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Preface

The opening of the National Museum of Ethnology

In the spring and summer of 1970, the Japan World Exposition was held in the Senri Hills of Suita, a northern suburb of Osaka. After the closing of the Exposition, the pavillions were removed and the fair grounds were turned into a large park. This park is now well known to the public by its new name, the "Expo '70 Commemoration Park", or by the shortened form "Expo Park".

The construction of the National Museum of Ethnology was begun inside this Expo Park a few years ago, and in November 1977 the completed Museum was finally opened to the public. As the only ethnological museum in Japan, it received an enthusiastic welcome, and in this half-year it has already been visited by over 300,000 people.

The object of this Museum of Ethnology is to present the cultures not only of Japan and her neighbours, but of all the various peoples of the world. The exhibits include ethnological materials collected from a wide range of areas in all parts of the globe. At present, the museum offers displays representing Oceania, America, Europe, Africa, West Asia, Southeast Asia, and one area of East Asia, namely, Japan. Further displays are being planned for the near future, to include the areas of North Asia, Central Asia, South Asia, and regions of East Asia other than Japan. The European display, too, is to be broadened in scope to cover more of the many cultures of that region.

National Universitites Joint Use Facilities

It is naturally very important to increase public understanding of the science of ethnology through the systematic display of ethnological materials gathered from the various parts of the world. This type of public education, however, is not the only purpose of the National Museum of Ethnology. The institution has an even more important function in the area of academic research. Although it is called a museum, the National Museum of Ethnology is actually a research institute for advanced studies in ethnology and cultural anthropology.

In Japan, it has been usual for national universities to have their owen research institutes, which function as the principal means for carrying out advanced studies. For a number of reasons, however, the last ten years have seen a trend toward the establishment of large-scale, independent research facilities not attached to particular universities.

These institutions, called "National Universities Joint Use Facilities", are available to researchers from all parts of the country. There are at present seven institutions of this type, including the National Laboratory for High Energy Physics, the National Institute for Polar Research, etc.

The National Museum of Ethnology has been established as one of these "National Universities Joint Use Facilities", which are not affiliated with particular universities, but come rather under the direct jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. In their organization and finances, however, these institutions are included in the Japanese national university system. This museum, too, is therefore an institution within the national university system, and its research staff are considered to be national university teachers. For this reason, the staff are called by the titles 'professor', 'associate professor', and 'research fellow' rather than by the customary 'curator'.

In November, 1977, the museum was officially opened to the general public, but it had already been functioning as a research facility since June, 1974. Research activities have steadily increased as new members are added to the research staff each year.

At present, the research staff of professors, associate professors, and research fellows consists of 52 people. This number is to be increased in the near future, to reach a planned total of 88 academic staff members, including 68 full-time staff members and 20 staff members employed jointly with universities.

Research activities are organized into five research departments, which are further divided into a total of 21 sections. Most of these sections are concerned with researching the cultures of the various parts of the world.

Towards an international research facility

Japan has clearly been a late starter in the study of ethnology, compared with European countries. Even so, a considerable amount of ethnographical information, chiefly concerning the Japanese Archipelago, had been accumulated by the latter half of the nineteenth century. The collection of artifacts as ethnological materials, too, was begun during that period.

After the beginning of the twentieth century, Japanese ethnologists expanded their field of investigation to include areas other than Japan, such as the East Asian mainland and Oceania. After the Second World War, they reached out further to include Southeast Asia, Africa, South America, etc., and today nearly all the regions of the world have become objects of their research. The researchers in this field have come to be organized chiefly through the Japanese Society of Ethnology, which has grown in membership from year to year and includes many significant contributions among its research results.

The research institutes concerned with ethnology and cultural anthropology in Japanese universities have been quite insufficient, however, and there had long been no central research institution. For this reason, such organizations as the Japanese Society of Ethnology proposed the idea of an institution to serve as a center for research in ethnology, ethnography and cultural anthropology, and to provide a powerful means of promoting research in these areas. As a result of this proposal, the government has responded by establishing the National Museum of Ethnology.

From year to year since it was decided to establish the museum, professors and

other staff members have been appointed in the capacity of national public servants. Furthermore, expenditures from the National Treasury have been approved to cover the costs of construction, equipment, the collection or purchase of artifacts, etc. In addition, the ethnological materials accumulated since the nineteenth century have been consigned to the museum.

In this manner, the National Museum of Ethnology has been established with a view to making it the center of research for ethnology and cultural anthropology in Japan. This means it is the representative research institution for this field in Japan, and its research activities will naturally include those of an international nature.

At present, the full-time research staff consists solely of Japanese, as professors of national universities are national public servants, and are therefore required by law to be Japanese citizens. In spite of this restriction, however, efforts are under way to make it possible for foreign researchers to become official staff members. Beginning this year, the museum is formally accepting foreign scholars as visiting researchers.

Short-term visits of researchers from abroad are being carried out steadily through the offices of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science and the Japan Foundation. Several international symposiums have already been held under the sponsorship of the museum, and have included a number of foreign participants. In addition, a considerable number of foreign scholars have visited and observed this institution both before and since its opening to the public. We hope that the museum will continue to serve as an international window to Japanese ethnological studies, and we look forward to welcoming many more foreign scholars.

Bulletin of the National Museum of Ethnology and Senri Ethnological Studies

Vast numbers of academic articles covering all subjects are being published in Japan, but although many of these are of high quality, very few of them are known internationally. In general, very little accurate information on Japanese academic activities reaches the outside world when compared to the vigour of these activities within the country. One reason for this lack of communication is the fact that almost all Japanese academic articles are written in the Japanese language, which is at present understood by a comparatively small number of foreign scholars. In order to provide the world with information regarding Japanese academic activities it is now all the more necessary for efforts to be made on the part of the Japanese to publish their research results in languages such as English, French, and Spanish, which are more generally understood internationally.

