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National Museums and Other Cultures in Modern Japan

The Tokyo National Museum (Tokyo Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan; hereafter Tōhaku) sits in a recessed position of prominence at the northern-most end of Ueno Park, the nerve center of Japanese national culture. Passing Maekawa Kunio's Tokyo Metropolitan Festival Hall, Le Corbusier's National Museum of Western Art, and the National Science Museum on the right, and

Maekawa's largely subterranean Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum on the left, one comes upon a sprawling complex of five oddly contrasting buildings, which together make up Tōhaku. Josiah Conder's original main building, of 1882, was destroyed in the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923, but the French-influenced Hyōkeikan still stands to the left of the main courtyard. It was built in the first decade of the century by Conder's student, Katayama Tōkuma, in honor of the wedding of the Crown Prince, although it is not now used for exhibition. The Honkan, the "new" main building at the top of the main courtyard, by Watanabe Jin, embodies the stylistic schizophrenia of the early 1930s. The "oriental" tiled roofs sit awkwardly on top of a heavy, largely unadorned façade, and for much of its life the building has been criticized for the poor light in which it shows the National Treasures and Important Cultural Properties, which the museum holds in abundance. To its right, Taniguchi Yoshirō's 1968 Tōyōkan is a more convincing marriage of International Modernism with the Japanese past, displaying the East Asian art and antiquities of which the main building's Japanese exhibits are to be seen as the culmination. Japanese archeology, the local ground for the latter, from the Paleolithic through the eighteenth century, is housed on the first floor of the Heiseikan special exhibition hall, built in 1993 to commemorate the wedding of a later Crown Prince. Finally, in 1999, thirty years after his father's commission, Taniguchi Yoshio completed an extraordinary new building behind the Hyōkeikan to house the seventh and eighth century treasures from the Hōryūji temple near Nara, by most accounts the oldest collection in Japan, an aesthetic quintessence that establishes arche for and gives identity to the remainder of the Tōhaku collection.[1]

Together with its counterparts in Kyoto and Nara, Tokyo's predecessors as capitals of the archipelago, Tōhaku is a convincing home for the national patrimony, storing and displaying the cream of the Japanese artistic crop, together with the domestic and regional stock from which it emerged. It stands confidently alongside the national museums of other cultures, which stockpile the cultural capital with which the modern state can invest its claims of cosmopolitan significance and national distinction. Unlike its Euro-American counterparts, however, and as the above description may suggest, Tōhaku's assurance has been hard-won. The architectural miscellany gives some sense of the labor that has been required to establish its own credentials, and the awkward authority of the tale it tells about the Japanese past.

This paper tries to specify the nature of this awkwardness by comparing Tōhaku to the two other Japanese national museums that deal in culture: the National Museum of Japanese History (Kokuritsu Rekishi Minzoku Hakubutsukan, more accurately translated as the National Museum of History and Folk, hereafter Rekihaku); and the National Museum of Ethnology (Kokuritsu Minzokugaku Hakubutsukan, hereafter

Minpaku). All three are in the culture business: collecting, storing, and exhibiting artifacts (rather than specimens), and thereby producing a particular place for and representation of Japan within the story they tell about the past. This work also implies the regulation of difference, both within the nation as it is put on display, and between it and the others against which it is compared.

In what follows I sketch briefly the reasons why the three museums made the choices they did in exhibiting their permanent collections, and the consequences of these choices for their representation of both Japan and other cultures. The model at Tōhaku and Rekihaku has been historical, following the modern museology of the West, which famously subordinates space to time, reads difference as evolution, divorces art and artifact, and thereby finally complements the imperial self with a colonial other.[2] In the Japanese context, I would argue, the work has carried less conviction, albeit with no less problematic implications. At Tōhaku, Japanese art has been removed from the contexts that animated it and entombed as national treasure in an imperial mausoleum. Minpaku downplays the importance of authenticity, and advocates comparison between cultures, but insists nonetheless that the latter should be understood in isolation, as discrete, organic, and largely ahistorical entities. Rekihaku has done more to acknowledge the extent to which the Japanese past has changed over time, often as a result of continental exchange and domestic multiplicity, but continues to rehearse an irreducible essence of the Japanese folk. In all cases Japanese uniqueness is avowed, but in none is there any convincing way of bringing the story into the present.

Space does not permit a detailed anatomy of the museum collections as they exist today, nor a patient genealogy of the evolution through which they have reached this point. Instead, I will suggest why the permanent collection of each museum takes the form that it does and the consequences of that form for the objects processed thereby, highlighting the limitations imposed by official mandates and adopted models, and enabling comparison between the Japanese case and other examples. Given this presentist bias, it is also important to note how the institutions have begun to provide a space within which their own practice can be interrogated and a new museology might emerge. Various such initiatives have been apparent in recent years. I end the paper with a 1997 special exhibition at Minpaku, which emphasized the extent to which the "traditional" cultures on display in the main galleries were themselves the product of particular moments of cultural exchange. Rather than an imperial narrative that reaffirms through distancing the distinction of the modern nation, it suggested the gradual emergence of an alternative, self-referential exercise that triangulates a contingent national identity in terms of its looking at, and being looked at by, other cultures.

1. The Birth of the Museum

When Japanese observers first went to the West in the 1860s, they needed new words with which to describe the museums, exhibitions, and other institutions of visual culture that were so numerous in Europe and America. This was not because public display was unknown during the Tokugawa, or Edo, period (1600-1868).[3] The commercialization and urbanization of early modern Japan gave rise to a variety of venues wherein culture and industry were put on display, affording a claim of native precedents for later practices of exhibition.[4] Collection itself, whether of cultural artifacts or natural history, tended to be a private affair. Nonetheless, temples frequently "unveiled" their treasures to the public at *kaichō*, a useful opportunity to generate income from belief; entrepreneurs exploited the new urban demand for diversion, and often the spaces and crowds afforded by temple and shrine unveilings and festivals, to stage the miraculous and marvelous at *misemono*, literally "showing things"; and natural historians, building on Chinese traditions of medicinal herbology and their own practice of scholarly meetings, broadened their remit at *bussankai* to collect and display products (*bussan*) that might benefit the health not only of individuals but of the body politic.[5] There were obvious distinctions, however, between these indigenous practices and those of the foreign institutions. Not only were the objects on display radically different from those in Japan: the iron and steam of modern industry was immediately evident as the source of Euro-American wealth and power; oil paint and figurative sculpture suggested ways of showing and seeing that would have radical consequences for artistic practice in Japan. But the institutions themselves were unprecedented. The vast scale and universal pretensions of international exhibitions dwarfed the familiar fairs of Edo, Nagoya, and the other cities of Tokugawa Japan. Similarly, the permanence, comprehensiveness, and public nature of the museums betokened something new.

The word invented to describe the latter novelty was *hakubutsukan*, literally "hall of diverse objects." It first appeared in 1860, to describe the Patent Office in Washington, DC, in the diary of the translator for a mission dispatched by the Tokugawa government to ratify the commercial treaties between Japan and the United States.[6] Subsequent missions adopted the same designation for all kinds of museums, a usage which was standardized in 1866 with the publication of the encyclopedic *Seiyō Jijō* (Conditions in the West) by Fukuzawa Yūkichi, who thereby cemented both his own reputation and the place of museums among the categorically western things to which Japan might aspire.[7] Following the overthrow of the Tokugawa shogunate in 1868, the new Meiji government too was quick to see the potential of public exhibition.

