafting of the Constitution. Thus a deep discrepancy existed between her view and that of the army.

This political tension remained, while the work of drafting a new Constitution continued. In May, 2008, a new Constitution in which one fourth of Diet members were appointed by the Commander-in-Chief of the Defense Services was enacted. A general election based on this constitution was held in July, 2010. Since the party of Aung San Suu Kyi boycotted this election, the result was an overwhelming victory for the Union Solidarity and Development Party, which was said to be a puppet party of the army. For the army, the result was a great step toward

realization of the Myanmar Way to Democracy.

The army, having confidence in the result, released Aung San Suu Kyi in December, 2010, to avoid criticism from overseas and gain support for further economic development.

Immediately after her release, Aung San Suu Kyi acted energetically and reorganized the movement. It seemed that political tension between the army and her would increase again. Despite of this general anticipation, the political situation changed dramatically. Dialog between the new government and Aung San Suu Kyi was realized. In 2011, Thein Sein, the leader of the Union Solidarity and Development Party, was elected as President and formed a new government. This new government differed from the previous military government in one important point: it aimed to solve political problems through direct dialog between Aung San Suu Kyi and top leaders of the government.

Solving problems through such direct dialog had been strongly requested by Aung San Suu Kyi. The previous military government had continued to ignore this appeal for more than twenty years. The change was epoch-making and became evident when Aung San Suu Kyi and President Thein Sein appeared together in front of the portrait of General Aung San, in the national newspaper.

In the following year, Aung San Suu Kyi stood as a candidate for by-election and won the Diet seat. Her candidacy was criticized in various ways: it meant accepting the new Constitution which enshrined Military leadership in politics. A more moderate view was that, considering her age, her change of stance was an unavoidable compromise aimed at a comeback in the next general election in 2015. In any case, to stand as a candidate in the by-election was likely a cause of the distress apparent in her face when she visited Japan. Her decision seemed to change the basic position of asking the military government to respect the result of the 1990 election, and on the importance of the Revolution of Spirit.

This decision, however, led to change in the government political stance and opened the possibility of solving a political problem in a peaceful way, which is also a fundamental principle of Democracy. Furthermore, it made her political activity possible and allowed her to teach people about the Revolution of Spirit more widely.

Media Control and Relaxation in Myanmar

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During the early years of Myanmar's Independence, from 1948 to 1962, censorship was quite relaxed. As in many democratic countries only pornographic material, or writings that would incite hatred between people of different ethnic groups or religions, were banned. Manuscripts for printing were not censored before publication. There were many private newspapers, magazines and journals. The military had their Myawaddy Press for Myanmar language books and magazine, and the Guardian Press mainly for a monthly magazine.

For the first 14 years after Independence there was press freedom under a democratically elected multi-party political system. From around 1959, during the military caretaker government of General Ne Win, a Department for Press Scrutiny was managed by the Ministry of Information. After the military take-over of March 2, 1962, press censorship was enforced by the military one-party socialist government under the 1962 Printers and Publishers Act.

The worst years began when the Press Scrutiny Department was taken over on March 1, 1997, by Ministry of Home Affairs. From 1988 this Department was practically controlled by the dreaded Military Intelligence.

Because of Aung San Suu Kyi's popularity and rising influence in Myanmar politics, printing her picture was not allowed. Even her name could not be printed for many years. This also affected references to her father, General Aung San (1915-1947), who was not only the founder of the modern Union of Myanmar, but also of the Burma Army, which was established and trained by the Japanese military during the Second World War.

It was only on April 3, 2005, that the Press Scrutiny Department was transferred back to the Ministry of Information from the Ministry of Home Affairs and placed under the government Printing and Publishing Enterprise. After adoption of the new Myanmar Constitution in 2008, freedom of expression was guaranteed and censorship was gradually relaxed.

By 2013, the Press Scrutiny Department had ceased to exist and became just a Registration Office where publications had to be placed for registration and preservation in the National Library, including books to be considered by the Selection Committee for Awarding Annual National Literary Prizes.

Previously, censorship was carried out in two ways. For some sensitive subjects like politics and religion, the manuscript had to be submitted before publication. For some subjects like sports and health magazines, journals and books could be printed first, but then had to be submitted for censorship before distribution.

Press censorship was lifted in five stages, from mid-2011 to the later part of 2012, over a period of fourteen months. In the first stage, on June 10, 2011, eighty-two weekly journals and ninety-six magazines and books in the fields of fine arts, sports, information, fiction, health, children's literature, non-fiction and, technology could be printed without prior censorship of the manuscripts. Only after printing were they to be submitted for censorship, before distribution.

In the second stage, starting from December 9, 2011, censorship of thirty-two journals and twenty-two magazines and books in the fields of economics, business, crime, and legal affairs was lifted.

In the third stage from March 1, 2012, three journals, ten magazines and books on education were no longer censored.

In the fourth stage, from May 15, 2012, all fiction

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Newly started newspapers and magazines are sold here and there across the city, Yangon (Tamura, 2013)

(novels, short stories, poetry) were no longer censored.

Finally, in the fifth stage all publications in the fields of politics and religion were lifted from censorship, from August 28, 2012.

Thus the strict censorship in force from August 6, 1964, was finally all lifted after a period of forty-eight years and fourteen days. The result was a flood of publications especially in the fields of politics and biographies; books about Aung San Suu Kyi and Gen. Aung San were published and continue to be published up to now (March, 2014).

