

Partnership between the Museum and Society

The Museum has been working to build networks to ensure the more systematic and viable use of cultural resources through academic collaboration with museums and universities, both in Japan and overseas. The Museum is also promoting various projects and activities that benefit local communities and international society, in cooperation with many organizations.

Conduct of *Kamuynomi* and Craftsmanship Training at the Ainu Association of Hokkaido

The Museum is carrying out two projects under an agreement with the Hokkaido Ainu Association. One is an implementation of the *Kamuynomi* rite. *Kamuynomi* is an Aynu (Ainu) word meaning “prayer to the gods.”

By implementing the *Kamuynomi* rite, the Museum aims to ensure proper storage of its Aynu collection and handing down of this traditional rite to future generations. In the past, this rite was privately performed by the late Mr. Kayano Shigeru (former director of the Nibutani Ainu Museum). From 2007, branches of the Utari Association (currently the Ainu Association) gave public performances of ancient Aynu dance together with the *Kamuynomi* prayer ceremony, and we received cooperation from the Association’s Kushiro Branch in 2009. The other project is to accept traditional artisans sent by the Ainu Association, which will help the Museum to further improve its academic research and collection on Aynu culture, and also promote the cultural development of Aynu people.



The *Kamuynomi* rite

Music Day at Minpaku

World Music Day, a festival which began in France to celebrate the summer solstice with a musical performance, was introduced in Japan in 2002. On this day, various musical events are held nationwide. The Museum, in support of the event, has been making its space available for concerts to members of the public who enjoy music since 2003. During AY2009, 15 groups and individuals gave musical performances using various instruments.

Min-Pack

In order to contribute to a better understanding of our research, the Museum has developed a learning-kit for children, called Min-Pack. It is rented to schools and other educational institutions. Min-Pack is a learning kit carried in a suitcase that contains a variety of materials including clothes, musical instruments, everyday commodities, and children’s learning aids of the world’s countries and regions. 19 packs and 10 types are now available.



Min-Pack “Meeting Aynu Culture”

As of April 2009, the following ten types are available:

- Living in the Extreme North: Anoraks and Duffle Coats from the Inuit in Canada
 - Treasure Box of the Andes: The Festivals and Life of the Peruvian Southern Highlands
 - Understanding Javanese Culture through Wearing their Costumes: *Salun* and *Kain*
 - Islam and Life of the Arab World
 - School Life in Bhutan
 - Seoul Style: A Day in the Life of Children in Seoul
 - Indian Costumes: Saris and Kurtas
 - Bricolage Art
 - The Arabian Nights
 - Meeting Aynu Culture
- Number of loans in 2009: 208 in total

Museum-School Partnership Program

The Museum offers “Guidance for Teachers” to introduce tools that can be effectively used in preparing for a tour of the Museum and in learning about the Museum before and after the tour, with a view to encouraging teachers to use the Museum as part of school education. The Museum also provided opportunities for a “Work Experience Program” to junior-high school students, and 13 participants were accepted during 2009.

Museum-School Partnership Workshop for Teachers

Based on case studies of educational activities that have used the Museum’s exhibits or other resources, this workshop for teachers provides ideas and insights into how to build collaborations between museums and schools.

In 2009, the workshop was offered on August 4, and 122 teachers (mainly from elementary schools) attended. The workshop has already achieved practical outcomes. For example, teachers who attended the workshop are willing to use the Museum in their social science classes. The workshop this year is also scheduled in the summer vacation time, coordinated with other educational institute schedules.

Volunteer activities

Minpaku Museum Partners (MMP) is a group of volunteers established in September 2004, to assist the Museum in the planning and implementation of its activities. MMP members work closely with staff of the Museum to show visually-impaired persons around the exhibitions, plan and implement special holiday events, and undertake a wide range of activities.

Another group of volunteers, the Earth’s Story-telling Village, was formed in October 2005, inspired by the “West African Story-telling Village,” a special exhibition held at the Museum in 2003. This group plays African musical instruments and tells folktales not only at the Museum, but also at children’s centers, elementary schools, and children’s welfare facilities in the vicinity.