As the Patent Office might suggest, however, art was not immediately uppermost in the newfound enthusiasm for museums. Tōhaku today dates its birth to an exhibition in 1872 at Yushima Seidō, a Confucian Shrine become educational secretariat, but this was intentionally a promiscuous jumble of old and new, natural and man-made, more similar to the earlier *bussankai* than to a modern museum. Early museum policy combined personnel, principles, and practices from Edo-period precursors, with conflicting preferences for a variety of foreign models. The personnel included Tanaka Yoshio, who had supplemented an early training in herbology and natural history with close observation of the Jardin des Plantes in Paris, as well as Machida Hisanari, who used the example of the British Museum to buttress his advocacy for the historical preservation of religious sites and artifacts, then under attack in a wave of anti-Buddhist campaigns.[8] Preservation would eventually become one of the central *raisons d'être* of Tōhaku, but in the short term both visions were quickly subordinated to the more pressing imperatives of industrial promotion, as advocated by Sano Tsunetami, who had used his earlier experience in building a modern navy for his domain as a springboard into the new government.[9]

For Sano, exhibitions and museums had a central part to play in the national pursuit of wealth and power.[10] Like Tanaka and Machida, although in a different delegation, he had visited Europe in 1867 to attend the Paris Exposition

Universelle, but the lessons he drew from the experience were somewhat different. His model was not botanical or Bloomsbury, but rather the work of industry visible at the then South Kensington Museum, today's Victoria and Albert. With this and the 1873 Vienna Welt-Ausstellung in mind, he became a fierce advocate for the transformative potential of exhibition in the drive to industrialize. At home, by "training the eye" (*ganmoku no kyō*) of an as yet unenlightened populace, industrial exhibitions and their permanent cousins would encourage the improvement of native industry and thereby promote a stream of export goods. Exhibited abroad, such goods could help correct a yawning balance of payments deficit.[11] Sano's vision was rapidly adopted by his boss, Ōkubo Toshimichi, then busily building his Home Ministry into the prime mover in industrial promotion, and ascendant in the 1870s.[12] In 1873, the nascent museum was placed under the jurisdiction of the secretariat for the Vienna exhibition and moved to Uchiyamashita-chō, close to the present-day Imperial Hotel. In 1875, the secretariat itself was wound down, and the museum transferred to the Home Ministry. The early phase of exhibition policy culminated with the first Domestic Industrial Exhibition in 1877 in Ueno Park, which was followed by a new museum building on the same site, completed in time for the Second Domestic Industrial Exhibition in 1881.[13]

It was only gradually that Tōhaku as we see it today emerged from these earlier preoccupations, through a gradual process of both ideological and institutional differentiation. The first step was the transfer of the museum into the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce in 1880, soon followed by its move to Ueno in March 1882. The transfer and the move coincided with the beginning of a reconsideration of, if not a backlash against, what was now seen as the earlier indiscriminate welcome afforded to western civilization and enlightenment, in combination with a reevaluation of things Japanese.[14] For the museum, this meant a turn away from industrial promotion and toward cultural preservation. The shift gained institutional direction through the appointment as director of Kuki Ryūichi, who had earlier earned his civilizational spurs under the tutelage of Fukuzawa. Its intellectual justification came via Kuki's close association with Ernest Fenollosa, recently arrived from Massachusetts to teach political economy and philosophy at the Imperial University, as well as his acolyte Okakura Kakuzō. Together Fenollosa and Okakura were beginning their advocacy (and acquisition) of what they identified as Japanese tradition, which they would soon turn to highly profitable account back in Boston.[15]

Although its new ministerial overlord was the heir of Ōkubo's insistence on industry, already by 1884 the museum's four main priorities were governed by culture: to preserve antiquities (aided by its right of first refusal on any temple or shrine dispositions); to encourage the progress of arts unique to Japan; to collect objects not yet represented in its collections; and to promote exchanges of objects with foreign institutions.[16] The trend was reinforced by the ongoing creation of a splendid Japanese monarchy, intended as a counterweight to the popular insurgence and constitution-making that marked the early 1880s, as well as an equivalent to the royal families and national traditions that buttressed contemporary European states and their burgeoning empires.[17] The transfer of the museum to the jurisdiction of the Imperial Household Ministry in 1886 and its renaming as the Imperial Museum (Teikoku Hakubutsukan) in 1889 effectively constituted the various objects on display as a single art lineage, identifying the cultural diversity therein as a national patrimony with which to buttress the monarchy's claims of unbroken continuity and equality on the international stage.[18]

The first stage of this redefinition culminated in 1900, with a further renaming of the institution as the Imperial Household Museum and the publication, in French, of the first history of Japanese art, as a catalogue to accompany Japan's participation in that year's Paris Exposition Universelle. The catalogue was the work of Okakura and Kuki, with the assistance of the museum staff. It built on Okakura's development over the previous decade of a periodization of Japanese art. Its canon was incarnated in the form of "national treasures," enabled by a Diet law of 1897, whose identification and research was now the museum's priority.[19]

The *Histoire de l'art du Japon* was translated into Japanese in 1901, although it took another two decades before its periodization was realized in the galleries, replacing the previous displays by genre and displacing Tōhaku's lingering pretensions to being a universal survey museum. The last link with natural history was also finally broken in the 1920s, when the destruction of all the buildings except the Hyōkeikan in the Great Kanto Earthquake provided the opportunity for both the transfer of the zoological, botanical, and mineralogical specimens to what is now the National Museum of Science and the construction of today's "new" main building.

2. The Problem with Japanese Art

What emerged from this process, however, was a very particular story of Japanese art, embodied in a museum very different from the institutions with which it might be compared. Tony Bennett has noted that, in the European context, it was possible for national museums to adopt wholesale the iconographic programs of earlier royal and aristocratic collections.[20] Given the Japanese comparison, it is possible to broaden the claim about the various elements that produced a space of representation wherein a viewer might identify with the forces of civilization. These elements included the perceived evolution of pictorial and sculptural media toward an ever more realistic depiction of the world; religious, historical, portrait, and landscape genres delineating the space and time in which, and the actors through whom, a providential destiny had been realized; and the massing of such objects in galleries, reiterating and rendering permanent their lessons. The forces of civilization thus presented, of course, were inflected through the rendering of history as a national narrative. Combined with its provision of a space of emulation, wherein hypothetically universal access afforded the possibility of social mingling and aspiration, and of regulation, whereby the bodily experience of being in the museum required the viewer to measure him or herself against the social and aesthetic models on display, the institution as a whole could function as an instrument of liberal governance, producing a voluntarily self-regulating citizenry, willing to put itself on the side of power.[21]

In late nineteenth-century Japan, however, the iconographic program itself—together with supporting media, genres, and display practice—was missing. The priority was not the production of a liberal subject, but rather the invention of a national aesthetic, through which the new state might acquire historical integrity and which might therefore support the other institutional and ideological creations underwriting its claim to a putative equality with the West.[22] "Japanese art history," therefore, as Mimi Yiengpruksawan has observed, "developed as a function of the Japanese state."[23] Okakura was central to this development, identifying the particular genius that enabled Japan both to represent Asia as quintessence (or museum) and to mark itself apart, capable of adaptation where India and China no longer were.[24] Periodization worked "to integrate stylistic and aesthetic evolution with historical development," assuming "a continuous history held in common by all cultural producers from ancient times through the present." The whole was anchored by its association with the unbroken imperial line, in whose possession a number of representative masterpieces could be found.[25] Translated into the Imperial Household Museum, the resulting history of art was realized as a series of galleries, identified by periods whose name was taken from the ruling house (some of them military rather than imperial) or its capital city.

