

## Contents Summary

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## 5.1 Contents Summary

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In this project, the British Museum (BM) and the National Museum of Ethnology (MINPAKU) have worked together to make the contents of the Multimedia Museum, with the staff from BM's department of museum education and ethnologists from MINPAKU's research department in charge.

One problem in making the contents was how to achieve GDM's ambitious goal, which, as stated in the Introduction, was to enable the individual to have his/her own virtual museum on a computer. Needless to say, in order to achieve this goal, numerous contents covering various places, times and genres, had to be prepared. Within the limited time and resources, unfortunately, it was almost impossible to satisfy such diverse needs.

Another was the gap between the contents prepared by BM and that by MINPAKU. MINPAKU had long been a good research partner of BM in many areas. The intimate relationship has been, however, mostly with BM's department of ethnology (Yoshida 1997: 19) and not with the department of education. As Mr. Andersen, Director of BM, writes, "both institutions (BM's department of ethnology and MINPAKU) are concerned in exploring the contemporary world ethnographically" (Andersen 1997: 11). The reason why the department of education has partnered with MINPAKU this time was because this joint project was primarily for the use of school education. As stated later (by Yasugi in this chapter), the contents provided by BM were the "Mexican Gallery Resources Pack" and "Ancient Mexico in the British Museum," both of which were from BM's educational publications. As a result, we had to combine rather unrelated materials; we had to deal with the ancient and the modern, art and ethnographic data at the same time. We admit that this gap did confuse some participants in this project. On the other hand, as Yasugi states in this chapter it should be noted that GDM made some comparative studies possible among these different categories, which would not have been realized otherwise. For instance, it revealed that there was an obvious similarity between the human sculpture of Mayan civilization and the pattern of folk costumes of today's Mayan people, living in the highland of Guatemala.

In addition to the contents of Mesoamerica (Mexico), of which Yasugi was in charge, three ethnologists from MINPAKU worked on the contents of the Multimedia

Museum. Although the fact that MINPAKU was the center of ethnological studies in Asia did not have any direct influence, the contents these three people have made ultimately turned out to be based upon all Asian regions; namely, Mongolia, Korea and Indonesia. In each of the contents, they tried to make a difference in order to avoid being monotonous. Several stories were featured in Mongolia, while materials such as ritual cups and bowls for ancestor worship were highlighted in Korea, and in Indonesia, the main theme was *Wayang*, the puppet show, and its photos and music were introduced.

As reviewed in the following articles, none of the contents are fully satisfying and they all have a lot to be improved in the future. As the global environment for Internet communications is rapidly evolving today, we ethnologists also have to think about what is most needed to create more informative and diverse contents.

## References

Anderson

1997 Foreword, *Images of Other Culture*, p.11. Osaka:NHK Service Center.

Yoshida, Kenji

1977 Preface, *Images of Other Culture*, p.19. Osaka:NHK Service Center.