On March 14, 2014, the Union Parliament (Hluttaw) passed two important laws which the President has now promulgated. They are law no. 12 of 2014, *The News Media Law*, and law no. 13 of 2014 *The Printers and Publishers Law*. At the same time the two restricting laws in force for over fifty years, viz. The Press (Emergency Powers) Act and The Printers and Publishers Act of 1962 were both abolished. We are now waiting for the Bylaws and Rulings which will provide details of provision and prohibitions under these two important laws.

The only prohibitions found in the new Printers and Publishers law are:

- (1) Not to print and publish indecent, pornographic writings giving explicit sexual content.
- (2) Writings that may incite conflict regarding nationality, religion and race.
- (3) Writings that deliberately denigrate

the reputation of an individual person or organization, or that have negative impact on human rights.

- (4) Plagiarized materials or intellectual properties that belong to others.
- (5) Apart from criticism, opinion and features, no other negative views or opinions of journalists should be published.

The Myanmar News Media Council, about to be established, will formulate the ethics and regulations for various kinds of media, including print media.

We will have to wait and see how the new laws will be implemented.

The important point is that the government is quickly loosening the iron grip that began with the military coup of March 1962. After fifty-two years, even the nationalized private newspapers are being turned into government-private partnerships. From late April 2014, the only government newspaper in English, *The New Light of Myanmar*, became a joint venture, with the government owning 51% of shares, and a private Myanmar investor taking 49% after returning from many years in Japan. Kyodo news agency has been asked to provide expertise, training, and equipment to raise this newspaper to international standards. A new joint venture company has been established under the name Global New Light of Myanmar Company.

Writers in Myanmar now enjoy freedom of expression and the right to print and publish without censorship.

National Control and the Public Space for Spirit Worship in Burmese World

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In this essay I would like to give an overview of historical changes in national control over spirit worship in the Burmese World, and consider the connections between 'control' and the less public nature of spirit worship.

Though spirit worship existed before the arrival of Theravāda Buddhism, the history of public control over the faith begins with the introduction of Buddhism by King Anawratha in the 11th century. When the king introduced Buddhism, he attempted to force his people to abandon their animistic beliefs without much success.

So, he elected 36 of the most powerful spirits to be placed under the control of the deity Indra. This pantheon of gods, famous in Myanmar, is called 'The Thirty-Seven Lords'. Later, the indigenous spirit worship of the people, including 'The Thirty-Seven Lords', came to be fused with Buddhism under its absolute superiority.

A parallelism existed between the religious hierarchy and existing political and governmental structures. The king resided at the top, reaching out to the people through local lords. In a symbolic sense, the spirit worship of

the people was being controlled by the king. In fact, the king prohibited sacrificial rituals, dispatched caretakers to the main shrines, and officers to important festivals in the country, appointed spirit mediums, and supported the presentation of songs, dances, costumes, and offerings to rituals. Spirit worship was emphasized throughout the dynastic era in a context different from Buddhism.

However, after the British colonized Burma, the new rulers adopted a policy of religious non-intervention based on their experience in India. As a result, spirit worship became removed from public control. The nationally appointed spirit mediums disappeared, as did the dispatch of caretakers to shrines around the country. In the confusion, the image of Min Mahagiri, head of the indigenous 'The Thirty-Seven Lords' and tutelary spirit of the household, was lost and yearly festivals ceased. National rituals that had been supported by the kingship faced a major transformation in the British period. Even the Taunbyon Festival, the most widely held in the nation now, was not very popular during the pre-war period.

Then with the post-war independence, U Nu came into power and promoted a more modern religious policy in following with the dynastic period. He created the Ministry of Religious Affairs in 1950 and instituted a policy that made Buddhism the state religion. He also justified the propitiation of spirits based on Buddhist scripture, and promoted animistic ritual as a national undertaking 'for the benefit of the people'. In order to protect the country in 1961, the cabinet decided to construct shrines in Yangon and Mandalay at government expense, although this plan went up in the smoke of Ne Win's 1962 coup d'état.

In contrast to U Nu, Ne Win promoted a complete separation between religion and state, during the 'Burmese Way to Socialism' period. In 1980 Ne Win blocked a political intervention by monks holding the first congregation of the Sangha of All Orders. However, he did not intervene in any way in relation to spirit worship. This resulted in some changes. In conflict with the socialist economy, the Taunbyon Festival became bloated with the addition of caretakers, mediums, and traditional festival officials. In the 1960s, most mediums had been women but from the late 1980s the proportion of cross-dressing men began to rise.

The military government that came to power after the pro-democracy



Shrine of the Taunbyon Brothers. They are listed among the 'Thirty-Seven Lords' and are regarded as the most powerful spirits in Myanmar. In the dynastic era, caretakers and spirit mediums were dispatched here by the order of kings (Iikuni, 2014)

movement in 1988 basically followed the religious policy of the socialist period. Then, in the 1990s, public control of the population was exerted by requiring professional spirit mediums to be registered by mandate, and by requiring that performances of rituals with music and dance had to be reported to the district council and police. Control over these practices and spirit mediums did not fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, but the Myanmar Traditional Artists Association, under the Ministry of Information.

