



A BRIEF REPORT ON THE GSI WEEK:

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

'INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND MUSEUMS'

&

EXCURSIONS

DATE OF EVENT: NOV 28 - DEC 3, 2023

LOCATION: HOKKAIDO UNIVERSITY CONFERENCE ROOM & ZOOM

NUMBER OF PERSONS ATTENDING: 99 (ONLINE PARTICIPANTS INCLUDED)

Acknowledgement:

The GSI Week 2023: a series of events, including International Symposiums on 'Migration and Memory of Place' and 'Indigenous People and Museums', was held to deepen understanding of Indigenous peoples through active interaction with them between November 28 to December 3, 2023, in Sapporo, Hokkaido, JAPAN. The area known as Hokkaido has been stewarded by the Ainu, Indigenous people of Japan. We respect the custodians of the land, Hokkaido. We thank all attendees, panelists, collaborators, and sponsors, including Dr. Akira SAI, Mr. Yuki ISOBE, Ms. Amanda GOMES, Mr. Aleksandr ULANOV, Ms. Clara ASTIER, and Mr. Michael IOANNIDES for their contribution to the event. We also thank the GSI Director, Prof. Hirofumi KATO, and its members, Dr. Kanako UZAWA, Dr. Jilda ANDREWS, Ms. Sumie HIROSE, and Ms. Mayu HIROTA for providing this opportunity and facilitating both symposiums and excursions. The symposium was streamed online and recorded live by the GSI staff. Finally, but not least, we thank all the local members for sharing their valuable knowledge and experience with the participants during the excursions before the symposiums.



Land Acknowledgement:

Dr. Kanako UZAWA held a land acknowledgment speech stating that the university where they gathered stands on the land owned traditionally by the Ainu and has historically and unjustly held stolen Ainu ancestor's human remains. It is critically important to acknowledge this historical fact, and she expressed her humbleness for this opportunity to stand and speak on their behalf. She also recited her poem. This poem served as an epitaph to her Ainu ancestors, who have been guiding her through her Indigenous pathway up to this moment. Because of them, we stand together, and because of them, we continue our Indigenous way of life.

Ainu Human Remains

Releasing the anger of the past helps us to move forward in our life journey

We dance and sing for this moment to be together

The togetherness reminds us who we are

Joy of dance

Tundra of music that runs through our body

Our moment together

Voices from the past that echo within ourselves

Clinging on our back, trying to get back to a present time and life

Breath that comes back to a body

Rusted and cold bones filled with the smell of blood

A last drop of the blood sings to our heart

Clinging to each other

Finally, warm blood running through a body

Searching for the joy of life, which we once had and lost

Getting life back isn't easy

Trying to remember how it was to breathe, laugh, and cry

My present life seems different from how I remember



Introduction:

Hokkaido University Global Station for Indigenous Studies and Cultural Diversity (GSI¹) held the GSI Week from Nov 28 to Dec 2, 2023. The GSI week started off with excursions to the National Ainu Museum and Park “Upopoy,” visiting Ainu local community called Nibutani located in Biratori Town as well as the Ainu Culture Promotion Center “Pirka Kotan.” 11 participants (except GSI staff and supporters) from Australia, Sweden, and Norway. This aimed to deepen understanding of the Ainu people and culture before the actual symposiums. They experienced the Ainu food class, dance, and talks by local Ainu individuals. This strengthened better understanding of the Ainu people and culture before the symposium sessions, which resulted in fruitful discussions over the topics. In addition to the excursions, Ms. Amanda GOMES also organized an “Early Career Researcher’s session” for graduate students at Hokkaido University as well as other relevant university students right after the excursions. The participants were a mixture of Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants, and some of them also shared their cultural experience and art with local Ainu members. The actual two international symposiums on ‘Migration and Memory of Place’ and ‘Indigenous People and Museums’ were held on Dec 1 and 3, 2023.