None of this, however, had much to do with the previous practice of Japanese art. It is a commonplace that museums remove objects from the contexts within which they have been produced and consumed. In the Japanese case, however, the rupture was particularly stark. Aesthetic contemplation was hardly unknown in pre-modern Japan, but fine art as a category introduced novel distinctions, requiring a divorce between labor and appreciation.[26] Older identifications had emphasized the mastery of material, tools, and practice required to participate in a particular activity: ink and brush, wood and chisel, clay, metal, ivory, tea. (A skill once acquired might also be transferred across media. Hon'ami Kōetsu's seventeenth century retreat at Takagamine, north of Kyoto, for example, saw the collective elaboration of what became Rimpa style through and on silk, paper, ceramic, and lacquer.) Fine art, on the other hand, prompted the search for objects that could meet the representational challenge posed by European painting and sculpture, and required a divorce from other media, gradually relegated to various categories of craft.[27] The latter might well suffice to satisfy early export demand, but would soon be consigned to the indigenous pre-history of an industrial present; fine art alone could guarantee the authenticity, distinction, and therefore endurance of Japanese tradition. Until recently, the split was still visible in the main building at Tōhaku, where national time unfolded from Asuka through modern on the second floor, largely in terms of sculpture and painting, over the applied and decorative arts on the first floor below.

The break was even more startling in terms of the ways in which the museum proposed that objects now be seen. To generalize across the range of situations in which pre-Meiji Japanese "art" was acquired, used, and appreciated is quixotic at best, but some broad characterizations and preliminary distinctions are possible. At the most general level, an object was governed by considerations of context and occasion that militated against any easy translatability or permanent display. Religious artifacts, which formed the large part of the early Tōhaku collection, did not denote an invariant truth, authorized by a single godhead, but called on a manifold unseen world, anchored and choreographed through the specificity of local practice.[28] Spiritual power was frequently mediated through indigenous deities with links to the immediate environment.[29] When this was not the case, Buddhist icons did their work through configuration and siting that turned universal potential to particular ends. Temple guardians and other visible markers might indicate a transition into sacred space, but access was often regulated, visibility governed by considerations of hierarchy and calendar: some icons on permanent, but often restricted, recessed, and therefore indistinct display; some unveiled annually or even more occasionally; and the most potent never revealed. The forced separation of Shinto and Buddhism following the events of 1868 and the resulting wave of destruction visited on Buddhist artifacts enabled the classification of distinct religious traditions, prompted the cataloguing and conservation of what could now be seen as an artistic heritage under threat, and gives some indication of the temporal ruptures necessary in order to bring Tōhaku into being.[30] The insistence of Okakura and Fennollosa on seeing the Guze Kannon, until then the hidden central icon of Hōryūji temple, subsequently the guardian spirit for Okakura's identification of Japanese tradition, reveals the curatorial violation required to overcome spatial distinctions, to secure an artifact for the museum, and thereby to traduce the irreducible *genius* of a singular *locus* as the representative icon of a national tradition.[31]

A similar logic, diversity, and reticence were evident in the networks of commission, use, and exchange governing more secular objects. Here the multiplicity of contexts, practices, and artifacts refuses a full accounting. Given their status and importance in defining the art to which both Okakura and Tōhaku were dedicated, however, it is useful to note that graphic media were often designed and deployed in the service of allusion rather than representation, conjuring associations rather than identifying presence, and displayed as part of an environment in which they had no necessary priority, or even independent status.[32] A hand scroll might narrate the key scenes from a religious life or a classical tale, but would likely interleave image and text, assuming the dense layers of reference that informed both and inviting solitary or companionable un-rolling and raveling, rather than static contemplation and general access. A hanging scroll might depict mountains and water, but the landscape might well be Chinese if not imagined, and the scroll itself displayed only occasionally, subject to considerations of season, company, and mood, as well as the other objects with which, from its alcove, it was to set the scene.[33] It took somewhat longer for such artifacts to enter the galleries, thereby materializing the full range of Okakura's canon, and their transfer hardly required the salvage operation necessary for religious icons, but their conversion to the cause of representation, to establish both parity with and distinction from European models, required a similar dislocation from existing site and practice.

These initial attempts to identify, collect, and display Japanese art of course left vast numbers of Japanese artifacts unaccounted for, and therefore fertile fields for subsequent intellectuals and collectors to harvest. Wealthy industrialists around the turn of the century began to rediscover tea as an occasion for the elaboration of corporate networks and social status, assembling collections and holding salons wherein they could afford to overcome some of the divisions between fine and applied arts, observer and object that the museum had established, and objects might thereby take on a life unavailable within its walls and cases.[34] In the 1910s and 20s Yanagi Muneyoshi, the leading intellectual light of what would become the *mingei* (folkcraft) movement, identified the pre-industrial everyday lives of commoners and the objects produced for them by unknown craftsmen as the endangered source for an alternative national aesthetic.[35] In both cases, the discoveries subsequently spawned their own institutions, in private art museums and folkcraft museums throughout the archipelago, but over time the aesthetics and objects also made their way into the national collections, overlaying though never restructuring the foundational chrono- and typo-logies. Perhaps the most jarring such episode was the urgent embrace of the Japanese sword immediately following the Asia-Pacific War, in order to save it from the demilitarizing clutches of the Occupation, and its subsequent requisite transfiguration from martial signifier and family heirloom to aesthetic object and national heritage.[36]

Even as collection and display evolved, therefore, objects continued to be incorporated into collections by being detached from historical moment and local context and then classified according to the existing schema. At the most general level, museumification has produced the twin dislocations of Japanese art from its continental context and modern Japan from its own past. For the first, it is enough to underscore the extent to which the discoveries of Japanese art in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were premised on the misrecognition of regional exchange as a national past. The ceramics that formed the bulk of the European export trade during the early modern period, which excited official encouragement and Western Japonisme during the late nineteenth century, and from which Okakura and his associates therefore distinguished Japanese fine art, were the product in the most recent instance of the dragooned importation of Korean ceramic artists during Toyotomi Hideyoshi's doomed invasions of the peninsula in the late sixteenth century. The Hōryūji sculpture, on which Okakura seized as the founding moment of a distinctive Japanese aesthetic and which therefore enabled the possibility of a national history, was also, most likely, Korean.[37] The unknown craft, which Yanagi identified as the enduring soul of the

Japanese people against the finer pretensions of Japanese art, could still be seen most clearly in Japan’s colonial peripheries.[38] (In this, Yanagi was replaying the preference of Sen no Rikyū for Korean Ido rice bowls as the favored utensil for what became formalized as the tea ceremony.) Tōhaku had and has space for Asian others, as aesthetic predecessors in the national galleries devoted to Korea and China and/or archaeo-ethnological others as empire expanded.[39] But the discovery and display of Japanese art has made it hard for self and others to occupy the same historical time or gallery space.

