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Preface

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This book presents a volume of collected papers that are presented in the International Workshop on Asian Museums and Museology held in Thailand, on August 24–28, 2014. The International Workshop on Asian Museums and Museology was organized by the National Museum of Ethnology, Japan, commonly known as Minpaku, under the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) program “New Horizons in Asian Museums and Museology”, and supported by the Fine Arts Department of the Ministry of Culture, Thailand. On behalf of Minpaku it is my great pleasure to host this International Workshop. I should particularly like to thank Mr. Sahaphum Bhumtittarat, Executive Director of the Office of National Museums, the Fine Arts Department of the Ministry of Culture of Thailand for supporting the organization of the seminar, and Mr. Somchai Na Nakhonphanom, Senior Adviser on Archaeology and Museology of Fine Arts Department for making stimulating opening remarks.

This International Workshop on Asian Museums and Museology aims to promote joint research between Japan and Asian countries, especially Thailand, Mongolia, and Myanmar. We are delighted to have so many talented and distinguished participants from Thailand, Mongolia, and Myanmar with us.

Minpaku was founded in 1974 as an Inter-University Cooperative Research Institute, according to the Japanese government higher research and education policy. For the Asia-Pacific region, this museum may be the largest research center for socio-cultural anthropology and ethnology.

Our sixty staff have conducted fieldwork on society, culture and socio-cultural changes at locations worldwide and conduct extensive activities in Osaka locally, as well. Last year alone, Minpaku organized forty joint research projects and held twenty-one international symposia, and invited around one thousand foreign and domestic researchers to join these activities.

We have also been organizing an international training course on Museology since 1994 supported financially by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and in collaboration with Lake Biwa Museum.

The course covers a wide range of museum activities, from collection planning, acquisition, and documentation to conservation, exhibition, education and public relations. Today it is desirable for any museum to present exhibitions in a multisided manner. Ideally, the museum should be a ‘contact zone’ for the exchange of ideas and opinions among the people who have created the artifacts, those who engage in displaying them, and a wide ranging audience.

Since 1994, more than two hundred museum-related professionals from all over the world have participated in the course. Twelve participants and observers from Thailand have joined the course to date. This International Workshop on Asian Museums and Museology is an extension of this international training course.

I hope that the publication of this volume will help develop effective dialogues and networks among museums in the Asian region and beyond.