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国立民族学博物館学術情報リポジトリ National Museum of Ethnology

Exhibiting European Cultures in the National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka

メタデータ	言語: eng 出版者: 公開日: 2014-05-13 キーワード (Ja): キーワード (En): 作成者: 森, 明子 メールアドレス: 所属:
URL	https://doi.org/10.15021/00003819

Exhibiting European Cultures in the National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka

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国立民族学博物館のヨーロッパ文化展示

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Starting from the presupposition that an exhibition at an ethnological museum is created from the relationships of three parties (the exhibits, museum visitors, and the researchers), in this paper, I discuss the creation of an exhibition focusing on the role of the researcher as a mediator between the other two cultures. I turn to the Europe exhibition at the National Museum of Ethnology (Minpaku), which opened in 2012, to describe the process of planning and creating an exhibition. Through this discussion, I consider the role of the ethnological museum in the contemporary world, and its part in transmitting anthropological knowledge to museum visitors. In the process of doing so, I will highlight the mission of Minpaku as an organization with a dual role; it acts as an ethnological museum and an anthropological research institute. Throughout this discussion, questions related to regional cultures and the nature of cultural encounters emerge anew to be explored. This paper is a revision of an original paper for the symposium 'Exhibiting Cultures: Comparative Perspectives from Japan and Europe'.

民族学博物館の展示は、三者（展示、来館者、研究者）の相互関係からつくられるという考えから出発し、ここでは媒介者としての研究者の役割に焦点をあてて、展示制作について論じる。展示の企画から制作の過程を描くにあたって、2012年に公開された国立民族学博物館のヨーロッパ展示をとりあげる。この議論を通して、現代世界における民族学博物館の役割や、人類学の知識を来館者にどう伝えるべきかについて検討する。この検討をおこなうなかで、人類学の専門研究機関であると同時に民族学博物館という二つの役割をもつ国立民

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Key Words : ethnographic exhibition, Europe, regional culture, everyday life, industrialisation
キーワード : 民族誌展示, ヨーロッパ, 地域文化, 日常生活, 産業化

族学博物館の使命が前景化する。全体を通じた議論から、地域の文化と、地域を超えた文化の出会いを、どう配置するべきか、という課題があらわれてくる。本稿は、国際シンポジウム「文化を展示すること—日本とヨーロッパの遠近法を考える」で発表した論文に加筆したものである。

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1 About the museum

This paper discusses exhibitions of European cultures in Japan, focusing on the ‘Europe’ exhibition at the National Museum of Ethnology (Minpaku), which opened in March 2012, and still forms a part of the museum’s permanent exhibition. I would like to begin by referring to three distinct features of the Minpaku exhibition.

Feature 1: Cultures of indigenous peoples, Europeans, and Japanese

Minpaku’s permanent exhibition includes several regional exhibitions, cross-cultural exhibits on music and language, and a section called ‘the Information Zone’. The regional exhibitions contain twelve displays (see Table 1).

Most of the museum’s exhibitions deal with the cultures of indigenous peoples. Some, such as the exhibition devoted to The Americas, exclude the cultures of majority groups altogether. However, the ‘Europe’ and ‘Japan’ exhibitions deal with the culture of majority groups. This leads to a question: how can we exhibit the cultures of majority groups in the modern world alongside the cultures of indigenous peoples? In order to exhibit very familiar cultures side by side with extremely foreign cultures, we need look at them relatively and exhibit them in a way that avoids stereotypical images.

Feature 2: Historical background: the exhibition in 1977 and its renewal in 2012

The ethnological museum emerged in Europe during the second half of the nineteenth century—partly as a descendant of ‘the cabinet of curiosities’ that had begun to gain popularity in the sixteenth century. Keeping in step with the modern

Table 1 Construction of the Permanent Exhibition

<Regional Exhibitions>	
Oceania	660 m ²
The Americas	320 m ²
Europe	250 m ²
Africa	500 m ²
West Asia	310 m ²
South Asia	600 m ²
Southeast Asia	730 m ²
Central and North Asia	710 m ²
East Asia, Culture of the Korean Peninsula	330 m ²
East Asia, Regional Cultures of China	660 m ²
East Asia, Aynu Culture	270 m ²
East Asia, Culture of Japan	1260 m ²
<Cross-cultural Exhibitions>	
Music	550 m ²
Language	170 m ²

(Data from National Museum of Ethnology 2012)

state building projects, such museums were established in major European cities. These museums featured treasures and curiosities which had been collected by travellers and specialists engaged in colonial policy, up until the first half of the twentieth century. To this day, these objects occupy the most important position in these museums' collections.