The narrative institutionalized at Tōhaku, moreover, has had the effect of divorcing Japan’s past from its present. The institutional premises of territorial integrity and historical continuity are at odds with the wholesale transformation of artistic practice that followed the events of the middle of the nineteenth century: modern Japanese art had to wait until the 1950s for its own museum.[40] The institutional divorce of modern art from its predecessors is of course a global, rather than uniquely Japanese, phenomenon, and it is beyond the scope of this paper to explore the evolution of modern artistic practice in Japan, but the extent to which Tōhaku fails to provide a history within which modern art could take its place raises questions about its status as the authority on the Japanese past.

3. Civilization, Comparatively

The question of how to link past to present is a persistent problem also at the National Museum of Ethnology (Minpaku) and the National Museum of Japanese History (Rekihaku), both of which came into being in the wake of the economic growth and surplus of the 1950s and 60s. As postwar institutions, both make a conscious break with prewar narratives of national history and culture, shifting the emphasis from imperial continuity and elite representation to local contexts and commoner lives. Repudiating the classification and chronology embedded in the galleries of Tōhaku has enabled an exploration of the diversity within the Japanese past and some acknowledgment of the extent to which that past is itself the artifact of a larger regional history. At the same time, in both museums the pre-modern past provides the authentic ground for Japanese people and culture, against which modern experience can only be deviant and fragmentary.

Minpaku today traces its own history back to 1935, when Shibusawa Eizō and others began planning an ethnology museum. These plans came to nothing, however, and the official history begins in earnest in 1964, when five scholarly organizations joined to petition the Ministry of Education for a national ethnological research museum.[41] The driving force behind the museum, however, was Umesao Tadao, an ecological scientist turned ethnographer who in 1957 had emerged as a public intellectual with a pioneering article, “Introduction to an

Ecological View of Civilization," based on ethnological fieldwork in Central and South Asia.[42] By the mid-1960s Umesao was building on this initial statement to develop a comparative theory of civilization, and therefore a new understanding of Japan's place in world history, while simultaneously becoming one of the leading commentators on the contemporary transformation from industrial to information society (*jōhō shakai*), as well as the possible shapes of society to come. In the latter role, he was also one of a group of five intellectuals in the Kansai area (Kyoto, Osaka, and Kobe) who promoted and helped plan the Osaka Expo (World's Fair) of 1970, which would explore and promote the latter set of questions about contemporary developments. Umesao himself saw the Expo site as the ideal place for a museum of ethnology, which might materialize his understanding of the former. Umesao was the first director-general of the museum from its foundation in 1974 through its opening in 1977 to his formal retirement in 1993, and his vision of Japan in the world frames the permanent exhibition at Minpaku to this day.[43]

Umesao understands civilization as a complex formed by human beings, their material artifacts, institutions, and culture, which is determined in the first instance by the relationship between communities and their environment. Within the old world, he sees a fundamental distinction between the patterns governing the development of the civilizations of the continental empires (China, India, the Islamic world, and

Russia) on the one hand and those of Japan and Western Europe on the other. The former were exposed to waves of destruction emanating out of the dry region that cuts diagonally through Asia, Africa, and Europe, and thus their development was driven externally, making it impossible to "mature sufficiently to allow mounting internal contradictions to work themselves out through revolutionary change."[44] The latter, by contrast, were blessed by both a temperate climate and sufficient distance from the disruption and were therefore able to develop in accordance with their own internal logic, passing through the stages, such as feudalism, necessary to reach the capitalist present. Japan, therefore, was fundamentally different from its continental neighbors. While it had inherited "much from Chinese civilization… these components… were not the ones that formed the foundation of our modernization. Rather it was the special ecological environment that became the basis for the development of a civilization entirely different from the classical continental empires."[45]

This model of discrete civilizations forms the basic premise for the permanent exhibit at Minpaku, a round-the-world tour that begins in Oceania before moving through the Americas, Europe, and Africa, West, Southeast, Central and North, and East Asia, to culminate in Japan. On the ground, the geographical circuit downplays Umesao's more polemical claims about the similarities between Japan and Western Europe.

Rather than the implicit hierarchy of Tōhaku, the museum makes an explicit attempt to treat civilizations equally, enabling a comparative perspective between artifacts. The inclusion of the developed world and, more pointedly, Japan itself makes a striking difference from most other ethnological collections.[46] The same leveling impulse extends to the artifacts themselves. From the start, Umesao was insistent on an omnivorous collection policy, arguing that in order to present a thorough account of everyday life objects should be representative rather than quintessential, "trash" rather than "treasures."[47] The exhibits for each region thus combine rural and urban, old and new, rather than privileging a particular way of life as a normative ideal.

Capacious as it is, however, the exhibit as a whole also places severe restrictions on the ways of seeing the artifacts on display. The model allows for variation within a region, grouping similar tools together so that visitors can form an image of the diversity within the whole.[48] But the whole is insisted on, downplaying both exchange across space and change over time in favor of a timeless cultural integrity. Early migration and influence between regions is acknowledged, but ongoing relationships are more difficult to see. The museum's acquisitions are restricted to objects pre-dating the introduction of plastics, but in effect the world on display is pre-industrial. As Yoshida Kenji, one of Minpaku's researchers, has noted,

> the exhibits emphasize the individual, separate nature of regional cultures and their own, unique values, embodying the cultural relativism advocated by cultural anthropology from the beginning of the twentieth century… [but also] marked by [its] characteristics and problems. One of the problems of the Minpaku collection is that by looking for characteristics specific to regional cultures, and so tending to collect artifacts used in "traditional" life, until very recently there have been no collections or exhibitions of contemporary objects, which have been created with advancing globalization. Especially in the permanent exhibition, created when Minpaku opened, this results in a portrayal of the cultures of the various peoples of the world as if they were unchanging and static.[49]

Given these premises, recent transformations can only be seen as depredation, the civilizations on display under threat. "The nomadic way of life is slowly dying out because the conditions supporting it have disappeared."[50] In the Japanese case, "many objects associated with traditional… lifestyles have been disappearing in the last few years." The museum insists, however, that they "can still be found on the fringes of contemporary life," were used "until quite recently… on an everyday basis," and thus with careful discernment "we can appreciate underlying motifs in Japanese culture that are difficult to perceive in modern society."[51] In the absence of a more explicit acknowledgment of how the cultures on display are themselves the product of particular circumstances, the reasons for this difficulty and, more broadly, the relationship between culture and history must remain obscure. As at Tōhaku, although for different reasons, there is no way in the permanent collection of bringing the story up to the present.