¹ GSI was Launched in April 2021. GSI is one of the research and educational hubs under Hokkaido University’s Global Institution for Collaborative Research and Education (GI-CoRE). For further information on the GSI, please see at <https://gi-core.oia.hokudai.ac.jp/gsi/>

Table of Contents

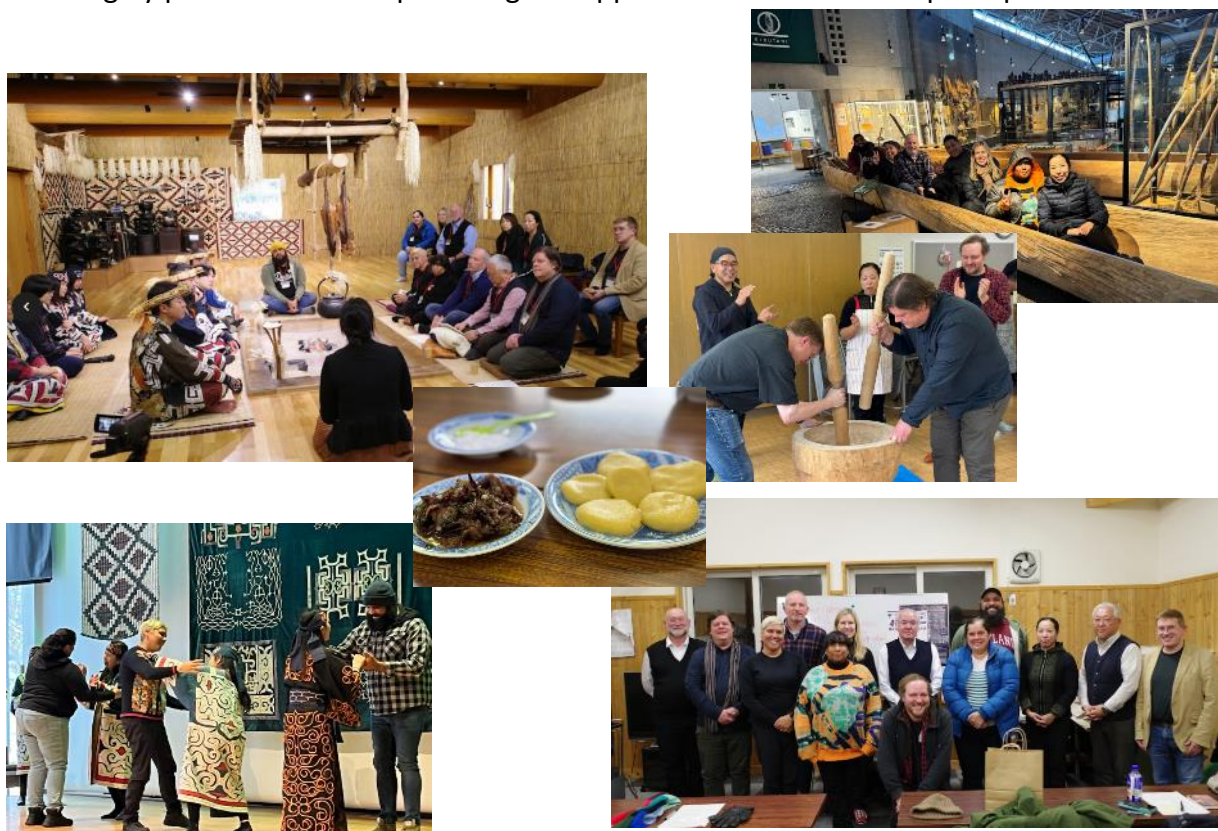
Acknowledgement:	2
Land Acknowledgement:	2
Introduction:	4
GSI Week 2023	6
Excursions	6
Symposium 'Indigenous people and Museums'	7
–Crafting voices of Indigenous peoples–	7
Program	7
Abstract	9
Conclusion:	13
Photo Album:	14