In contrast, Minpaku was established in 1974, as an ethnological research institute that featured exhibitions. This was in keeping with the rapid economic growth in Japan after World War II, during which the country transformed itself from a poor defeated nation to one of the leading economic powers in the world. The Tokyo Olympics of 1964, and the Japan World Exposition held in Osaka in 1970 (EXPO '70), remain symbols of those days of rapid growth. In fact, Minpaku was constructed on the very site of EXPO '70 after it closed. The political, economic, social, and scientific conditions of the 1970s underlie the grand design of Minpaku, and the first Europe exhibition opened as a regional exhibition in 1977. The situation has drastically changed over the course of approximately thirty years, and the exhibition has since been totally renewed. When it first opened, the exhibition reflected the confidence and economic growth of the 1970s; the 2012 exhibition, in contrast, reflects an age of globalisation. We now find our subject, the exhibition of 2012, in settings that reflect this new reality. Consequently, we need to reconsider both established practices of exhibiting as well as our ideas about regional cultures.

Feature 3: Expertise as a research institute and the establishment of a comprehensible exhibition for general visitors

Minpaku is an ethnological research institution, and its researchers are required to obtain good results in their specialised fields of study. The exhibitions are thus presented in the form of research results. However, since many visitors are not trained ethnologists, the exhibitions must be widely comprehensible as well as academically sound. Though these two elements—expertise and comprehensibility—are not contradictory, it is not easy to satisfy both requirements at the same time. Embodying the two in its exhibitions is one of the goals of Minpaku.

2 Ideas and aims behind the exhibition

The three features mentioned above constitute the context in which the exhibition was conceived. Minpaku's Europe exhibition of 2012 intends to show the cultures of people's everyday lives, by focusing on their experiences and the concept of 'time'. It highlights the ways in which Europeans have lived their lives up to the present, and how we can/should conceive of them from that point of view. The exhibition consists of four sections¹⁾:

1. Agriculture and the Annual Cycle
2. Religions and Beliefs
3. Industrialisation
4. Europe in Transformation

The first section shows that changing seasons and the rhythm of farm work correspond with each other, and that seasonal festivals mark these stages. The subject of the second section is Christianity, which shapes both the spiritual and everyday lives of European people: here in the first and the second sections, church bells govern the rhythm of life. During the period of industrialisation however, the hands of the clock replaced church bells. In the third section, we see that labour has come to be measured by time, and that the tick-tock of the clock regulates people's lives. During this era, factories, schools, hospitals, and many other institutions were established, using the clock to mark the passage of time. In contrast to earlier use of the clock to mark time, the passage of time in the era of globalisation is marked by digitally represented symbols. In the fourth section, we show some aspects of life in a globalizing world.

The three dimensions of time

The four sections of the Europe exhibition are presented in chronological order in a way that emphasises these three periods of time. The first two sections belong to pre-industrial Europe, the third is associated with modern Europe, and the last corresponds to contemporary Europe from the end of the twentieth century. These three periods of time have constituted and disciplined people's everyday lives in

Europe, prior to industrialisation and up to the present. Of great importance to us is the fact that the earlier period has not been entirely replaced by the newer one; these diverse periods of time are still reflected in contemporary Europe, though people live their lives without realising it. We focus on these diverse dimensions of European culture in our exhibition, wishing to portray a non-monolithic Europe.