4. Fragmented Folk

In comparison to art and ethnology, history took longer to put on display. Rekihaku finally opened in 1983, thirty years after an initial petition by three of the five organizations that would later petition for a separate ethnology museum. It was only in 1966, however, that the cabinet accepted a proposal to establish a museum of history and ethnology, as one of a number of projects commemorating the one-hundredth anniversary of the Meiji Ishin. Even then, the project required over fifteen years of planning, a large part of which was taken up by a debate over the basic plan for the permanent exhibits. The first plan had emphasized a chronological exposition of Japanese history, unfolding the story of the nation through the ages and complementing it with sub-exhibits on particular themes, ethnological exhibits of traditional lifeways, archaeological displays, and outdoor exhibits of traditional housing and the like. By the end of 1978, however, this plan had given way to a rather different model. Rather than a textbook narrative, the museum would stage a series of themes, chosen from subjects of current research and ongoing debate among historians, which would enable visitors to understand the multiple perspectives available on the past and the open-ended nature of our relationship to it.

Throughout the museum, the emphasis was to be on *minshū seikatsu-shi* (literally, the history of the everyday life of the people), which would both be easier to display through objects than political or intellectual history and presumably have greater appeal to the public. The exposition of these themes was to be explicitly interdisciplinary, not only incorporating the findings but also respecting the distinct methodologies of archaeology, ethnology, and other disciplines. The choice and development of themes was allocated to project teams, to include both museum staff and external specialists. The first themes to emerge from this process included early state formation, the question of Japanese feudalism, and the like, but also laid heavy emphasis on commoner life and culture, for example counterposing peasant movements to the *daimyō* (military overlords) who are the usual staple of fifteenth and sixteenth century political history.[52]

The choice of approach and themes needs to be understood in the context of broader developments within Japanese history at the time. Both conservative and progressive historians in the postwar period agreed on the need to look beyond the “dark valley" of the 1930s and excavate a viable national past on which to build a reformed present. For both, the Meiji period, following the arrival of the West in 1853 and the fall of the Tokugawa shogunate in 1868, was the starting-point for such a recovery. (Hence the one-hundredth anniversary of the inauguration of the modern state was not the incidental occasion but the genetic endowment of the museum.) But they differed on its significance. While conservative commentators extolled Meiji for its achievements of economic modernization and national autonomy (downplaying for the most part the colonial empire to which these led), one group of progressive historians sought in Meiji the last gasp of popular resistance to the depredations of industrial capitalism and the impositions of an authoritarian state.[53] These were the chroniclers of *minshūshi* (people's history), led by Irokawa Daikichi.[54]

Following the lead of Yanagita Kunio and other ethnologists in the early twentieth century, the *minshūshi* writers sought traces of what they believed to be an authentic, but now vanished, Japan in the communal life of pre-modern communities and the sensibility and self-expression to which these gave rise. For Irokawa, this commoner voice had found its last expression in the freedom and popular rights movement (*jiyū minken undō*) of the late 1870s and early 1880s, which had demanded a new constitution based on popular sovereignty and universal suffrage. In this view, the suppression of this movement by the Meiji state had broken Japan's connection with a living past and thereby enabled the deviation toward authoritarianism, empire, and finally war. And the recovery of these voices, promising the restoration of an indigenous democratic tradition, found expression at Rekihaku. Irokawa served as the main academic consultant for the museum's initial plans, and the assumptions of *minshūshi* continue to provide the broad parameters for the permanent exhibits.

This more populist vision enabled a more complex narrative of the Japanese past than that visible at Tōhaku. Where the latter insists on the unilinear unfolding of an original endowment, Rekihaku proposes a polyphonal, often conflictual vision. Where art tends to divide by hierarchy and classification, separating devotional icon from vernacular screen from military uniform despite their common origins in the same historical time, space, and perhaps also class, history would rather establish links, suggesting relationships between apparently discrete material objects. The basic exhibition policy at Rekihaku, moreover, has allowed the emphasis within this dialectical view of the past to shift, a potential that has been realized in the years since the museum was established. Irokawa's work on people's history has been supplemented by others, perhaps most noticeably Amino Yoshihiko, whose account of the non-agrarian population of medieval Japan has broadened into a wholesale revision of the standard narratives of Japanese history; there is now a broad recognition of the ways in which Japan as a nation is itself an artifact of the modern state system and the pre-modern archipelago was defined through its maritime interactions with the continent.[55]

The permanent exhibition today repeatedly connects turning points within the national past to broader regional influences. Thus the arrival of rice from China nearly 2000 years ago prompted a transformation toward more complex agricultural communities and the emergence of the social hierarchies and religious practices that preceded the formation of the early state. That Yamato State in turn depended heavily on continental imports, and the intermediation of maritime communities between Japan and Korea, in establishing its own hegemony. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Chinese imports of technology and printing, among many other goods, enabled a revolution in architectural practice and intellectual life, a trade that continued throughout the Edo period, when Japan used to be thought of as "closed." Similarly, the most recent special exhibition, "Interaction in the Medieval East Asian Sea" insists that "since ancient times, the seas of Asia have linked one region with another and, as sites for the mutual exchange of people, objects, culture and technology, they became a cradle of history, serving as a driving force for the reforms that brought new eras." The point was illustrated with screens depicting the various activities associated with this trade, as well as the ceramics, some of them salvaged from wrecks, that formed the bulk of the trade and provided the requisite materials for the emerging tea culture. The exhibition suggests that the Portuguese and other Europeans arrived in the sixteenth century as initially marginal figures in what was already a thriving regional market, and it was only after this encounter that interchanges "gradually became confined to a national framework." The somewhat pointed moral of the story is therefore that "the maritime regions of East Asia during the Middle Ages… together formed a world that was not connected by the usual confluence of national borders and countries."[56]

At the same time, the arguments and assumptions that have enabled the open-ended exploration of history beyond the nation in the pre-modern world have also stymied a convincing engagement with the connections between it and the modern period, and the dynamics of the latter. The first three galleries of the permanent exhibition, devoted to the pre-modern, culminate in a fourth exploring the world of Japanese folk custom and belief, an acknowledgment of the influence of ethnology driving both the initial calls for the museum and the premises of people's history itself. But here history comes to a halt. The archipelago is disaggregated into different environments, within which tradition is seen to endure without any exploration of why or how. In the urban landscape, people seek consolation from unspecified "anxieties and conflicts" through religious beliefs and practices that "may seem old-fashioned at first glance… but quietly live on," echoing Irokawa's search for local practice that can endure unchanged through modern transformations. Agricultural, mountain, and fishing villages are characterized by enduring symbioses between human community and natural environment, without any acknowledgment of how both, and the relationship between them, have been transformed in the recent past, through industrialization, depopulation, and environmental degradation, for example.[57] Ethnology here operates as reassurance and prophylactic against the corrosions of time, which must come after cultural authenticity has been established.[58]