To sum up, in the dynastic era and U Nu periods, spirit worship had been given public 'protection', but during the British and Socialist periods, no intervention was made. The socialist period policy continued during the military period, but there was a strengthening of control over the mass gatherings of people and mediums for rituals, which form the core of spirit medium cult, and mediums were treated as specialists in the 'traditional arts' rather than as 'religious people'. Especially during the military periods, the policy regarding spirit mediums was very different from the policy regarding Buddhist monks. The latter policy was a carrot-and-stick, that is, large donations for monks who supported the military government and a strict crackdown on antigovernmental behavior by monks. State control of spirit worship promotes dereligionification and privatization, and eliminates extraneous spirit worship in the

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Buddhist 'Burmese World'.

How does the state control of spirit worship relate to the formation of public space in the modern 'Burmese World'? Gender may be a crucial point. Since the 1980s, cross-dressing men have risen to prominence in mediumship, where formerly there was an unwritten rule that 'a medium must be a real male or a real female'. There may be many factors behind the invalidation of this unwritten rule, but one important factor could be related to changes in control by the state, which have separated spirit worship from

religious institutions, and encourage its development in the private sector. In a society where ascetic and male-centric Theravāda Buddhism is the norm, women and cross-dressers have been marginalized. Spirit worship relieves the daily oppression by providing people a valuable opportunity to become faithful to their own desires. The public space of spirit worship has the potential to become a heterotopia that counters the 'Burmese World' where ascetic and male-centric Buddhism is the norm.

Buddhist Public or Counterpublics in Myanmar

Keiko Tosa

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Myanmar has experienced three types of government (socialist, military, presidential) and two economic regimes (socialist-centralized, and market driven under economic sanctions) since 1962, when General Ne Win took power by coup d'état. Strict control of the movement of goods, people and information has been the rule. In 2011, the current government began a process of reform to democratize the country. This has gone further than had been expected. President Thein Sein released the pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest and started dialogue with her, which invited participation of the National League for Democracy (NLD) party in the 2012 by-elections. After a great victory in the by-election, she joined national politics as a member of a Parliament.

Although rapid changes in Myanmar have attracted world attention, since the release of Aung San Suu Kyi, it is also important to frame changes in the long process of social reorganization by observing practices of the people. With this aim, in 2012, we began 'An Anthropological Study of "Control" and "Public": Community, Information and Resources in Myanmar'. This Inter-University Research Project is organized by Minpaku and will continue until 2016.

The term 'control' might be first imagined as having the political meaning. For example, during the period of the Burmese Way to Socialism (1962-1988), imports, exports, and the



Young novice washing his bowl at Karen State (Tosa, 2014)

distribution of imported goods were all controlled. The media has been censored since Ne Win period. However our project is not concerned only with such political control, but also with the invisible ideology and coercive

mechanisms that penetrate various domains such religion and gender relationships in people's everyday life. Most Myanmar people believed that phone calls in private life and other daily activities were always monitored by Military Intelligence. These monitoring systems, some of which were imagined only, might have internalized control by people themselves. In other words, self-control might have been imposed on daily practices.

We can also suppose that tactics and practices developed to evade the visible and invisible controls. For example, domestic political news not covered by government media was orally delivered among the people. Political criticism was often embedded in rumors or jokes, which seemed to create counter-narratives against the discourse in government media (Tosa, K. 2005 'The chicken and the scorpion: Rumor, counternarratives and the political uses of Buddhism.' In *Burma* ed. by Skidmore. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.). At the same time, Burmese (Myanmar) political exiles founded independent media specializing in Burma-related news such as the *Irrawaddy*, the *Mizzima News*, the *Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB)*. Later they collected oral news and helped spread such news by co-operating with leading media. The exiled Burmese tried to increase information flow concerning Myanmar, and to broaden the arena for discussion of Myanmar political affairs.

Jürgen Harbarmas defined the public sphere as 'the sphere of private people come together as a public' and analysed how people discuss and develop critical views of authority (Harbarmas, J. 1989 *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. London: Polity Press.). While accepting that the concept of 'public sphere' as still useful, Nancy Fraser criticized Harbarmas for considering only the bourgeois public sphere. She pointed out that many groups such as women, workers, colored people, gays and lesbians may have been subordinated to the bourgeoisie, but also create alternative public spheres in which they talk and exchange their own opinions. She called these 'subaltern counterpublics' (Fraser, N. 1997 *Justice Interruptus*. London: Routledge.).

I believe Fraser's argument is fruitful especially when we consider Myanmar under the military regime. In Myanmar, 89% of the population professes Theravada Buddhism. Most Buddhist

villages have at least one monastery with resident monks called *kyaungdain sayadaw*. Preaching by monks is part of daily life in the Buddhist community. On occasions such as weddings, funerals, the birth of children, and merit-making ceremonies, preaching by a monk is indispensable for Buddhists. Around the 1990s, a rather new form of preaching became popular among urban people: the lay people invited their favourite monks and hosted preaching ceremonies at their own expense. These independent preaching ceremonies, called *taya bwe* or *taya ho bwe*, were held by many different social groups, including local community groups, associations of co-workers, and voluntary groups. In the 2000s, popular monks could mobilize several thousands to around 10,000 people at one *taya bwe*. Even though monks generally remain aloof from worldly matters, in their sermons they sometimes include tacit criticism of social trends or may indirectly comment on political topics. It is also possible for monks to slip indirect criticism into a historical Buddhist tale. Direct criticism and discussion of politics in general were avoided under the strict official controls on public speech. Moreover, the government prohibited all unsanctioned assemblies of more than five persons. Nevertheless, religious rituals within monastery compounds remained lawful. Later, *taya bwe* were also held in open spaces on street sides or within markets. Preaching delivered by popular monks was recorded and distributed using electronic media. Tens of thousands of CDs, VCDs and DVDs or transcriptions were sold or distributed to bring merit to patrons.