This theme is distinctly different from the Europe exhibition as it was from 1977 to 2011. I will briefly refer here to the earlier exhibition. At the time of the museum's opening, the Europe exhibition of 1977 limited its subject matter to pre-industrial Europe, and focused on the following three areas:

1. Agriculture (focusing on cereal culture) and livestock management
2. Wine making
3. Manouche as migrant people

The idea for this exhibition came about as a result of the presumption that when arranging European cultures on the same time-horizon as non-Western cultures, post-industrial European cultures should not be included among the cultures exhibited.

The problem of modern Europe in an ethnological museum

In the ethnological museum, the attitude toward 'the modern' has been ambiguous. Many ethnological museums do not include exhibits of European cultures at all, and when they do, they often omit modern Europe completely. The primary reason for this is that early ethnologists/anthropologists did not deal with modern Europe in their research. Ethnology/anthropology had identified itself as a study of 'others', and the non-Westerner was the one conceived of as the 'other'.

This framework of ethnology/anthropology has deeply prescribed the framing of exhibitions in ethnological museums, and leads to the exhibition of European cultures (on those rare occasions in which they are exhibited) as a rural idyll that completely excludes the urban industrial aspects of society.

This form of exhibition was originally in harmony with cultural relativism, which criticises and warns against evolutionistic ethnocentrism. According to this view, keeping industrial Europe out of exhibitions was necessary to let visitors see several cultures impartially, without a sense of superiority.

The anthropological turn

Since the second half of the 1980s, however, scholars such as George E. Murdock, James Clifford, Michael M. J. Fischer, and others have sharply criticized the epistemological framework of ethnological/anthropological studies as hegemonic, for placing the West as a subject and the non-West as an object²). This transformation of the anthropological regime was related to the intellectual trends prevalent in those days. In the 1970s, ethnologists/anthropologists began to take an active interest in world-system issues, which resonated with the situation of the

world at that time. Many former colonies had become independent, and these newly independent countries were beginning to form new political and economic relations. Now the people that ethnologists/anthropologists had gone to study were no longer the exotic other, but belonged to the same world as the researchers themselves. Throughout the 1990s, ethnologists/anthropologists engaged in heated arguments over post-colonialism. Ethnological/anthropological researchers came to conceive of the modern industrialised world as the target of their research.

This intellectual setting led scholars to call into question the classical anthropological standpoint—one based on the premise that the object of research is far removed from the researcher. The ‘others’ of the contemporary world are no longer people who live far away and have nothing to do with us; we now share a common world³). However, the important point here is that many exhibitions in ethnological museums still reflect the intellectual regime from the earlier era, before the anthropological turn. If the exhibitions of Minpaku are to be presented as research results, its exhibitions should reflect current research trends. For this reason it was decided that the planned exhibition should show modern Europe along with other cultures, in accordance with a relativistic point of view. Furthermore, ‘the modern’ should be exhibited as an aspect of European culture, and not its former status as a hegemonic power in world history.

As scholars of this generation who conduct field research in contemporary Europe, we agreed that our exhibition should include cultures emerging after modern industrialisation. In the end, we decided to exhibit industrialising Europe as different both from pre-modern times, and from the age of modern globalisation at the end of the twentieth century. In this way, the very basic idea of the Minpaku Europe Exhibition 2012 took its form: Europe could not be recognized monolithically, and ‘Time’ was taken up as the keyword that specified the concept of the exhibition.

3 Key points explored in the Europe exhibition: objects, displays, and spaces

Below, I give an account of how we created the exhibition. I refer to certain important aspects such as the selection of objects, the display-medium, and the use of space. In terms of object selection, we consider the following three points:

- 1) Reasons for the selection
- 2) Character as an exhibited object, and as a stocked object
- 3) The channel and means of acquisition, which can in turn be divided into four:
 - a) Selection in the storage room where objects are inventoried, archived, and held
 - b) Acquisition through purchase and gift receiving for the purpose of a pre-conceived concrete exhibition plan

- c) Acquisition in cooperation with other research institutions (e.g., borrowing, lending, and contributing resources for the planned exhibition)
- d) Other arrangements might include the use of expendable materials not intended for lengthy storage.

To enhance the display, we use different kinds of media: literal texts, visual images, and sound documents. With regard to the exhibition space, it has remained intact since 1977⁴). In creating an exhibition, questions that must be addressed include how best to organise the display within a given area, and how best to utilise the available wall-space.

