

Introduction: Twenty-Year of International Cooperation for Museums and Museology

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Museology emerged in Europe and North America, leading to museum standards and examples, and producing abundant literature that applies to these areas. In comparison to this, information about Asian museums and museology is still limited in number. This book presents up-to-date information about museums and museology in present-day Asia, focusing on Japan, Mongolia, Myanmar and Thailand.

The peer-reviewed chapters in this volume are written versions of the invited lectures delivered at the international symposium “New Horizons for Asian Museums and Museology” held on 21, 22 February 2015 at the National Museum of Ethnology, Japan (Minpaku).¹ The symposium was an opportunity to present the outcomes of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) Core-to-Core Program “New Horizons in Asian Museums and Museology” (FY2012–2014). At the same time, it represented one of the achievements of Minpaku’s more than 20-year-long efforts in international cooperation and human resource development for museums and museology.

This proceedings of the symposium provides museum professionals and museology students with chosen examples of museum activities, for example, database construction and sharing information, conservation of and access to museum collections, relationships between museums and local communities, and international cooperation in the field of cultural heritage. Throughout the course of this book, the reader will understand that a museum is not only a place for collecting, representing, and preserving cultural heritage but also plays a fundamental role in community development.

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In this introductory chapter, the history and outline of 20-year museology training courses at Minpaku are briefly described to help the understanding of the project background. Then, results of studies carried out as a part of the project during FY2012–2014 are summarized, and the objective and contents of the symposium described.

1 International Human Resource Development in Museology since 1994

The history of training programs in Minpaku goes back two decades. In the early 1990s, Minpaku was receiving many requests from Asian countries to conduct museum-related training. In 1993, taking advantage of the concurrent visits to Minpaku of researchers of museology from Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand, Minpaku held a short international cooperation seminar on museology. That year became “year zero” for international training in museology at Minpaku.

1.1 Museology Training Courses

In FY1994, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) decided to hold a 6-month course called “Museum Management Technology (Collection, Conservation and Exhibition),” in which a then professor of Minpaku, Tsuneyuki Morita played a central role. Minpaku as an institution was commissioned to provide a 2-week “International Cooperation Seminar on Museology” as part of the JICA’s course and accepted participants subsequently. Although it was initially begun as a 2-week seminar, a week-long study trip was added later, which was planned and guided by Minpaku. Around ten participants enrolled annually in this JICA course, and always formed a diverse group of individuals in terms of age, experience, position, and responsibility.

Around the tenth year, the course was completely revised. Organizational changes at both JICA and Minpaku also prompted the revision, with JICA transitioning from a special public institution to an independent administrative institution, and Minpaku becoming a member of the Inter-University Research Institute Corporation’s National Institute of the Humanities. Upon launching the revised program, Minpaku decided to partner with Lake Biwa Museum known for its pioneering of community-based activities to formulate improved course content. Since then, fully commissioned by JICA, it became the joint responsibility of Minpaku and Lake Biwa Museum to plan, operate, and implement the training course. The name of the course was changed to “JICA Intensive Course on Museology,” and it became a three-and-a-half month intensive program. Previously, the course had been geared for a wide range of people – from museum directors to young

staff – and to meet their different needs, the course had to cover many fields, from museum top management to practical skills for general museum activities. To redress that difficulty, the audience of the reshaped course was focused on people seeking to acquire practical skills.

In FY2009, when the Intensive Course was undergoing another renewal, JICA decided to place a stronger emphasis on defining the desired outcomes of the training. This shift was in response to a movement in Japan to reassess the overall status of the country's international cooperation. To ensure that the training would yield beneficial outcomes in the participants' home countries, JICA decided that, in principle, training would be provided to participants from the same set of countries for 3 years consecutively. Minpaku, however, strongly requested that JICA ensure that their decisions would not exclude countries where demand was high but museum staff was limited in number.

In FY2012, the course title was changed to “Comprehensive Museology Course” and the course was continued for another 3 years. In the new program, the curriculum was revised to enhance content related to museum management, and disaster management.

1.2 Outline and Features of Museology Courses

One of the main features of these museology courses has always been a comprehensive approach to covering matters related to museums, rather than focusing on a single topic.