In accounting for the modern, however, the insistence by Irokawa and others that the imperatives of industry and empire have distorted the history of people's everyday lives, translates into a fragmented presentation, with agency drained from the archipelago and developments driven by influences from an unspecified elsewhere. The fifth and final gallery opens with the "civilization and enlightenment" of the late nineteenth century, which was promoted by the government, but also encouraged the commoners in the demand for rights; the installation, however, ignores the way in which the movement was shaped by both state and subjects, rather exploring its effects through the uneven transformation of commoner lives. Industrialization is seen through the eyes of a female employee, the development of Hokkaido is acknowledged to have caused suffering to the Ainu, and the mass culture of the 1920s is juxtaposed to the welfare problems exposed by the Great Kanto Earthquake. There is no exploration of how these transformations are connected, however, nor any mention of how modernization proceeded and modernity was forged through both industry and empire, domestic transformation and colonial advance. Nor, finally, is there any suggestion of what followed the first talkies, how the story might come up to the present. At the National Museum, Japanese history stops with the birth of popular entertainment in the 1920s in Café Ultra, a cabaret in Asakusa, the traditional and modern center of commoner Tokyo.[59]

5. Images of Other Cultures

It would be too easy, and misleading, to leave the story there. It should be no surprise to learn that the permanent collections of national museums still bear the traces of their nineteenth- or twentieth-century governing assumptions and that history therefore comes up short. As noteworthy is the extent to which the museums have recently begun to provide space within which to develop a very different understanding of self and other, past and present, as they question the premises of their own operation and formulate the basis of a quite new and different museology. A recent reinstallation in the main building at Tōhaku has begun to overcome the divorce between fine and other arts, to reintroduce ethnographic materials, and to explore the broader social fields within which art history itself emerged. Special exhibitions are complemented at Rekihaku with an active lecture and conference schedule. A 2002 forum on “The Present and Future of History Museums” included presentations on the politics of history exhibits and “displaying the present,” a report on an exhibit in a city museum of the standard two room home on a postwar housing estate. There is no space to explore the full range of initiatives here, but to give some sense of the shifts underway, let me end by introducing the special exhibition held at Minpaku in from September 1997 to January 1998 to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of its opening.

The exhibition was a distinctive three-way collaboration between Minpaku, the Setagaya Art Museum (a contemporary art museum in Tokyo, to which the exhibition subsequently transferred), and the British Museum in London. It aimed to place Japan in comparative perspective with Africa and Oceania, and so destabilize the perspective from metropolis outwards (whether Japanese or British), as well as the primordial distinction between high (civilized) art and ethnographic (primitive) object, on which the division of labor and various narratives of all the national museums in part rest. The exhibition began with a time tunnel, of thirty sets of three photographs, tracing a temporal regression from contemporary rush hours in Kyoto, Fiji, and Ghana to the moment at the turn of the last century when people throughout the world seem to have begun simultaneously to brandish umbrellas. The first room then took up the story by recreating the way in which the three regions were displayed in the British Museum circa 1910, plunging the visitor back into a world of overflowing exhibit cases, minimal labeling, and the catholic collection habits of late Edwardian Britons. Benin bronzes were the property of ethnographic collections but, importantly, Japanese art had already been divorced from arms and armor, endorsing Okakura's work to establish equivalency. The second room reversed the gaze, showing how the three "traditional" cultures had incorporated elements of Western culture into their own cultural practices, whether in Fante battle standards in Ghana, coconut palm copies of elaborate English hats in Polynesia, or frock coats in early Meiji. The third room marked a gradual differentiation between the three cases, noting how the Western way of seeing Africa and Oceania was gradually adopted within Japan, as the latter acquired its own industry and empire. The easy separation of modern self from still primitive other was brought up short, however, in the final room, which emphasized again the simultaneity of and active translation between contemporary cultures. All-in-one kiosks from a Japanese rail station, the London Underground, Accra, and New Guinea underlined the extent to which convenience is a global good. African coffins, New Guinea battle shields, Japanese puri-kura, and contemporary Western art revealed the extent to which any cultural production relies on transgressing the boundaries between self and other, art and ethnography.

One exhibition alone was of course not enough to break down these walls. The exhibition does, however, suggest a way out of the double bind in which history has found itself, in Japan and elsewhere. By exploring, in the words of its curator, how "the West, Africa and Oceania, and Japan have looked at each other during the modern age" and investigating "the traces left by these intersecting gazes in the form of objects and photographs," the exhibition suggested not only the extent to which these identities have historically been constituted by difference, however much a national history might wish to pretend otherwise, but that collapsing the distinction between art and other objects might be one way to begin rewriting a history that allows us to see this.[60] This kind of self-estrangement, through a familiarization with difference, is perhaps work for national museums in the years to come.

Thanks to Dan Sherman for unflagging encouragement and meticulous editing. Thanks to Tim Clark, Sarah Teasley, and Alice Tseng for close reading and excellent suggestions. Following Japanese usage, Japanese names are written with the family name first, followed by the given name, thus Taniguchi Yoshio rather than Yoshio Taniguchi.

[1] For introductions to Tōhaku, see Ōsumi Akiko, "Tokyo Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan Hyaku-Ni-Jū nen no Rekishi," *Gekkan Bunkazai* 349 (1992): 6-13 (hereafter "Rekishi); Ōsumi Akiko, "Tokyo National Museum," in *Nihonga, Transcending the Past: Japanese-Style Painting 1868-1968*, ed. Ellen P.

Conant (Saint Louis, Miss.: Saint Louis Art Museum, 1995), 90-91; and, of course, the museum's newly redesigned website, Tokyo National Museum, "Museum Map," http://www.tnm.go.jp/en/guide/map/index.html and "History of the Tokyo National Museum," http://www.tnm.go.jp/en/history/12.html (both accessed 1 July 2004).

[2] The model rests therefore on a division of cultural labor. Art museums have traditionally undertaken a self-description of Western civilization, adumbrating universal truths through an evolutionary account of individual genius. Natural history, ethnology, and other "evolutionary" museums, on the other hand, were charged with the care of those objects deemed to be outside history, the products of unindividuated groups and the domain of synchronic sciences. Between them they could thereby provide a space of representation for the imperial state and of emulation for its national subjects. The two sides of Central Park, metropolitan identity marked off against imperial ethnography, thus neatly reveal the two-sided coin of the modern museological project. Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995) and *Pasts Beyond Memory: Evolution, Museums, Colonialism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004).

[3] The Tokugawa period takes its name from the ruling family of the last of three *bakufu* ("tent government"), in English shogunates (from the military title of the ruler), which governed Japan from the late 12th century. Edo, present-day Tokyo, was initially their military headquarters, and became the largest city in the world by 1700. The Tokugawa family, *bakufu*, and period were preceded by the Kamakura (1185-1333), named after the town that was the headquarters for the shogunate headed by the Minamoto house, and the Muromachi (1336-1573), named after a southern part of Kyoto, the emperor's capital, that was the headquarters for the Ashikaga shogunate. Following the fall of the Tokugawa and the revolution that "restored" monarchical rule, modern time was told and the past is organized by reign,

hence Meiji (1868-1912), Taishō (1912-26), Shōwa (1926-89), and Heisei (1989-present).