Section 1—Agriculture and the Annual Cycle

Visitors move on to the Europe exhibition upon exiting the exhibition on Native Americans ('The Americas'). The first thing they encounter is the 'Bread corner'. We regard bread as a suitable object for introducing European cultures, because this everyday foodstuff—familiar to both Europeans and Japanese—is widespread throughout Europe, and varies greatly, based on different regional and historical backgrounds. Replicas of thirteen types of bread and a couple of baking utensils are displayed, along with several pictures from the researchers' fieldwork. At the next corner, 'Agriculture and the Annual Cycle', shows that the annual cycle of agricultural work, punctuated by festivals, defines the rhythm of daily life and resonates with the changing seasons. While the display of the annual cycle focuses on growing wheat and producing wine, in another corner, dairy farming is shown as regular work that remains constant throughout the year. Most objects have been selected from the storage room, and are displayed together with an old historical calendar and the page of a prayer book, and pictures from researchers' fieldwork. High on the wall, visitors can see six huge etchings displaying six scenes depicting rural life. These were originally made for the Europe exhibition in 1977 and have been part of the exhibition ever since (Figure 1).

Section 2—Religions and Beliefs

In the second section, 'Religions and Beliefs', the emphasis is placed on Romanian Orthodox grave-posts from Maramures, wood and glass icons, and priestly vestments. Most of these objects were collected through researchers' fieldwork over some ten years, and some pictures from the field are included to vividly illustrate the real context of these objects. This section shows the religious life of a European village. In particular, the grave-posts (titled 'cheerful grave') and a serial icon being made (titled 'process of icon making') familiarise visitors with the Orthodox religion, which is unfamiliar to Japanese people. Objects such as crosses and articles related to pilgrimages that have been taken from storage provide information on Catholicism and Protestantism. The pilgrimage display suggests the origins of a souvenir culture, which flows into modern tourism (Figure 2).

Section 3—Industrialisation

Focusing on the period around 1900, the exhibition entitled ‘Industrialisation’ consists of four scenes; three are related to production, and one to family life. A scene of factory production is depicted using historical visuals on a screen, where visitors see how hundreds of workers, as well as their supervisors, are controlled by time. Two scenes of rural and urban household industry show that domestic handiwork has served to underpin industrialisation. Rural household industry centres on flax work. On exhibit are various implements for flax processing, the plant itself (before and after processing), linen made of woven flax, as well as a chest in which to store them. All these items have been taken directly from storage. The display of urban household industry includes ready-made garment manufacturing in Berlin. Several objects related to this have been brought together with the cooperation of Museum Europäischer Kulturen in Berlin. Visitors can thus compare urban and rural household industry, paying special attention to women’s work. A scene of family life shows part of a living room as an aspect of bourgeois life that contrasts strikingly with the lives of workers (Figure 3).

Section 4—Europe in Transformation

The fourth section deals with the expansion of the European Union, the increase in immigration, and migrants’ lives in Europe. The immigration exhibit depicts how European countries have formulated immigrant policies, and how migrants have lived between two cultures—that of their host country and that of their home countries. Japanese visitors will know that cities in Europe, in contrast to Japan, have long since accepted migrants, including refugees and workers, from former colonies.

The exhibit in this section includes many new kinds of materials. The electronic display shows the historical development of the European Union using figures and photographs, and euro coins denote the economic integration of the EU and the culturally diverse identities of the countries that compose it. Governments and associations have produced various brochures in a multitude of languages, along with a display showcasing the day-to-day lives of the members of an immigrant family highlighting the cultural hybridity of their lives. Packing sheets of instant noodles exemplify the influx of immigrants’ culinary cultures into Europe. Immigrants also describe their own experiences first-hand in videos. As visitors exit the Europe exhibition, they pass Romanian benches where they can rest and read pamphlets (Figure 4).