In order to present the research results of the museum staff, *Bulletin of the National Museum of Ethnology* has been published regularly since 1976, and it has been the policy of this publication to accept contributions in languages other than Japanese, such as English, French, Spanish, etc. In fact, however, while a few articles in English and Spanish have appeared in this publication, the majority of contributions have been written in Japanese, accompanied by foreign language resumes of about 500 words.

Since the first issue of this *bulletin* was published in March, 1976, subsequent issues have come out at the rate of at least four per year, and to date nine issues have made their appearance. The *bulletins* have been distributed to the major research institutions in Japan and abroad, and have also been brought out for sale by the Ethnological Foundation of Japan. These publications are apparently being welcomed and used by foreign researchers as well as by Japanese.

As explained previously, however, from the point of view of international academic exchange, a journal written mainly in Japanese cannot possibly be expected to have sufficient effectiveness. Yet under the present conditions of the academic world in Japan, it would be totally unrealistic to expect that contributors stop using Japanese and write exclusively in foreign languages such as English. It has therefore been decided to continue the publication of the *bulletin* as it is, and to produce in addition a series of foreign-language publications called *Senri Ethnological Studies* (*SES*). The name "Senri" was taken from the location of the National Museum of Ethnology. The Senri region, located in Osaka Prefecture, is distinct from Osaka City, and is in the process of being made into a new cultural area.

Editorial System

While *Senri Ethnological Studies* consists of research reports written in foreign languages, it is not a foreign-language edition or translation of the "*Bulletin*". It is edited independently of the latter, and its contents are entirely different. It is up to the choice of each contributor whether to write his research results in Japanese and submit them to the *bulletin*, or to write them in a European language and submit them to *SES*.

The principal languages to be used are English, French, and Spanish, but in some cases articles in other languages may be admitted as well.

Because this project is financed by the Japanese government, there are restrictions concerning contributors to and recipients of the publication, unlike the case of a journal published and distributed in a membership system. In principle, contributors to the journal are to consist of staff members and others directly related to the museum, while the journal is to be distributed to research institutions in Japan and abroad. In all cases, however, it is our intention to interpret these policies as broadly as possible. Distribution to institutions will be carried out free of charge, but a commercial edition for sale to the general public is being planned by the Ethnological Foundation of Japan.

Senri Ethnological Studies will not necessarily be published at regular intervals, but it is hoped that a pace of four issues per year can be maintained. As a rule, each issue will be based on a particular area or theme, to be indicated on the cover. Accordingly, this first issue deals chiefly with the region of Africa. In cases where an issue does not center on a specific area or theme, it will be labeled "Miscellanea". The second issue will probably be of this latter type. In addition to the General Editor and Assistant Editor, each issue will be edited by a project team made up of museum staff members specializing in the appropriate area.

Kyoto University African Studies and SES

The journal *Kyoto University African Studies*, like this first issue of *Senri Ethnological Studies*, was devoted to research concerned with the African continent. There are a number of circumstances that should be mentioned here regarding the international presentation of the results of Japanese research on Africa.

For ten years beginning in 1966, *Kyoto University African Studies* was published at Kyoto University at an average rate of one issue per year. I myself participated in the editing of that journal from beginning to end, either as editor or as one of the associate editors. The journal was originally established as a means of presenting the research results of the Kyoto University African Primatological Expedition, which began in 1962. From the beginning, however, the participants in this expedition included specialists in fields other than primatology, such as anthropologists, ethnographers, geographers, etc., whose research covered a wide range of topics. In addition, there were many contributions from scholars belonging to research institutions other than Kyoto University, including some from overseas. In short, this journal, which dealt mainly but not exclusively with the work of Japanese anthropologists, became one of the international journals of African studies and seems as such to have been well received.

Originally, however, the journal was to take the form of a report on the results of the expedition; and for this reason, there was an agreement between Kyoto University and the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, which controlled the budget, that publication would be limited to ten issues. Accordingly, the project came to an end after the publication of the tenth volume in 1976. There were voices at home and abroad protesting the discontinuation of the journal, but it could not be helped.

Subsequently, the National Museum of Ethnology was established and became one of the bases for Japanese research on Africa. Several people who had been connected with *Kyoto University African Studies*, including myself, its editor, have moved to the new institution. The special African issues of *Senri Ethnological Studies* published here, therefore, will in effect take over the function of the former journal put out by Kyoto University. In other words, it is hoped that the African Series of this publication will be an international academic journal concerned principally with presenting the results of research on Africa carried out by Japanese anthropologists and ethnologists. With regard to the frequency of publication, moreover, at least one of the four *SES* issues published annually is to be devoted to African research, following the precedent of *Kyoto University African Studies*. The concerned parties at Kyoto University and the National Museum of Ethnology are mutually agreed that the African series of *SES* is to take over the role of the Kyoto University publication; and to this end, we are requesting that contributors to the previous journal continue to make contributions to the new series.

Our Hope

The task of publishing research results in European languages is an extremely

difficult and laborious one for us, since the language we use in our daily life, as well as in research, is one which is totally different structurally from those languages. It goes without saying, however, that the international exchange of academic information is extremely important and necessary. Here, we have attempted to overcome the difficulties involved in order to present the fruits of our efforts to the world of scholars who understand the European languages. We hope our readers will excuse the linguistic flaws and instances of poor usage which occur in these pages. Finally, the researchers in this corner of the Far East would greatly appreciate your advice and support as they assume a position of active participation in international academic activities.

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