[4] For example, Shiina Noritaka, *Zukai Hakurankaishi* (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 2000), 17-40; Umesao Tadao, "Keynote Address: The Comparative Study of Collection and Representation," in *Japanese Civilization in the Modern World, XVII, Collection and Representation*, ed. Tadao Umesao, Angus Lockyer, and Kenji Yoshida (Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology, Senri Ethnological Studies 54, 2001), 1-9.

[5] Peter Kornicki, "Public Display and Changing Values: Early Meiji Exhibitions and Their Precursors," *Monumenta Nipponica* 49.2 (1994): 167-96. For the links between *kaichō* and *misemono*: Nam-Lin Hur, *Prayer and Play in Late Tokugawa Japan: Asakusa Sensoji and Edo Society* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000). For *misemono*, Andrew L. Markus, "The Carnival of Edo: *Misemono* Spectacles from Contemporary Accounts," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 45.2 (1985), 499-541.

[6] Shiina, *Zukai Hakurankaishi*, 41; Umesao, "Keynote Address," 9.

[7] *Fukuzawa Yūkichi Zenshû* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1958), vol. 1, 26–27. On Fukuzawa, see Carmen Blacker, *The Japanese Enlightenment: A Study of the Writings of Fukuzawa Yukichi* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1964).

[8] For Tanaka, see Angus Lockyer, *Japan at the Exhibition, 1867-1970* (Ph.D. thesis, Stanford University, 2000), 79-82, and Murasawa Takeo, *Kindai Nihon o kizuita Tanaka Yoshio to Yoshikado* (Tokyo: Tanaka Yoshio Yoshikado Kenshôkai, 1978).

[9] For Sano, see Yoshikawa Ryuko, *Nisseki no Sōshisha Sano Tsunetami* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2001).

[10] In the 1870s, the tasks confronting the still unformed state were often neatly summarized in a series of four-character syllogisms. In order to escape the semi-colonial fate by then overtaking China, Japan would have to become a "rich country, with a strong army" (*fukoku kyōhei*). In order to

generate the requisite riches, the government would have to "increase production and promote industry" (*shokusan kōgyō*). And in order to accomplish any of this, the country as a whole would have to embrace what is usually translated as "civilization and enlightenment" (*bunmei kaika*), but which implied the wholesale rejection of the now discredited customs and practices of the past, in favor of opening what in retrospect seemed to have been a closed country to the improving influence of the West.

[11] Lockyer, *Japan at the Exhibition*, 90-95.

[12] For Ōkubo, see Lockyer, *Japan at the Exhbition*, 95-98, and Sasaki Suguru, "Bunmei kaika no seiji shidō: Ōkubo Toshimichi o chūshin ni," in Hayashiya Tatsusaburō, ed., *Bunmei Kaika no Kenkyū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1979), 78-111.

[13] Ōsumi, "Rekishi" and "Tokyo National Museum."

[14] For the general context here, see Kenneth B. Pyle, *The New Generation in Meiji Japan: Problems of Cultural Identity, 1885-1895* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969).

[15] For Kuki, see Tsukasa Ryōichi, *Baron Kuki Ryūichi* (Kobe: Kobe Shinbun Shuppan Sentaa, 2003); for Okakura, Kakuzo Okakura, *The Ideals of the East: The Spirit of Japanese Art* (Rutland, VT: Tuttle, 1970), F.G. Notehelfer, "On Idealism and Realism in the Thought of Okakura Tenshin," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 16.2 (1990), 309-55, and Victoria Weston, *Japanese Painting and National Identity: Okakura Tenshin and his Circle* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Centre for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2004); and for Okakura and Fenollosa, Stefan Tanaka, "Imaging History: Inscribing Belief in the Nation," *Journal of Asian Studies*, 53.1 (1994), 24-44, and Karatani Kōjin, "Japan as Museum: Okakura Tenshin and Ernest Fenollosa," in *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky*, ed. Alexandra Munroe (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1996), 33-39.

[16] Shiina, *Zukai Hakurankaishi*, 88.

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[17] Takashi Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

[18] Ōsumi, "Rekishi" and "Tokyo National Museum." Thanks to Alice Tseng for clarifying the significance of developments in the 1880s.

[19] Mimi Yiengpruksawan, "Japanese Art History 2001: The State and Stakes of the Research," *Art Bulletin*, 83.1 (2001), 114

[20] Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, 36.

[21] Ibid., 24.

[22] For the broader project, see among many others Marius B. Jansen and Gilbert Rozman, *Japan in Transition: From Tokugawa to Meiji* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986).

[23] Yiengpruksawan, "Japanese Art History 2001," 114.

[24] For Japan as museum, see Karatani, "Japan as Museum," and Stefan Tanaka, *New Times in Modern Japan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 168-92.

[25] Yiengpruksawan, "Japanese Art History 2001," 114.

[26] Kitazawa Noriaki, *Me no Shinden* (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1989); Kinoshita Naoyuki, *Bijutsu to iu Misemono: Aburae Chaya no Jidai* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1993); and Satō Dōshin, *'Nihon Bijutsu' Tanjō: Kindai Nihon no 'Kotoba' to Senryaku* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1996). Thanks to Tim Clark for pointing out that Japanese art did not require the importation of Western concepts in order to exist, but rather that the neologisms encouraged a gradual restructuring, perhaps even a simplifying, of what was already a highly sophisticated aesthetic discourse and practice.

[27] Sato Dōshin, *Meiji Kokka to Kindai Bijutsu: Bi no Seijigaku* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1999).

[28] For two examples, see Donald F. McCallum, *Zenkōkji and its Icon: A Study of Medieval Japanese Religious Art* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994); and Mimi Hall Yiengpruksawan, *Hiraizumi: Buddhist Art and*

Regional Politics in Twelfth-Century Japan (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998).

[29] For a recent introduction to the phenomenon, see Mark Teeuwen and Fabio Ramelli, eds., *Buddhas and Kamis in Japan: Honji Suijaku as a Combinatory Paradigm* (London: Routledge, 2003).

[30] For the separation and the consequences of its aftermath for Buddhism, see James Ketelaar, *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan: Buddhism and its Persecution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990); for Shinto, Helen Hardacre, *Shinto and the State, 1868-1988* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989).

[31] Tanaka, "Imaging History," 24-25. At the same time, the fragility of many of the artifacts placed some constraints on their mobility. Thanks to Alice Tseng for pointing out that the Imperial Museums in Kyoto and Nara were built in the 1890s in order to alleviate the need to take icons all the way to Tokyo.

[32] For the variety of ways in which allusion was mobilized in early modern visual media, see Alfred Haft, *A Study of Mitate in the Edo Period* (Ph.D. thesis: SOAS, University of London, 2005).