Digital Guide

The digital guide provides visitors with the opportunity to enjoy twelve programs using a small electronic device. Compiled by the researchers, the digital programs last one to two minutes and include visual and audio information with

narration. Each digital guide program helps explain the local context for each object on display, information that is not provided elsewhere in the exhibition hall. In addition, using this media precludes disrupting the atmosphere in the exhibition hall (Table 2).

Table 2 Digital guide programs

No.	Program Title
100	European Language Map
101	Bread
102	Europe's Agriculture
103	Birch Bark Products
104	Cheerful Graves
105	Pilgrimages
106	Icons
107	Spinning Wheels
108	Mangle Board Roller and Mangle Board
109	Ida's Life as a Tailor
110	Sewing Tools and Materials
111	Europe in Transformation

For example, program No. 109 tells the story of one woman's life. She is a tailor and the recipient of the two certificates on display. The program includes old photographs and narration, the former were archived by Museum Europäischer Kulturen in Berlin. Program No. 107 focuses on a spinning wheel. While a video shows an elderly woman spinning flax, a narrator explains the Grimm brothers' story about three spinners and Schubert's song 'Spinning Gretchen' in Goethe's 'Faust'. This program shows that spinning was an important motif for European art, music, and literature.

4 Accompanying programs

Minpaku organised events such as gallery talks, lectures, and film screenings regularly for a period of three months in the year following the opening of the permanent exhibition. Within this framework, the 2013-Spring-Minpaku-Forum entitled 'Europe—between imagination and reality' was held from 5 January to 23 March. All events were planned and managed by the four researchers responsible for the exhibition, along with staff of the museum's public relations office. Information was disseminated through posters, brochures, and a website (Figure 5). For example, a series called 'Bread Seminars' combined a lecture and tasting. Each of the four researchers planned a seminar around her or his specialised field: these were 'Scandinavian rye bread', 'Bread and the Eastern Orthodox Church', 'Regional diversity and historical legends of German breads', and 'Italian bread in

everyday life'. These events attracted so many applicants that we were unable to accept them all (Figure 6). Several lectures were held both in the auditorium hall and in the exhibition hall. Film screenings related to migrants in Europe were followed by lectures given by researchers.

The exhibition guidebook is very compact, following the model of the Minpaku permanent exhibition. This is in striking contrast to Museum Europäischer Kulturen in Berlin, which publishes a very thick and detailed catalogue.

5 Exhibition and anthropological study

I now return to the starting point and consider the kind of communication we wanted to establish with visitors.

5.1 Mission: professionalism and general intelligibility

First, I should refer to the mission of the Minpaku exhibition, something we always keep in mind. As I mentioned at the beginning of this paper, we are conscious that our exhibitions should meet the expectations of both professionals and the public. The exhibition is expected to be of high quality, backed by research, and should be unique and original. At the same time, the museum should fundamentally respond to the intellectual interests of citizens, and contribute to their education. Practically, the exhibition is used as part of the school curriculum, of which the most important objectives are to provide accurate knowledge plainly, and to motivate intellectual curiosity. The target demographic ranges widely, from young children to elderly people with varying levels of knowledge and specialised interests. An essential requirement is that it provides 'explicitness' that also satisfies the demand for expertise. The 'education mission', the 'research mission', and striving for 'explicitness' are indispensable conditions, and the exhibition is planned around them.

The four sections of the Europe exhibition, 'Agriculture and the Annual Cycle', 'Religions and Beliefs', 'Industrialisation', and 'Europe in Transformation', were envisaged to respond to the educational mission, and to utilise specialised expertise. By showing concrete objects from people's daily lives, these exhibitions respond to educational needs that cannot be covered in schools. The point is that the ways of life exhibited in the four sections are not obsolete relics of the distant past; they currently exist and are seen in the multi-layered Europe of today. Based on ethnological/anthropological studies, this perspective deepens people's understanding of Europe. Furthermore, each section reflects the interest and knowledge of the researcher in charge. Each researcher initially submitted her/his original plan for discussion by the group of four, after which it was examined in a larger gathering that included the researchers in charge of the whole renewal project. This process ensured that the story of the exhibition was kept simple and clear, while allowing

for the inclusion of specialised knowledge and original views from each researcher, to help create niche displays within the exhibition. I mention here some points to show how I put the section 'Industrialisation' into shape.