The attendants of preaching as well as the audiences of CDs and DVDs could hear and share the opinions of monks which they could never receive outside of this arena. Monks and their audiences together may have created a sort of counterpublic with new styles of *taya bwe*. Of course, we should consider whether or not *taya bwe* achieved a sufficiently 'discursive' function to actually create or influence public opinion.

This is not the only example of a counterpublic sphere in Myanmar. Through the research project, we wish to consider various arenas or counterpublics in which the people come together as a public. We will also analyze the relationships between multiple arenas under the reform government.

Conferences

The Russian-Chinese Border: A 'Strategic Partnership' in a Mosaic of Indigenous Societies

*International Workshop
January 8 – 9, 2014*

Border studies in anthropology, sociology and political science were previously concerned mostly with the regions of the European Union, North America and the Balkans, but today the focus of global geopolitics is shifting to Northeast Asia. The main players, China and Russia, are former influential empires that have had long-standing disputes with each other and with surrounding countries. Perestroika brought numerous positive changes in bilateral political relations between China and Russia. It led in particular to the signing of an agreement on the eastern border between the USSR and the People's Republic of China (PRC), and to demarcation of the Russian and Chinese borders, finalized in 2008. During the process of political negotiation between Russia and China in 1996, a bilateral declaration was signed on a 'strategic partnership'. The declaration introduced a new turn in the development of bilateral relations and led to a rapidly changing social and economic life along the Russian-Chinese border. At the same time, two-way flows of resources through the frontier led to the rapid development of transnationalism in the region.

This conference was the outcome of a three-year project 'Where Rising Powers Meet: China and Russia at their North Asian Border' (2012-2015), based at the Mongolia and Inner Asia Study Unit (MIASU) of the University of Cambridge, UK, under the leadership of Professor Caroline Humphrey. Researchers from Japan, USA, UK, China, South Korea and Buryat Republic of Russia presented the results of studies on border history,

politics, and local cultures of peoples residing across the Northeast Asian borders. The presentations illustrated what kinds of state strategy for the border region have been followed by Russia and China. Conference participants then considered how the past and present state policies might be regarded or remembered as painful by peoples, despite their involvement in political negotiations and national ambitions. In our conference, we also analyzed how geographic images are transformed, and mechanisms that shape spatial concepts of hierarchy in border regions. In conclusion, participants discussed how in the past and present the societies living around Northeast Asian borders have experienced a complex range of perceptions of 'Self' and 'Others' in daily life. Collaboration with researchers from various disciplines during the conference, with the support of Minpaku, contributed greatly to the cross-cultural focus of border studies.

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Comparative Studies of Indigenous Cultures around the North Pacific Rim: Focusing on Indigenous Rights and Marine Resource Utilization

*International Symposium
January 11 – 13, 2014*

The North Pacific is a culturally and environmentally rich region of the world that is little recognized in the catalogs of area studies programs, the charts of geopolitical strategists and the annals world cultural history. Yet, prehistorically, historically and in the present it is a dynamic, culturally-and-politically complex, interconnected region. At least

since the Jesup North Pacific Expedition (1897-1902) there has been a growing understanding that the people and ecology of this region have deep historical linkages and that the region has a huge role to play in understanding the world as a whole.

The time has come to establish a network of scholars concerned with the inhabitants and settlements of the North Pacific, its shores, and nearby surroundings. Continuing in the research tradition of the Jesup Expedition and the Jesup Centennial (1997-98), and to develop platforms and plans for interlinking ongoing research, David Koester (University of Alaska, Fairbanks) and I decided to hold this symposium. It brought together more than twenty-five internationally recognized scholars who wish to understand contrasts and linkages among societies and cultures of the region.

This symposium compared the results and current progress of research on and with indigenous cultures along the North Pacific Rim. It also provided a basis for building a network for research on indigenous cultures along the North Pacific Rim, and focused on the current status of indigenous rights and utilization of marine resources. In the first part of our three-day-symposium, Japanese researchers reported results of their current research with indigenous peoples along the North Pacific Rim. In the second and third parts, we discussed current research results, and the progress of joint-projects concerned with indigenous cultures along the Northern Pacific Rim in the USA, Canada, and Russia.

Because Japanese anthropologists have published mainly in Japanese, their research projects were not well known among foreign researchers. The symposium provided a good opportunity for Japanese researchers to introduce their work to the wider anthropological community. Participants found that there are many individual and group research projects



Symposium speakers and commentators (2014)

with related and overlapping themes and problematics. Thus, we strongly felt the need for international collaboration in research, and especially for comparative studies. The symposium concluded with participants discussing how to establish a network for anthropological and indigenous research along the Northern Pacific Rim.

One result is that we now plan to establish a new academic association and journal.