From FY2004 onwards, all courses have been comprised of a 10 week general program (for all participants) and a 3-week specialized program (various electives).

The general program includes an overview of museology, such as collection, conservation, exhibition, collaboration with society, and museum management. The lectures and practice cover these topics, and participants are asked to give presentations resulting from their own experiences and to take part in study trips. The study trips are designed for experiencing the diverse styles and conditions of Japanese museums. In addition to this, during weekends and holidays throughout the course, participants visit museums in the region, according to their own interests and specialties. Usually, they visit a total of 40–50 museums during their stay in Japan. For a 3-week specialized program, three specialized programs are offered each week, from which participants select one. For example, the specialized programs for the 2014 curriculum were; first week, ‘Preventive Conservation,’ ‘Management of a Local History Museum,’ or ‘Photography,’ second week, ‘Conservation and Restoration of Objects,’ ‘Museum and Local Communities,’ or ‘Filming,’ and third week, ‘Excavating and Controlling Archaeological Resources,’ ‘Exhibition Design,’ or ‘Documentation and Databases.’

Interactive exchange of experiences and information, in other words “forum-oriented” learning, instead of unilateral classroom lectures, is what the courses seek to achieve. To that end, participants are given many opportunities to share their

Table 1 Participants of the museology courses (FY1994–2014) including observers

	Number of participants and observers	Countries and regions
Africa	48	16 (Benin, Botswana, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia)
Asia	84	16 (Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Viet Nam)
Europe	8	4 (Armenia, Bulgaria, Finland, Macedonia)
Latin America	41	10 (Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Guyana, Jamaica, Peru)
Middle East	25	6 (Iran, Jordan, Palestinian Authority, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey)
Oceania	10	4 (Australia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands)
Total	216	56 countries and regions

experiences and ideas through discussion during lectures, museum report presentations, specialty report presentations, a public forum, and final report presentations. In their museum reports, participants are expected to introduce their home museums and discuss the current environment impacting museums in their countries. Having this opportunity at the onset of the course allows other participants and teaching staff to have common understanding of each other's background and of the represented countries. In the specialty reports, participants are asked to report on their specialties and activities at their home museums. The public forum is an opportunity for participants to share the status of their museums with the general public in Japan, and to interact with them. In the final reports, participants attempt to present workable solutions to the challenges they face in their countries. These final reports are prepared utilizing knowledge gained throughout the course, and should help them plan the initial phase of activities at their home museums after their return.

All operations at museums, such as collection, conservation, exhibition, education, social collaboration, public relations, and other services, are interconnected and interdependent. That is why Minpaku and Lake Biwa Museum consider it important for museology to be comprehensive, covering all the main areas of museum activity. The comprehensive nature of the international training courses, over the past 20 years, sets these courses apart from others inside and outside Japan, and is their *raison d'être*.

The number of past participants and observers totals 216, from 56 countries and regions (Table 1). Each year, a "Minpaku Co-operation Newsletter" is published, with most content provided by participants in the course that year. This helps to communicate course updates to former participants and represents a growing resource of information for future participants.

2 New Developments in International Cooperation

Many participants of the museology courses are now playing pivotal roles in the operation of museums and in human resource development in their respective countries and regions.

Considering this fact, Minpaku launched in FY2012 a 3-year project, the JSPS Core-to-Core Program “New Horizons in Asian Museums and Museology,” as a new initiative of international cooperation through museology. The objective of the JSPS project is to establish a common platform for sharing knowledge and experience, whereby museum specialists and researchers in Asian countries can communicate to each other their activities and research results. The project is carried in collaboration with Mongolia, Myanmar, and Thailand.² The reason for the choice of these three countries was that among the 56 countries and regions that participated to the museology courses to date, these countries all sent participants and observers of around ten in number.

Prior to the international symposium “New Horizons for Asian Museums and Museology” at Minpaku in 2015, joint research meetings for specialists as well as public seminars for students and the general public were organized by Minpaku within the project, in Mongolia (2012), Myanmar (2013), and Thailand (2014).