Industrialisation from an ethnological/anthropological perspective

The central issue of the section 'Industrialisation' was to make clear that people's ways of life changed drastically during the course of industrialisation, and was also different from the current post-industrial age. During the planning stage, some colleagues suggested that I display a big heavy machine in this section, because industrialisation meant mechanisation to them. However, they did not have any concrete ideas about what kind of machine to exhibit, or its presumable context. This idea might reflect a rough image of industry in general, but as a plan for our exhibition, it was naïve. This might have been appropriate had it been an exhibition on technology, but not for one on culture. In the end, I decided to focus on several scenes of production, which displayed the incorporation of machines and the subsequent inevitable transformation of people's ways of life.

In creating the exhibition, I intended to depict industrialisation from a critical point of view, and to refrain from equating it with advancement and enlightenment. In the four exhibited scenes, workers and their families, as well as members of a bourgeois family, are taken up as the main actors of industrialisation.

Body, discipline, surveillance

While conceiving the factory scene, I limited myself to a photograph of hundreds of workers and a large screen. I also had a video made from a still picture. Projecting the image onto a screen made it possible to get both a bird's-eye view and a life-size view, and to guide the visitor's gaze from one perspective to the other. This was intended to emphasise the contrast between workers and supervisors. Furthermore, it cost less than printing a large photograph (Figure 7).

By showing the old photograph in an enlarged manner, I expected visitors to become aware of the overwhelming power and strained atmosphere present in a factory hall from that period. In my view, this atmosphere derived from the ethics of the modern age of industrialisation, which often appeared as the power to regiment and kept people under constant surveillance. This view is an issue that has been explored by Michel Foucault and other scholars (Burchell, G. et al. (eds.) 1991). I expected that even those who were unfamiliar with these studies would be able to grasp something about this aspect of modernity. Indeed, the atmosphere in the factory in this photograph is quite different from that in present-day production sites. I also intended to show here that industrialisation had brought about the division and expansion of two social classes: the workers and the middle-class. While the concept of social class is less articulated in Japan, visitors to the exhibition will notice its presence in everyday life, and learn about its historical origins.

Family space

While the first three scenes focus on the worker class, I bring focus to the middle-class way of life in the fourth scene. The living room exhibit illustrates typical spatial divisions in a middle-class household. My intention was to highlight the importance of the living room of the middle-class at that time; it was where members of the family and their friends enjoyed themselves and talked about politics and art in particular (Figure 8). Those talks, according to Jürgen Habermas, formed the basis of public opinion during the period under discussion (Habermas 1990).

Female labour, women's world

Moreover, in this section I highlighted the important and unique role that female labour played at every turn. Female labour was far more than a complement to male labour. I also depicted a woman's world using an old photograph of a decoration inside a flax chest. In this manner, I tried to bring my own research interests into the exhibition.

5.2 Object selection and acquisition

Closeness, comparison, simplicity

As for selection, we consciously chose objects familiar to Japanese people, and tried to amplify familiar examples by showing their historical context and/or different examples. Singer sewing machines are very popular in Japan and remind most visitors of their mothers. Showing one in this context, we invited the visitors into a wider, deeper, and more cheerful Europe, beyond its stereotypical images. Researchers acquired some objects directly from their research subjects while conducting their field studies. I believe this is an ideal way of collecting and exhibiting materials. However, in the storage room there are also many objects that have been acquired through third parties; information about them is scarce. An important part of the process involved in creating an exhibition is planning the arrangement and combination of different objects to be displayed.

Copying an object to be exhibited is another useful approach. At Minpaku, we have effectively used copies of objects since the museum's inception. Because the aim of the exhibition is not to demonstrate the possession of valuable things, but to understand cultures, a good copy of an object, with relevant information, is equally valuable if it aids the visitors' understanding. The bread in our present exhibition is an example of a copied object for which conservation is the underpinning rationale. Each of the four researchers selected certain types of bread to be exhibited and packed them in their suitcases when travelling from Europe to Japan; they then took them to an artisan's studio in Osaka. The 'bread' corner of the exhibit is greatly appreciated by visitors (Figure 1).