Nobuhiro Kishigami
Convenor
National Museum of Ethnology

Re-Collection and Sharing Traditional Knowledge, Memories, Information, and Images: Problem and the Prospects on Creating Collaborative Catalog

*International Workshop
January 28 - 29, 2014*

The Minpaku Info-Forum Museum Project has been started to establish an unprecedented online museum. The project will have three phases: (1) collection-review and international joint research, (2)

design of system architecture for the online museum, and (3) operation of multi-lateral and reciprocal information generating databanks. The project will require the re-collection and expansion of information on previously collected ethnographic materials, and sharing of information with people in source communities and with scholars outside the Museum.

On the first day of the workshop, six participants reviewed a collection of about fifty Native American Zuni artifacts. We discussed the social life of things, the authenticity of specific religious objects, and suitable methods of preservation from the perspective of the source community. The participants were Robert Breunig (Museum of Northern Arizona), Jim Enote (A:shiwi A:wan Museum and Heritage Center), Octavius Seowtewa (Zuni religious leader), Koji Yamasaki (Hokkaido University), Ken'ichi Sudo (Minpaku), and Atsunori Ito (Minpaku).

On the second day, we heard nine seminar presentations. In his opening remarks, Director-General Sudo stated that Minpaku's current and future mission is to create collaborative systems together with source communities. Ito then introduced recent trends among ethnological museums in economically leading countries. Such museums now share their collection information with source communities, aiming to develop new interactive databases in collaboration with them. Examples include the *Reciprocal Research Network* of the Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia, Canada, *Sharing Knowledge* by the Arctic Studies Center of the



In the storage room, Minpaku on January 28, 2014 (Ito, 2014)

Smithsonian Institute, USA, and *Amidolanne* by the A:shiwi A:wam Museum and Heritage Center, USA.

This workshop was held jointly by two Minpaku Core Research Projects 'Practical Research on the Collection, Conservation, and Documentation of Ethnological Materials' and 'Anthropology of Cultural Heritage', and one Minpaku joint research project 'A Study of Relationship-building Using Ethnological Materials'. The members of these three projects, from Minpaku and elsewhere, enjoyed constructive discussions of a framework for the Info-Forum Museum project.

Atsunori Ito
Convenor
National Museum of Ethnology

Development and Social Change of Prehispanic Societies in South Coast of Peru

*International Symposium
February 16, 2014*

Recently, the Peruvian South Coast has hosted several archaeological investigations of Nasca society — famous for their lines and geoglyphs. With increasing clarity we can see how social processes of the south coast differ greatly from the north. The south coast is environmentally heterogeneous and divided by rivers that discharge into the Pacific

Ocean. 'Nasca society' refers only to societies of the Nasca Period (100-600 AD), but other societies emerged earlier and developed through mutual interactions. Based on latest results, this symposium aimed to synthesize our current knowledge of the prehispanic south coast, focusing on interregional interactions and power constellations.

After opening remarks by Yuji Seki (convenor, Minpaku) and Masato Sakai (Yamagata University), the speakers were introduced. Christina Conlee (Texas State University, USA) presented 'Power transformations and society in Nasca: A South Basin perspective' based on her excavations in La Tiza. Her discussion focused on diachronic transitions in power and social-economy. Markus Reindel (German Archaeological Institute, KAAK) presented 'Paracas in Palpa: The power foundations of Nasca culture', emphasizing the importance of Paracas society (800-200 BC) in the Palpa Valley, as shown by intensive surveys and excavations. Kevin Vaughn (Purdue University, USA) presented 'Pilgrimage and power in early Nasca' based on his Ica Valley survey. He focused on pottery production and the nature of Cahuachi as a pilgrimage center. Yuichi Matsumoto (Yamagata University) presented 'Paracas in the highlands: A perspective from Campanayuc Rumi', discussing the Formative Period (1000-500 BC) through his southern highlands data.

Sakai presented 'Landscape and societies in the Rio Grande de Nasca basin'. He discussed the cultural landscape of the region at different times, focusing on human activities at lines, geoglyphs and the basin center point. A concluding debate on prehistoric society of the South Coast of Peru was chaired by Seki, and covered several issues in a synthetic manner: chronology, subsistence, climate change, pilgrimage, and others.

This symposium was sponsored by the project 'Reconstructing the Andean Civilization Studies from the Perspectives of the Formation and the Change of Power' (Project Leader: Yuji Seki) (JSPS Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (S), No. 23222003).

Atsushi Yamamoto
Participant
National Museum of Ethnology

Social Movements and the Production of Knowledge: Politics, Identity and Social Change in East Asia

*International Symposium
February 22 – 23, 2014*

The symposium was organized as a part of a Minpaku Core Research Project, 'The Anthropology of Care and Education for Life', with support of the Japanese Society of Cultural Anthropology. Our aim was to discuss the potential of ethnographic approaches to study social movements and the role of knowledge production in those movements in East Asia.

Research on new social movements has flourished in many parts of the world since the mid-1990s. Although culture or identity has been one of the main concerns within this field, anthropologists have not played a prominent role in the theoretical and methodological debates. Eleven anthropologists working on or engaged with social movements in South Korea, Taiwan and Japan



The scene of the presentation (Kevin Vaughn, 2014)

joined the symposium and discussed current political situations, contested identities, and alternative views on society.