2.1 *International Workshop on Asian Museums and Museology in Mongolia (2012)*

The first International Workshop on Asian Museums and Museology was held in Mongolia in July 2012. It was composed of three joint research meetings and one public seminar (Sonoda et al. 2014).

A joint research meeting on “Preventive conservation” focused on the problems of museum storage re-organization was held at Kharakhorum Museum in Kharakhorum. A case study from Mongolia was presented by Chogdon Natsagnyam (Kharakhorum Museum, Mongolia). This concerned a UNESCO support project for museums in Mongolia with reference to Erdene Zuu Museum. Within the project, basic and fundamental improvements were made, and museum staff was trained. Erdene Zuu can be considered the ultimate difficult case as it necessitates a balance between the needs of conservation, access to cultural heritage for continuing its activities as a Buddhist monastery, and serving a large number of tourists, as shown

²Overseas coordinators of the project are: Jarunee Incherdchai from Thailand, one of the 1994 (inauguration year) JICA participants (now Director of the Kanchanaphisek National Museum); Ichinkhorloo Lkhagvasuren from Mongolia, a 1994 observer (now Professor at Mongolian National University of Science and Technology); and Nu Mra Zan from Myanmar, another 1994 observer (now museum consultant to the Myanmar Ministry of Culture). Naoko Sonoda (present author) is from the National Museum of Ethnology, Japan, and has been coordinator for the entire project.

by the presentation of Naigal Tumutbaatar (Erdene Zuu Museum, Mongolia). Present author gave a presentation on an ongoing storage re-organization project at Minpaku, taking as examples the re-organization of two special storage rooms, one for fur/skin/feather and the other for carpets.

Joint research meetings on “Documentation” and “Museum and local community” were held at Mongolian National University of Science and Technology in Ulaanbaatar. Documentation implies sharing information between people from three sides, namely, site people who are the owners of, ethnological researchers who are the developers of, and the third party people who are the users of, the cultural resources, as noted by Masatoshi Kubo (National Museum of Ethnology, Japan). Kubo remarked that this necessitates consideration of different rights regarding sharing cultural resources. An example of nationwide project of registration and documentation for cultural heritage in Mongolia was presented by Dalkhaa Narantuya (Center of Cultural Heritage, Mongolia). To link the museum and local communities, the active involvement of local children and adults in museum activities was required. Public programs carried out at one museum in Mongolia were described by Oyunkhisig Tsanjid (National Museum of Mongolia, Mongolia). Connections with local people were also discussed in detail with the example of the Lake Biwa Museum by Yasushi Kusuoka (Lake Biwa Museum, Japan).

A JSPS Core-to-Core Program Public Seminar on “The Great East Japan Earthquake and the Preservation of Cultural Heritage” was held at Mongolian National University of Science and Technology in Ulaanbaatar. The Great East Japan Earthquake and the subsequent tsunami occurred in March 2011, bringing unprecedented damage in Japan. It affected many tangible and intangible cultural properties. In Mongolia, it might not be necessary to worry about earthquakes and certainly not tsunami. It might not even possible for people in Mongolia to imagine the disaster caused by them. However, other kinds of disaster might occur, such as drought, extreme cold, or fire. This Public Seminar was aimed at sharing information on how disaster may affect both tangible and intangible cultural heritage. The experience of an unprecedented disaster in Japan would surely be helpful for thinking generally about the problems of disaster prevention and response. Rescue activities for tangible and intangible cultural properties were described based on the experiences of researchers at Minpaku: Shingo Hidaka presented work to preserve Japanese folk objects, while Isao Hayashi spoke about the resurrection of local dance traditions; and Kenji Yoshida emphasized the importance of transmitting memories of the disaster to future generations. Tsuneyuki Morita introduced in his closing remarks the notion of failsafe. Failsafe is the concept of a safety zone, used in the worlds of military affairs and IT. It is a place or activity that in the event of a specific type of failure, responds in a way that will cause no harm, or at least a minimum of harm, to other devices or personnel. As a place for the accumulation of human wisdom and survival knowledge, the museum can be thought of as a failsafe for human understanding and heritage.