One of the most important characteristics of the present exhibition is international cooperation. In particular, the section 'Industrialisation' was completed in

cooperation with staff from Museum Europäischer Kulturen in Berlin who provided us with many historical photographs, shared research information, and donated objects to the exhibition. This cooperation was based on an academic exchange between two researchers that developed over ten years. I think that this research relationship is very productive, especially because it continues to develop through the exchange of ideas and opinions related to exhibitions.

Thinking about representativeness

Next, I would like to refer to the representativeness of the objects on display. When selecting objects, we usually take into consideration how representative they are of the culture in question, but there arises a question regarding the extent of this consideration. How do we distinguish between objects that are suitable, and those that are not? As mentioned above, the exhibition at Minpaku aims to give visitors an understanding of cultures from a relative point of view while avoiding stereotyped images. We must consider whether an object is embedded within the culture under consideration, and whether the object reflects the ways of life of the people from that culture.

We could understand the relationship between objects exhibited and the culture they are meant to portray using an analogy of the relationship between the subject under examination in ethnography, and the culture it studies. While most ethnography deals with very local phenomena, depending on the researcher's microscopic observations and experiences, ethnographic descriptions provide descriptions of the concerned culture that go beyond the limits of field sites. Thus, the exhibited object, as well as the ethnographic subject, should be embedded in, and articulate the broader culture in question. Where an object derives from is less important.

Below I would like to mention two examples of objects and ethnographic subjects, both of which are on exhibit. First, I will take up the 'cheerful grave' of the section 'Religions and Beliefs' (Figure 9). This unique grave-post comes from a village in Maramures, Romania. As a scene of European Christianity, it is far from representative; in fact, it does not even represent Romanian graves. Yet the grave resonates with other objects in this section of the exhibition and effectively depicts a villager's world. In this section, most objects come from Maramures, and the villagers' way of life is vividly depicted, based on detailed field research, which, as we have seen, plays a vital part in this exhibition. Here, the researcher brings certain aspects of the villager's everyday life together in the exhibition hall. In this way, the exhibition contributes to visitors' understanding of rural Orthodox Christianity, and whether or not the grave scene is representative seems inessential.

As another example, I will focus on 'Ramen' culture in the 'Europe in Transformation' section. Ramen instant noodles originated in Japan and are now widely used throughout the world. There are two points to be considered here: using non-European food as a display object for a European exhibition, and displaying a

global scene beyond Europe as the setting for a European exhibition. Here, Ramen culture provides an example of how cultures might be appropriated by other groups for other purposes. We think this is an important aspect of contemporary European cultures and strive to show its meaningfulness. Cultures are uncertain, hybridised, and continually in transformation, an issue that recent theories of culture discuss (for example Clifford 1997). It is from this perspective that Ramen is taken up as a display object in the section ‘Europe in Transformation’. Furthermore, we thought that seeing a commonplace, low priced meal such as instant noodles in the exhibition hall would help relativise visitors’ own culture to what they saw in the display (Figure 10).

The selection of objects is connected to the subject of rethinking a regional culture. The means by which we conceive of and represent a regional culture in the contemporary world is, in my view, more and more debatable. On one side, it leads to the anthropological study of the current world, while on the other, it leads to a reconsideration of the place where visitors see themselves.

5.3 Display and information intermediary

Below I will summarise the displays, though some have already been mentioned briefly.

Literal information—panels and captions

Literal information available in the Minpaku exhibition hall is generally very brief, and so in remarkable contrast to the museums in Europe. Since its inauguration, Minpaku’s policy has always been that visitors should acquire understanding by looking and touching the objects on display, not by studying written information. Though it is meaningful to understand culture through objects, rather than from written materials, it sometimes results in an information overload for visitors who require further explanations. This issue needs more investigation.