The symposium brought together a group of anthropologists based in Taiwan, South Korea, Japan and USA, along with one discussant (John Clammer from United Nations University). The atmosphere at the symposium was intimate and fostered a substantive and engaging discussion.

The papers covered a variety of social movements ranging from environmentalism, indigenous politics and feminism to democratisation and social welfarism, and dealt with a broad range of social practices used in response to contradictions generated by state control or capitalist expansion, such as ritual, story-telling, artistic performances, self-help group meetings, informal education, and the conservation of cultural heritage. They not only investigated the knowledge, culture or identity generated through these practices, but also the role of knowledge in the construction and reproduction of social and cultural groups, and how this knowledge challenges existing structures of knowledge production. We also considered how embodied knowledge (forms of practice, memory, emotions) is produced and reproduced. Some papers also offered a critique of methods for conducting research on social movements, the way ethnographic research situates itself in relation to activism, and how ethnographic sources can generate new theoretical frameworks.

Scholars and postgraduate students also contributed to the symposium. We concluded that ethnographic research methods and the conceptual tools of anthropology can make significant contributions to the study of social movements. The symposium was a first step in our plan to apply anthropological and ethnographic approaches to the study of social movements.

Kyonosuke Hirai
Convenor
National Museum of Ethnology

Individual, Family and State: Interdisciplinary Approach from Anthropology and Demography on International Migration and Health

*International Symposium
March 1 – 2, 2014*

This symposium was organized as a result of the academic agreement between the Population and Development Study Centre (CEPED) of Paris Descartes University and Minpaku, with financial support from both institutes. The main object was to share the achievements of French and Japanese experts on population and development in sub-Saharan Africa, especially in applied research concerned with international migration and global health issues.

The keynote lecture explained the epistemological implications of interdisciplinary research and was followed by discussion of the challenges of interdisciplinary integration for the study of population and development.

In the sessions that followed, we examined political issues related to refugees, the social dynamics of migrant workers, anthropological and socio-demographic research on global health, infectious disease, and finally the contribution of social sciences to development aid. Common themes across all papers were:

- Constraints exerted by globalization versus state autonomy
- Liberalism versus social protection
- Individualism versus solidarity
- Economic values versus human and moral values

The discussions were very active, especially concerning the contribution of social sciences to development aid.

Many issues require further discussion: for example, differences between French and Japanese researchers in their approaches to Africa; the concept of 'population' or 'people' in demography and anthropology; and the definition of 'data' in different disciplines and in aid projects.

Japanese studies in Africa have only a half of century of history. French study in Africa has a long and rich history, and has been strongly linked to state interests. Japanese researchers began with a kind of dream for Africa, or utopian hope, then had many kinds of personal experience in Africa. French researchers now propose 'anthropologic demography' as a useful science for development projects in Africa, while the Japan Association for African Studies has no demographers and includes many anthropologists.

Demography and anthropology do not share the same definition of 'population'. For demography, the population is a sampling tool used to predict some phenomenon or dynamic process, whereas in anthropology, 'population' or 'people' is a defined group that changes. As a result, the notion of 'data' is different in demography, anthropology and in development work. The latter need useful indicators to understand population numbers and economic conditions, and demography is good at providing such indicators. Anthropology considers the indicators as tools for manipulating objects, and instead offers possibilities for wider comprehension.

Different points of view became evident during the symposium, which was therefore a great opportunity for social scientists to interact with each other and learn from their diverse experiences.

Teiko Mishima
Convenor
National Museum of Ethnology

Information

Awards

Two Minpaku researchers have recently been given prestigious awards for their exceptional academic contributions:

Toko Fujimoto (Department of Cultural Research) was awarded the 'NIHU Prize for Young Researchers' from National Institutes for the Humanities (NIHU) for her studies of religious anthropology in Kazakhstan. This award was established to commemorate the 10th anniversary of NIHU and to honor young researchers making contributions in the humanities (December 10, 2013).

Naomichi Ishige (Professor Emeritus) received the 'Kumagusu Minakata Award' from the city of Tanabe (Wakayama Prefecture) for his anthropological studies on food cultures of the world. This award is given to scholars who have made major contribution in the fields of either natural history or folk culture and commemorates Kumagusu Minakata, a well-known scholar of natural history and folklore in the early 20th century (May 10, 2014).

In memoriam

With regret we note the following:

Chou Ta-sheng, Professor Emeritus. Theory of material culture. East Asia. Minpaku 1983-1995; d. May 4, 2014.

New Staff

Mizuho Matsuo

Associate Professor, Department of Advanced Studies in Anthropology

Matsuo works on gender and medical anthropology in India, specifically the transformation of reproductive practices such



as birth, abortion, birth control and infertility treatment, and the cultural meanings of reproductive technologies in colonial and postcolonial India. She is currently interested in bodily substances and caste/ ethnic identity. Before joining Minpaku in April 2014, she was an associate professor at Niigata University of International and Information Studies (NUIS). Her major works include *Anthropology on Gender and Reproduction: Living Childless in Rural Maharashtra, India* (in Japanese, Showado, 2013) and *A Cultural Study of Surrogacy in India* (in Japanese, Fukuyosha, 2013).