We hoped that this Public Seminar served an opportunity and starting point to think about disaster prevention in the field of museums and cultural properties in Mongolia.

2.2 International Research Meeting on Museology in Myanmar (2013)

The International Research Meeting on Museology was held in Myanmar in September 2013 (Sonoda et al. 2015a). The Opening Address was kindly read by Nu Mra Zan (Ministry of Culture, Myanmar) on the behalf of the Union Minister of the Ministry of Culture, and the Closing Speech given by the Vice Minister of the Ministry of Culture. The Meeting was composed of joint research meetings using two venues, one in the North at Bagan Archaeological Museum, the other in the South at the National Museum (Yangon), and these were followed by a JSPS Core-to-Core Program Public Seminar at the National Museum (Yangon).

Some key concepts for museums of our era became evident during these events. A museum today has not only the classic basic functions of collection, conservation, exhibition, and museum education. There are larger potentials as suggested by Tsuneyuki Morita (National Museum of Ethnology, Japan). Kyaw Shin Naung (National Museum (Nay Pyi Taw), Myanmar) observed that an organization is only as good as the individuals it employs, and emphasized the necessity for capacity-building.

The notion of the museum as a forum was frequently mentioned by speakers. The importance of mutual communication and collaboration with exhibition source communities was emphasized with examples of regional museums in Myanmar by Marlar Aung (Lashio Cultural Museum, Myanmar) and ethnographic museums worldwide by Kenji Yoshida (National Museum of Ethnology, Japan). Shigeki Kobayashi (National Museum of Ethnology, Japan) also considered exhibitions as forums. Mie Mie Thet Nwe (National Museum (Yangon), Myanmar) argued for the necessity of school teachers and museums to work together. Masatoshi Kubo (National Museum of Ethnology, Japan) stated that the concept of forum-type collaboration plays an important role also in managing cultural resources. Yoshida underlined in his presentation with reference to an art historian Duncan Cameron's discussion that the museum in our era is required to be a forum where people can encounter the unknown in ways that generate discussion and debate, and is no longer a temple where people come to worship "treasures" with pre-established value.

The concept of forum-type museum leads us to develop relationships and cooperation between the museum and local communities. A good example of the involvement of the local people in museum activities was given taking example of the Lake Biwa Museum, Japan, by Yasushi Kusuoka. Relationships between the museum and local communities is attracting increased interest not only in Japan but in the world of the museum today, as it is directly connected with museum education, lifelong education, and the economic and cultural development of local communities.

Tsuneyuki Morita (National Museum of Ethnology, Japan) stated that the strong point of a museum lies in the collection of objects. Here, whatever may be said, we come to the consideration that, even for a museum in the twenty-first century, the basic functions of storage and preservation remain and cannot be neglected. This was shown by the presentations of Baby on the conservation of archaeological

objects at Bagan Archaeological Museum (Myanmar) and Shingo Hidaka (National Museum of Ethnology, Japan) on the rescue operations of objects in emergency situations, and by Aye Aye Thinn on the documentation and conservation of objects at the National Museum (Nay Pyi Taw), Myanmar. Access to collections and realization of the forum-type museum only becomes possible when a museum properly performs its fundamental functions.

2.3 International Workshop on Asian Museums and Museology in Thailand (2014)

The International Workshop on Asian Museums and Museology was held in Thailand in August 2014 (Sonoda et al. 2015b). The workshop was supported by the Department of Fine Arts, Ministry of Culture, Thailand. It included a joint research meeting at Kanchanaphisek National Museum, and a JSPS Core-to-Core Program Public Seminar at the National Museum Bangkok.