Using still and moving images

Minpaku exhibitions tend to use images as a means of explanation, and as an alternative to literal texts. Both still and moving images provide much information, and indeed many visitors are glad to have images as their information source. However, since electronic devices emit strong flashes of light, damage to the open space of the exhibition hall is a possibility. We are conscious of and strive to control these negative aspects. The number of images displayed in relation to the volume and number of objects, as well as the amount of space available, needs to be considered. Furthermore, we are always exploring new ways of providing explanations.

Using sound—life histories, soundless videos, and Digital Guides

In the planning stages, we considered certain scenes that we thought would

be enhanced with the use of sounds, such as church bells, Orthodox Mass, ambient noise in a factory, and the sound rhythms of spinning and weaving. We were certain that sounds could be very effective in conveying the changing speed and rhythm of everyday life. However, it is also true that such sounds in the exhibition hall could potentially disturb visitors who want to peruse the exhibition at their own pace. Taking into account these negative elements, and with a pragmatic consideration of our limited budget, we used sounds as little possible in the Europe exhibition. In the end, we have only used it in the narratives of migrants' life histories.

6 Closing remarks

I shall conclude by providing some details on the placement of the present Europe exhibition. Speaking of the Minpaku Exhibition Hall, the Europe exhibition is located between 'The Americas' and 'Africa'. This arrangement was intended to signify overcoming the conceptual framework of the binary opposition of Europe vs. non-Europe that has long defined ethnological/anthropological studies. However, I suppose the Europe exhibition of 1977 was still designed in the context of the binary opposition, meaning that it only portrayed pre-industrial pastoral Europe and the ethnic minority of Manouche, completely excluding modern European society.

In contrast, the Europe exhibition of 2012 includes modern and contemporary Europe as its object, and tries to articulate and distinguish between the multi-layered ways of life which compose it. By showing Europe as being comprised of different local cultures, it presents a different way of understanding Europe and of making links between local cultures and globalised cultures. A migrants' life is thus situated at an intersection. From here, we might explore the contemporary meanings and forms of regional culture.

In the middle of the 1970s, just after a period of unprecedented economic growth, Japan launched itself onto the world stage. It was during this period that Minpaku constructed its exhibition to invite visitors to encounter other cultures. Today, this mission is considered complete; many Japanese people have access to rich stores of information and marvellous first-hand experiences from a broader world. However, these accomplished cultural encounters seem to be unarticulated or recorded; I believe that they can be turned productively into knowledge. The ethnological museums of the contemporary world can and should contribute to this.

Notes

- 1) The 'Europe' exhibition of 2012 was created by four Minpaku researchers—Taeko Udagawa, Mitsuhiro Shinmen, Akiko Mori, and Hiroshi Shoji—who were responsible for each of the four sections respectively.
- 2) I will make reference here to two epoch-making books: *'Anthropology as cultural critique: an experimental moment in the human sciences'* and *'Writing culture: the poetics and politics of ethnography'*. Both were published in the same year, 1986.

- 3) I argued on this issue in detail in another article (Mori 2013).
- 4) The space allocated to each exhibition is different, as shown in Table 1. Europe is the smallest of the regional exhibitions. The space was assigned at the time the Minpaku exhibition was first established, and this arrangement continues to the present. This layout is taken by the present researchers as a given, and it was under these conditions that they really began to plan the creation of the exhibition. However, from the visitors' point of view, the relative difference in size has meaning: an exhibition in a small space could be seen as having less comparative significance. Though it was not an important subject of discussion at our symposium, I think this condition influenced the exhibition to no small extent—not only in terms of the capacity of the exhibition space, but also in terms of the spatial impression given to visitors.

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Figure 1 A view of section 1 'Agriculture and the Annual cycle'



Figure 2 A view of section 2 'Religions and Beliefs'



Figure 3 A view of section 3 'Industrialization'



Figure 4 A view of section 4 'Europe in Transformation'



Figure 5 Poster of ‘Europe—between imagination and reality’ from 5 January to 23 March



Figure 6 Accompanying Program: Bread seminar in the museum restaurant on 23 February 2013



Figure 7 A photograph from the 1900s depicting a factory scene
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Figure 8 A display of 'Living room'



Figure 9 A display of 'Cheerful grave'



Figure 10 A display of 'Instant ramen noodles in ethnic shops'