[33] For a short introduction to the moment in the fifteenth century when this aesthetic complex crystallized, see Donald Keene, *Yoshimasa and the Silver Pavilion: The Creation of the Soul of Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

[34] Kumakura Isao, "The Tea Ceremony and Collection: The Prehistory of Private Art Museums," in *Japanese Civilization*, ed. Umesao et al.; Christine Guth, *Art, Tea, and Industry: Masuda Takashi and the Mitsui Circle* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

[35] Soetsu Yanagi, *The Unknown Craftsman: A Japanese Insight into Beauty* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1972); Lisbeth Kim Brandt, *The Folk-Craft Movement in Early Showa Japan, 1925-1945* (Ph.D. thesis: Columbia University, 1996); and Yuko Kikuchi, *Japanese Modernisation and Mingei Theory: Cultural*

Nationalism and Oriental Orientalism (London and New York: Routledge, 2004). Yanagi.

[36] Kinoshita Naoyuki, "From Weapon to Work of Art: 'Sword Hunts' in Modern Japan," in *Japanese Civilization*, ed. Umesao et al.

[37] Tanaka, "Imaging History."

[38] Brandt, *Folk-Craft Movement.*

[39] Ainu and Ryukyuan materials were part of the collection from the 1870s, Taiwanese were added from the 1890s, ancient Korean and Chinese expanded following the First World War, and Micronesian artifacts formed the centerpiece of a "Southern Culture Exhibition" in the Hyōkeikan in 1942, following the transfer of the permanent exhibition to the new main building. Yoshida Kenji, "'Tōhaku' and 'Minpaku' within the History of Modern Japanese Civilization: Museum Collections in Modern Japan," in *Japanese Civilization*, ed. Umesao et al.

[40] "The History of The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo," http://www.momat.go.jp/english/history.html (accessed 2 July 2004).

[41] The organizations were the Folklore Society of Japan, the Japanese Association of Ethnology, the Anthropological Society of Nippon, the Japanese Society of Ethnology (from 2004 the Japanese Society of Cultural Anthropology), and the Japanese Archaeological Association. The first three had also been the petitioners in 1953 for what would eventually become Rekihaku. National Museum of Ethnology, *Survey and Guide 2004-2005,* http://www.minpaku.ac.jp/english/aboutus/2004_all.pdf (accessed 4 July 2004), 3.

[42] Already in 1964, the article had been chosen as one of the 18 most "influential in shaping Japan's postwar thought" by the *Chūō Kōron*, perhaps the leading public opinion journal, in whose pages it had admittedly first appeared. By 1996, the 1967 book that followed the original article came fourth in a survey of 58 leading intellectuals of the ten best books of any genre published in the 20th century, ahead of texts by Doi Takeo and Nakane

Chie that are much better known in the West. The 1967 book has now been translated into English as *An Ecological View of History: Japanese Civilization in World Context* (Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2003), from the preface to which this is drawn, vii.

[43] Umesao's own account of the creation of the museum can be found in a series of interviews, collected as Umesao Tadao, *Minpaku Tanjō* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1978).

[44] Umesao, *Ecological View*, 56.

[45] Ibid, 166-7. Umesao's development of these ideas began from the question of Japanese modernization, which preoccupied intellectual debate at the time. Unlike the dominant progressive position, however, which he saw as overly preoccupied with the recent wartime past and in thrall to Marxist analysis, he did not assume that modernization had failed, due to differences between Japan and Western Europe, but rather that it had succeeded, precisely because of the similarities between his two old world zones.

[46] "All cultures are treated equally by the museum, since our policy is to regard cultural differences as exemplifying the wealth of cultural diversity rather than to judge them in terms of superiority or inferiority." "An Introduction to the Exhibits," in National Museum of Ethnology, ed., *Guide to the National Museum of Ethnology* (Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology, 1991).

[47] Yoshida Kenji, "'Tōhaku' and 'Minpaku'."

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

[50] National Museum of Ethnology, *Guide*, 153.

[51] Ibid., 170.

[52] Kokuritsu Rekishi Minzoku Hakubutsukan, *Kokuritsu Rekishi Minzoku Hakubutsukan Jūnen-shi* (Sakura: Kokuritsu Rekishi Minzoku Hakubutsukan, 1991), 127-33. The full list of themes was as follows: in the ancient

period, "the appearance of the Japanese people," "the emergence and development of farming," "*kofun* and their society" (ancient tombs, dating from the end of the 3rd to the early 6th century), "the *ritsuryō* state" (the earliest state in the archipelago, from the mid-7th to the 10th century), and "court culture"; in the medieval period, "east and west Japan," "popular life and culture," "*daimyō* (military overlords) and *ikki* (peasant movements)," and "Japan in the age of exploration"; and in the early modern period, "the Japanese feudal system," "everyday life in village society," "the formation of cities," and "foundations for modernity: the establishment of a popular cultural sphere." Ibid.

[53] For a general overview of postwar historiography, see Carol Gluck, "The Past in the Present," in *Postwar Japan as History*, ed. Andrew Gordon (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), 64-95.

[54] For introductions to *minshūshi*, see Carol Gluck, "The People in History," Journal of Asian Studies, vol. 38, no. 1 (Nov. 1978), 25-50, and Takashi Fujitani, "Minshushi as Critique of Orientalist Knowledges, *Positions*, vol. 6, no. 2 (Fall 1998), 303-322. Two works by Irokawa work have been translated into English: *The Culture of the Meiji Period*, trans. Marius B. Jansen (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), dealing with the freedom and popular rights' movement and the establishment of the emperor system; and *The Age of Hirohito: In Search of Modern Japan*, trans. Mikiso Hane and John Urda (New York: Free Press, 1995).

[55] See Amino Yoshihiko, "Emperor, Rice, and Commoners," in Donald Denoon, Mark Hudson, Gavan McCormack, and Tessa Morris- Suzuki, eds., *Multicultural Japan: Palaeolithic to Postmodern* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 235-45, and Amino Yoshihiko, "Deconstructing `Japan'," *East Asian History* 3 (June 1992), 121-42.

[56] National Museum of Japanese History, "Special Exhibition. The Interaction in Medieval East Asian Sea: Maritime Commerce, Ports, and

Sunken Ships," http://www.rekihaku.ac.jp/e_news/index91/index.html (accessed 3 July 2004).

[57] National Museum of Japanese History, "Gallery 4: The World of Japanese Folk Customs and Beliefs," http://www.rekihaku.ac.jp/e_zyoosetu/no4/index.html (accessed 3 July 2004).

[58] For a parallel case, see Daniel J. Sherman, "'Peoples Ethnographic': Objects, Museums, and the Colonial Inheritance of French Ethnography," *French Historical Studies* 27.3 (2004), 669-703.

[59] National Museum of Japanese History, "Gallery 5," http://www.rekihaku.ac.jp/e_zyoosetu/no5/index.html (accessed 3 July 2004). For a fictional introduction to the Asakusa of the 1920s, see Yasunari Kawabata, *The Scarlet Gang of Asakusa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005). For the area's Tokugawa-period history, Nam-Lin Hur, *Prayer and Play in Late Tokugawa Japan: Asakusa Sensōji and Edo Society* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000).

[60] Kenji Yoshida, "'Images of Other Cultures' in Museums," in *Ibunka e no Manazashi: Dai-Ei Hakubutsukan to Kokuritsu Minzokugaku Hakubutsukan no Korekushon kara*, ed. Kenji Yoshida and John Mack (Tokyo: NHK Saabisu Sentaa, 1997), 42.