Through these Workshop presentations, the diversity of museums developed and thriving in Thailand today was introduced. According to Patcharin Sukpramool (Office of National Museums, Thailand) and Jarunee Incherdchai (Kanchanaphisek National Museum, Thailand), more than 77,000 items are arranged and stored by material type at the Kanchanaphisek National Museum and the Central Storage. This Museum and Storage is a good example of visible storage, though the Central Storage is not yet fully open to the public. This initiative deserves special attention as it allows access to collections that would otherwise be out of public view. Access to the collections naturally requires proper collection care and sustainable collection management as stated by the present author's presentation. Collection management refers not only to activities under normal circumstances but also in emergency cases. Sopit Panyakhan (Office of National Museums, Thailand) described the conservation of palm-leaf manuscripts affected both by fire and the water used to extinguish fire. Responses to natural disaster were illustrated by two interventions, one from Nopparat Thepthepha (National Science Museum, Thailand) with the example of severe flood in Thailand, and the other from Shingo Hidaka (National Museum of Ethnology, Japan) with the example of earthquake in Japan, both events occurred in 2011.

Another issue that should be emphasized is the importance of the relationships between museums and people or local communities. Watcharawadee Wichiansri (Songkhla National Museum, Thailand) described community cooperation in a refurbishment project at Songkhla National Museum. Kenji Yoshida (National Museum of Ethnology, Japan) remarked that museums throughout the world are now increasingly assuming the role of a forum in which participants are not only the exhibitor and the audience, but also representatives of the culture exhibited. Museums today are becoming increasingly involved in community-based activities as can be seen at Chiang Mai National Museum (Nitaya Kanokmongkol, Chiang

Mai National Museum, Thailand) and Lake Biwa Museum (Yasushi Kusuoka, Lake Biwa Museum, Japan). The relations with local communities are capturing increased interest as they can be connected with museum education and lifelong education. Kanokwalee Suriyatham (Roi-Et National Museum, Thailand) introduced the educational programs of Roi-Et National Museum. Museums are also expected to contribute to the economic and cultural development of local communities, as shown by the establishment of Chonburi City Museum (Wised Phetpradab, Fine Arts Department, Prachinburi, Thailand).

We can therefore conclude, with reference to Tsuneyuki Morita (National Museum of Ethnology, Japan)'s keynote speech, that the museum is no longer simply a place to conserve valuable materials, with multiple meanings, for admiration by visitors. We should make more effort to reveal further unknown visual meanings hidden in objects and to establish new methods and technologies to activate them. It is time to reconsider the values and new possibilities of the museum.

3 The International Symposium “New Horizons for Asian Museums and Museology”

The international symposium “New Horizons for Asian Museums and Museology”, the last in our meeting, was held at Minpaku (Japan) in February 2015.

3.1 Asian Museums Today

Three speakers described how their museums are evolving and adapting to their historical, social and cultural environments.

Nu Mra Zan (Ministry of Culture, Myanmar), in her presentation “Museums in Myanmar: Brief History and Actual Perspectives” retraced the history of Myanmar museums from the earliest such as ancient palaces and Pitaka libraries, through museums established before independence such as Bagan Archaeological Museum, to the most recent-days. Establishment of the Ministry of Culture in 1952, 4 years after regaining independence, led to construction of the first national museum (Yangon) and several other museums. Currently, Myanmar museums supported by the Ministry of Culture can be classified as national museums, archaeological museums, regional cultural museums, and memorial museums. Other kinds of museum are now appearing under other ministries and in the private sector in Myanmar. Nu Mra Zan pointed out the urgent need for collaboration between these different museums to form a nation-wide museum organization, in order to work together for the improvement of Myanmar museums, and to facilitate international cooperation.

Ichinkhorloo Lkhagvasuren (Mongolian National University of Science and Technology, Mongolia) presented “The Current Status of Mongolia’s Museums: Changes Taking Place in the Practical Activities of Museums since the 1990s”.

From the middle of 1920s to the 1990s, the museum affairs of Mongolia were dominated by communist-socialist ideology, demolishing the culture of the exploiter class and creating the culture of the exploited class. The democratic movement since the 1990s brought a big change in the field of culture, particularly for the protection and conservation of historic and cultural heritage, and for the museum activities. It was necessary to improve working conditions in museums, train professional staff, and to participate in international cooperation between museums. New museums were set up as to replace dissolved museums, and other museums were established anew including those under private ownership. Lkhagvasuren remarked that although Mongolia's museums have achieved much in the implementation of their goals, much remains to be accomplished.