Noboru Yoshioka

Assistant Professor, Department of Social Research



Yoshioka was educated at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies and received his PhD in 2012. He specializes in South Asian linguistics, particularly descriptive studies of languages in northern Pakistan. Since 2004, he has conducted fieldwork in an autonomous self-governing region of Pakistan called Gilgit-Baltistan that was formerly known as the Northern Areas. He has mainly studied two languages: Burushaski and Domaaki. The former is a language isolate spoken in the Karakoram Range; the latter is an Indo-European language spoken by relatively few people who work as musicians and blacksmiths among Burushaski speakers. He recently began research on Shina, a language located in an area adjacent to Burushaski and Domaaki.

Kaoru Suemori

Research Fellow, Research Center for Cultural Resources



Suemori specializes in conservation science and Chinese Buddhist art. He has been interested in cultural heritage issues since his early career. He studied the archaeology of Southeast Asia at International Christian University (1999-2004). At the University of Tsukuba (2004-2009), he received his MA (2006), and joined a PhD program on world heritage studies (without dissertation). He studied Buddhist art history and conservation at heritage sites, especially in Buddhist stone temples located in the northwest part of China. Most recently, he has been engaged in technical support for the Grand Egyptian Museum Conservation Center, while employed by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for five years (2009-2014). He is currently undertaking research related to collection management at Minpaku.

Visiting Scholars

Shanmugam Pillai Subbiah

Retired Professor, University of Madras, India



Born in a remote village in the southern-most part of India, Shanmugam Pillai Subbiah graduated in geography from the University of Madras, Chennai, and completed a PhD in agricultural geography at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. He taught geography at the University of Madras and promoted research

on rural dynamics, social landscapes of urban systems, disaster recovery and rehabilitation, and regional studies. He was instrumental in establishing a GIS Lab in the early 1990s at the University of Madras, and was actively involved in GIS education for young scholars and professionals. He has had a very long association with Japanese social anthropologists working in India, and his joint studies on the Indian Tsunami 2004 resulted in a book, *The Indian Ocean Tsunami: The Global Response to a Natural Disaster*, jointly edited and published by the Kentucky University Press, USA. He was editor of *The Indian Geographical Journal*, the oldest geography journal in India, for more than two decades. He recently visited Minpaku to develop a book on the 'dynamics of rural social structure', in association with Yoshio Sugimoto.

(December 16, 2013 – March 14, 2014)

Youssef Kanjou

Director, Aleppo Museum, Syria



Born in Aleppo, north Syria, Kanjou studied anthropology at the Institute of Anthropological Research, Universidad Nacional

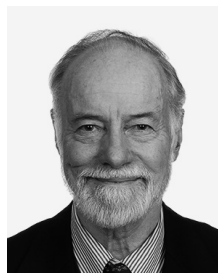
Autónoma de México (UNAM) and he received his MA and PhD there. He is a researcher at the Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums (DGAM) in Syria and lecturer at the archaeology department of Aleppo University. Since 2003 until present he has been co-director of a Syrian Japanese expedition from the University of Tokyo at Dederiyeh cave. He has been a member and director of several other archaeological expeditions in Syria. He was a visiting researcher at the University of Tokyo in 2008, 2010 and 2013. In 2010 he was appointed Director of Aleppo Museum. After the current war

began in Syria, his main subject became the protection of cultural heritage in Syria. At Minpaku, his project title is: 'War and the Museum: Protecting cultural heritage and helping communities regenerate, during and after war'.

(March 17, 2014 – March 16, 2015)

Andrew Strathern

A.W. Mellon Distinguished Professor of Anthropology, University of Pittsburgh, USA



Strathern and his wife and colleague, Dr. Pamela J. Stewart (Strathern) are visiting researchers collaborating with Isao

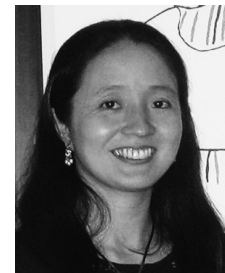
Hayashi at Minpaku. Their Minpaku project title is: *The Anthropology of Disaster: How People Cope, How People Hope*. They will study the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami of 2011. Their anthropological interests are global and comparative, and their field areas include Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Taiwan, China, Japan, New Zealand, Australia, Scotland, and Ireland. In addition to disaster studies, they have studied cosmological landscapes; religious change; land use and ownership; ritual studies; political peace-making; climatic change; medical and legal anthropology; language, culture and cognitive science; and the culture, history and societies of Scotland and Ireland. They have jointly published more than 45 books and more than 200 articles or essays. They were previously at Minpaku in 2000, when they co-authored a book, *Remaking the World: Myth, Mining, and Ritual Change among the Duna of Papua New Guinea* (Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002). Their most recent book is *Ritual: Key Concepts in Religion* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2014). In 2012 they were jointly the DeCarle Distinguished Lecturers at the University of

Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand. Their webpages are: www.stewartstrathern.pitt.edu/ and www.pitt.edu/~strather/sandspubcat.htm

(April 1 – June 30, 2014)

Michiyo Yoneno-Reyes

Associate Professor, University of the Philippines, Philippines



Yoneno-Reyes is an ethnomusicologist and Asianist, and teaches graduate courses at the Asian Center, University of the

Philippines. She co-authored *The Philippines and Japan in America's Shadow* (National University of Singapore Press, 2011) and *Global Goes Local: Popular Culture in Asia* (University of British Columbia Press, 2002) among others, edited *East Asian Popular Culture: Philippine Perspectives* (UP Asian Center, 2013) and a special issue *The Nikkeijin* (*Asian Studies Journal* 44(1), 2008), and co-edited *Cultural Hybridities of the Philippines* (*Asian Studies Journal* 47, 2011). She is also a review editor of *Asian Studies Journal* and is currently writing a book on folksong and modernity among indigenous peoples of the northern Philippine highlands. At Minpaku, she is producing a video on music and culture in the same region. She obtained her BA in musicology from Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music, and MM in musicology and PhD in Philippine Studies from the University of the Philippines.