Jarunee Incherdchai (Kanchanaphisek National Museum, Thailand) explained the history, role and function of national museums in Thailand in "Policies for National Museum Management: Solutions and Development." There are 41 national museums over the whole country. Since the Act on National Education of 1997, national museums have been expected to provide more educational services and facilities, but a lack of museum personnel and inadequate budgets remain big problems. Recently the decision was made to reduce the number of national museums, and the small-scale national museums, formerly monastery museums, have returned to being monastery museums. To improve the image of national museums, three pilot projects are undergoing: the first project is establishment of seven national museum storage units – a main central storage unit in Pathumthani Province and six regional national museum storage units –; the second project is renovation of the National Museum Bangkok; and the third project is development of the Kanchanaphisek National Museum which will represent all ethnic groups in Thailand.

3.2 Museums in the Info-Age

The potential of museums in the twenty-first century, the age of IT, has been explored from diverse angles: nation-wide database construction; sharing of museum information; and computer analysis of the museum environment.

Galbadrakh Enkhbat (Center of Cultural Heritage, Mongolia) gave a detailed account of the "The Creation of a Registration and Information Database for Cultural Heritage in Mongolia." Under the "National Project for Digitization of Cultural Heritage" started in 2005, a total of 42 organizations are involved in the registration and information state database of cultural heritage, using RCH (Registration of Cultural Heritage) software. So far, 45,645 names and 65,211 movable objects have been registered. For immovable historical and cultural properties, the registration is conducted using RICH (Registration of Immovable Cultural Heritage) software. So far, a total 32,124 historical and cultural immovable properties from 3,100 cultural sites in 15 provinces have been registered. Registration for ICH (Intangible Cultural Heritage) covers 329 soums (sub-provinces) and 9 districts, and 7,206 individuals identified as ICH bearers. In 2014, the "National Project for

Digitization of Cultural Heritage-2” was approved, aiming to register and document cultural heritage, to take control of conservation and preservation of cultural heritage, to create a digital database for tangible and intangible cultural heritage, and to improve the system used for registration and information database of cultural heritage.

Atsushi Nobayashi (National Museum of Ethnology, Japan) presented “Rewiring Museum Information: Mobile and Cloud”. At the National Museum of Ethnology, Japan (Minpaku), ImageFinder was designed to connect different kinds of information on an object through a new digital device: People search information not by using text but images of the objects instead. Another instrument called MAP (Minpaku Anthropological Phototheque) shows pictures taken by Minpaku staff in their fieldwork. These examples show that rapid progress in the design of digital devices and growth of the Internet community have changed the way to offer information on exhibitions and the museum itself. By connecting the information, visitors and users might find additional information or produce new contents and feed them back to the museum. As Minpaku collects materials concerned with human culture, we can show the existence of material culture in each period all over the world. Nobayashi believes that objects and information related to them would be our inheritance of intelligence on this planet.

Present author gave a presentation on “Managing and Analyzing Museum Environmental Data”. Two specially customized computer programs have been developed at Minpaku to facilitate the analysis of the museum environment: a pest monitoring data analysis program and a temperature/relative humidity monitoring data analysis program. These analysis programs improve understanding of the museum environment and support efficient and quick discovery of any abnormalities from a preventive conservation point of view. Daily and advanced uses of these data analysis programs were described. For example, a comparative study of the results of temperature and humidity control under the normal regime and under the power-saving regime was carried out based on actual readings, and permitted use of more energy-efficient air-conditioning control since FY2014. For the next development, it is intended to incorporate these analytical programs into “data analysis small packages” that can be used freely by other museums and related institutions.

3.3 Balance Between Conservation and Access for Museums

During this session, we discussed two initiatives aimed at balancing the access to and the conservation of museum collections, which is a fundamental need for museums.

Aye Aye Thinn (National Museum (Nay Pyi Taw), Myanmar) presented an initiative of the new national museum in Myanmar in “Exhibition, Conservation and Documentation at the National Museum (Nay Pyi Taw).” The National Museum (Nay Pyi Taw) is under construction and the first phase was scheduled to open in March 2015. The exhibition policy is: to present national prestige and integrity; to

reveal national cultural heritage to show the soft power and ability of the nation; to build a museum fitting the nation's prestige and grade; and to construct the museum as a good, modern, and attractive one with the right preservation techniques and of a high standard. A total of 9,047 objects have been collected, some excavated from ancient sites and others provided by donation, exchange, or given as awards. Each object arriving at the museum is systematically documented and is being conserved with simple chemicals and ordinary equipment. Aye Aye Thinn recognized the necessity for modern techniques of conservation, documentation, and exhibition.

Shingo Hidaka (National Museum of Ethnology, Japan) reported on "Conservation Science Research at the Museum: Development of Carbon Dioxide Treatment for Museum Collection". He described the development of an enclosure-type insecticidal treatment for ethnographic/folklore artifacts using carbon dioxide. After the successful installation of the system, the technique was applied on a larger scale using a special enclosure-type bag (11.5 m in length, 10 m in width, and 2 m in height). Since one of the preconditions for development of the system was that the treatment procedures could be performed by museum staff, close attention was paid to worker safety. Other challenges faced were to: minimize the decrease in humidity inside the bag when carbon dioxide is supplied; achieve a uniform distribution of carbon dioxide concentration in a large-scale treatment facility; and establish supplementary methods for killing insects that resist by carbon dioxide treatment (e.g. longicorn beetles).

3.4 Museums and Local Communities

To serve local communities, museums today are expected to act as centers for education, local development, and disaster recovery.

Nitaya Kanokmongkol (Chiang Mai National Museum, Thailand) spoke about "The Situation of Community Museums in the North of Thailand". The community museums in the North of Thailand have different patterns: Ethnicity museums and local historical museums. Most ethnicity museums are located in the community of those ethnic people, and present ethnic identity, history, and folklore. Local historical museums are located in historical areas related to the folk life of the communities, and present the history of the areas and the communities. Nitaya considers community museums in Thailand just one type of local museum managed by people, temples, and private units. The situations of the local museums might not be as stable as those of the national museums because the idea of each community unit is different in its understanding of the museum's social function. And nowadays, most local museums are just used as tourist places for the community economy.

Taisuke Ohtsuka (Lake Biwa Museum, Japan), in his presentation "Interactive Museum Activities That Provide Venues for Innovation: Case Studies from the Lake Biwa Museum," considered how to define and construct a better relationship of coexistence between humans and nature through interactive museum activities. The Restoration of Fish Breeding in Paddy Fields project was analyzed as a social

innovation generated by collaborative and interactive activities in which the museum has been engaged. The museum's researchers contributed no more than the idea and some related knowledge, and other actors such as farmers, prefectural agencies, and researchers in other research institutes organized and advanced the project. Further innovation along these lines is expected to contribute to a "better relationship of coexistence between humans and lakes."

Isao Hayashi (National Museum of Ethnology, Japan) considered "Museums as Hubs for Disaster Recovery and Rebuilding Communities." Among many museums throughout Japan that address the subject of disaster, the attention was drawn to the Chuetsu Earthquake Memorial Corridor which is composed of four facilities and three parks. One facility in Nagaoka acts as gateway to the Corridor, another in Ojiya is responsible for disaster prevention education, the one in Kawaguchi aims to reveal the connections born between people, and the one in Yamakoshi recounts the history, culture, and reconstruction of the village. Memorial parks were established in Myoken as a "park for prayer," in Kogomo as a "park for remembering," and at the Epicenter as a "park for beginnings." The author thus introduced the significance of involving the local people in the planning process and management of facilities that represent and reflect their own experiences.

3.5 Museums and International Cooperation

Shinichi Yoshihara (Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Japan) gave a full account of "JICA's Cooperation in Museum Construction and Capacity Building of Human Resources". For many years, JICA assisted developing countries in various fields as the executive agency for Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA). JICA provides assistance through technical cooperation, loan aid, and grant aid in an integrated manner. The Agency also assists developing countries through dispatch of volunteers, emergency disaster relief, and citizen participatory cooperation. Yoshihara gave examples of assistance to museums in Asia. However, he recognized that, in comparison with other sectors such as infrastructure, health, and education, projects and training for museum development remain small scale.