(April 1 – June 30, 2014)

Narangerel

Professor, Inner Mongolia University, China

Narangerel was born in Horqin Left Wing Middle Banner of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. She came to Japan to study in 1997, and earned her doctor's degree in 2003. She is



now a professor at Inner Mongolia University, China. Narangerel's study focuses on social transitions in modern

Mongolia, and especially the relationship between Mongolian modernization and the communist movement from the viewpoint of anthropology. She has also conducted detailed studies of complex international relationships in the postmodern age — relationships that have had a profound impact on Mongolian society. For Inner Mongolian studies, she has also used materials collected by Japanese researchers in the first half of 20th century. These, together with her recent fieldwork, have allowed her to describe the massive changes in lifestyle, production modes, population, nature, social environment, and cultural customs. She also has given close attention to deteriorating environmental conditions in Inner Mongolia.

(April 3, 2014 – March 31, 2015)

Publications

From January to June 2014, we published the following issues and articles:

Bulletin of the National Museum of Ethnology 38

Issue 2: S. Hidaka, Y. Seki, S. Hashimoto and H. Shiino, 'A study of the production of metal objects during the formative stage of the Andean civilization: From the results of x-ray fluorescence analysis of metal objects unearthed from the Kuntur Wasi and Pacopampa sites in Peru'; M. Kumagai, 'The Muslim who went to a Muslim country: The example of a Chinese Xinjiang Uyghur living in Istanbul, Turkey'; and K. Fujii, 'The practice of "commuting to distant farms" and ecological resource management in the Yaeyama

archipelago of the Ryukyu Arc: A case study involving traffic between "High Island" and "Low Island" from its 19th century last stage to the beginning of the 20th century'.

Issue 3: M. Deguchi, 'Similarities between the "Ko" of the pre-civil code era and present day Nonprofit Organizations (NPOs) in Japan'; T. Kubo, 'Anthropology in the field of aid: The resettlement of Karenni refugees from Burma to the United States'; J. Fukada, 'The trade network of shell money in local history: The historical transitions and present situation of the trade of Nassa shells in the Bismarck Archipelago and the Solomon Islands'; and E. Yanagisawa, 'Gong making in Vietnam: A case study in Phuoc Kieu village'.

Issue 4: Special Issue 'Exhibiting Cultures: Comparative Perspectives from Japan and Europe': A. Mori, 'Introduction: Exhibiting cultures from comparative perspectives'; A. Mori, 'Exhibiting European cultures in the National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka'; E. Tietmeyer, 'Exhibiting European cultures in Berlin, Germany'; I. Daniels, 'Museum experiments in living ethnography: 'At Home in Japan' in London?'; and S. Hidaka, 'The exhibition of Japanese cultures in the National Museum of Ethnology'. T. Uesugi, 'Military service and citizenship of immigrants: Argument and confrontation about pre-1997 Gurkhas' acquisition of right of settlement as developed in electronic newspapers'.

Senri Ethnological Studies

No.86: Lkhagvasuren, I. and Y. Konagaya (eds.) *Oirat People: Cultural Uniformity and Diversification*. 278pp.

No.87: Suzuki, N. (ed.) *The Anthropology of Care and Education for Life: Searching for Resilient Communities in Multicultural Aging Societies*. 210pp.

No.88: Matthews, P.J. *On the Trail of Taro: An Exploration of Natural and Cultural History*. 429pp.

No.89: Seki, Y. (ed.) *El Centro*

Ceremonial Andino: Nuevas Perspectivas para los Períodos Arcaico y Formativo. 316pp.

Senri Ethnological Reports

No.116: Han, Y. and S. Meng. *Research on Dialects of the Oroqen Language in China*. 113pp.

No.117: Yamamoto, N. *Crops, Man, and Life in the Central Andes*. 441pp.

No.118: Chen, T-s. (ed.) *Human Rights and Support for Stateless People around the World: Japan's Role (International Academic Conference Report)*. 229pp.

No.119: Konagaya, Y., Sarangerel and Soyolma (eds.) *Oral Histories of Buryats in China: Their Trans-border Experiences*. 489pp.

MINPAKU Anthropology Newsletter

The Newsletter is published in June and December. 'Minpaku' is an abbreviation of the Japanese name for the National Museum of Ethnology (*Kokuritsu Minzokugaku Hakubutsukan*). The Newsletter promotes a continuing exchange of information with former visiting scholars and others who have been associated with the museum. The Newsletter also provides a forum for communication with a wider academic audience.

The Newsletter is available online at: <http://www.minpaku.ac.jp/english/research/activity/publication/periodical/newsletter>

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Signed articles represent views of the authors, not necessarily official views of the National Museum of Ethnology.

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2014. ISSN 1341-7959

Printed by Nakanishi Printing Co., Ltd