Kenji Yoshida (National Museum of Ethnology, Japan) gave a presentation on "Museums and Community Development: With Special Reference to Zambian Cases". He emphasized that the museum is not only a storage place for tangible objects of the past, or a destination for tourists, it is also a base for the accumulation and dissemination of local culture, and for creating people's pride in or identity to the community. He argued that only when people have pride in themselves and their own culture, can they challenge and overcome various difficulties. Examples of movements in Africa, especially those in Zambia where he has been working for more than 30 years, clearly demonstrate that the museum, an institution for constructing cultures, can also be appreciated from the viewpoint of community development. He noted that the identity museums to be created should be open-minded

and those that admit cultural diversity, otherwise it will result only in creating a nationalistic ideology. The networking of museums, both nationally and internationally, is thus essential.

4 Conclusions

To a large extent, museums in Japan reached their current state by adapting and modifying what previous museum leaders learned during studies in Europe and/or North America. Developing countries and regions are more or less in the same situation as Japan was and can use Japan's experience. When our international training in museology commenced in 1994, an advantage of getting trained in Japan was the involvement of experts with first-hand experience of the post-war "dawning" of Japanese museums, which was what the participants were experiencing in their homelands. Those people in Japan are now retiring, and the relationship between course participants and Japan is also changing. The result is a shift from a unilateral teaching of experiences to a bilateral sharing of knowledge and experience, in which each party influences the other.

After nearly two decades, many former participants came out to play a central role in the museum activities in their respective countries. Considering this fact, we started a new project in collaboration and organized international meetings and seminars overseas, focusing in Asia. Through the international meetings and seminars held in Mongolia (2012), in Myanmar (2013), and in Thailand (2014), we shared activities, experience, and knowledge about each country's museums. We were especially delighted to learn that, in Mongolia, former participants and observers were working together to hold domestic seminars, suggesting that young experts were being developed. In Myanmar, former participants and observers were teaching a Museology Diploma Course in hope of generating a new workforce, which is a pressing challenge. In Thailand, the diversity of museums encountered – such as one dedicated to visible storage, several kinds of community museums – suggests that the country's museums are gaining momentum.

The meetings and seminars served to strengthen relationships between the project participants' countries in matter of museology, and there was more consequence than that. Museums in remote areas as well as those belonging to other governmental sectors or private section also participated in the meetings and seminars. The meetings and seminars were occasions to connect different museums in the respective countries.

The last of the series, the international symposium "New Horizons for Asian Museums and Museology" was held in Japan (2015) gathering researchers from the above Asian countries. It was conceived as a wrap-up symposium of 3 years collaboration and was aimed to build a framework for sustainable international cooperation which would contribute to the future development of museums. There, the need to continue a museology training course in Japan was strongly requested by all symposium participants, and we learnt that there was a latent demand for more advanced training courses. Museum-based international cooperation indeed

continues with a new project (JICA Knowledge Co-Creation Program (Group & Region Focus) “Museums and Community Development”) scheduled to be conducted by Minpaku and Lake Biwa Museum in the period FY2015–2017. The new program reflects the present global trend calling for museums to shift their role towards achieving closer relationships with society and users, and promoting collaboration with local communities.

At the same time, importance of academic exchange between museums and/or museum specialists to connect Japan and overseas countries was recognized and emphasized. Actually some former participants came back to Minpaku as visiting researchers and some others are preparing a doctorate in Japanese universities.

New possibilities offered by the current info-age revealed highly promising for further networking and sustainable development for museums. Nowadays, it becomes easy to connect each other, inside and outside the country or region, in order to share information not only between researchers but also connecting the site people and the users in the field of museums, leading to a forum-type and worldwide database sharing.

The symposium, and as a result this volume demonstrate that, Asian countries have, at present, very active and unique museum activities based on their respective historical, cultural and social backgrounds. Each country has developed or is developing its own museology and museums, which is not a simple copy of other countries’ museology or museums. Such a tendency is not limited to Asia but can also be seen in other countries, suggesting that Minpaku’s 20 year-long effort in international cooperation and training is bearing fruit.

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