GSI Week 2023

Excursions

The purpose of the excursions was to deepen the knowledge about the Ainu culture and people so that participants' experiences in Hokkaido would become more meaningful and memorable, which they could take home with them. Some of the participants have already been in Japan and specifically expressed their particular interest in visiting the Nibutani community. The first excursion was to visit the National Ainu Museum and Park "Upopoy," where they had a chance to communicate and ask questions with the Upopoy staff directly. Some participants later expressed how different the experience was compared to the previous Upopoy visit. On the following day, they visited the Ainu Nibutani community, which is full of cultural activities: Ainu food class, local museum visits guided by community members, a talk by the prominent Ainu leader, Mr. Shiro KAYANO, and finally, a cultural exchange program at the Nibutani community center in the evening. The last excursion took place in Sapporo, visiting the Ainu Culture Promotion Center "Pirka Kotan" where participants were welcomed by Sapporo Ainu community members with lunch and cultural activities such as music concerts and dance. This allowed the participants to reflect on and compare the local Ainu community and the Ainu community in the city. Overall, feedback from the participants was highly positive and all expressed great appreciation for these unique experiences.



Symposium 'Indigenous people and Museums'

–Crafting voices of Indigenous peoples–

Program

09:40 Doors Open

10:00-10:05 Opening Remarks | Prof. Hirofumi KATO, Director of GSI, Hokkaido University

10:05-10:10 Message from the Australian Embassy Tokyo

10:10-10:15 Greetings | Dr. Kanako UZAWA, Ainu representative, Hokkaido University & the University of Oslo

10:15-10:45 yukar (Ainu oral literature) & Response | Ms. Haruna YAZAKI & members of the Australian delegation

10:45-11:05 Presentation 1 'The National Ainu Museum's Approach to the Ainu Language'
Ms. Haruna YAZAKI, the National Ainu Museum (the Foundation for Ainu Culture)

11:05-11:25 Presentation 2 'My Grandfather, My Father, and I – A Role of Each of Us'
Mr. Kenyu YAMAMARU (Keni), the National Ainu Museum (the Foundation for Ainu Culture)

11:25-11:45 Presentation 3 'Dancing with museum objects – Exploring Ainu Indigeneity in a museum space through Ainu collections-'
Dr. Kanako UZAWA, Hokkaido University & the University of Oslo

11:45-12:15 Discussion | Ms. Haruna YAZAKI, Mr. Kenyu YAMAMARU (Keni), & Dr. Kanako UZAWA

12:15-13:45 ❖ Lunch (90 mins) ❖

13:45-14:05 Presentation 4 'Museums as interfaces of authority and knowledge – an Australian experience'

Dr. Michael PICKERING, Hokkaido University & Australian National University

14:05-14:25 Presentation 5 'Mapping the collection store and making it a place for people'

Dr. Vanessa RUSS, the University of Melbourne

14:25-14:45 Presentation 6 'Museums and ancestral futures – new modes of cultural work'

Dr. Jilda ANDREWS, Australian National University

14:45-15:15 ❖ Tea break (30 mins) ❖

15:15-16:00 Conversation 'The changing Indigenous art centre model: reclaiming processes

of cultural expression outside of western needs' Ms. Mayatili MARIKA, the University of Melbourne & Mr. Kade MCDONALD, Agency, moderated by Dr. Jilda ANDREWS, Australian National University

16:00-17:30 Panel Discussion and Q & A session | All Contributors

17:30-17:45 Closing Remarks | Prof. Hirofumi KATO, Hokkaido University

17:45-18:00 Closing Ceremony



Abstract

(1) 'The National Ainu Museum's approach to the Ainu Language'

Ms Haruna YAZAKI, the National Ainu Museum (the Foundation for Ainu Culture)



Ainu is the language of the Ainu people and has been spoken in the northern part of the Japanese archipelago and surrounding areas. However, since the Meiji era (1868-1912), the Ainu language has been gradually cut off from daily life due to Japanese assimilation policies. In 2009, UNESCO designated it as an "Endangered Language" and recognized it as "Critically Endangered". Under these circumstances, as a center for the revival and development of Ainu culture, Upopoy: National Ainu Museum and Park has positioned the Ainu language as its first language. Ainu appears first on all information displays, including the names of facilities and rooms at the National Museum and the National Park. The Museum also uses Ainu for major information panels in the Permanent Exhibition Room. Various issues need to be considered, such as dialects and notation methods, not to mention how to express new words, such as the names of facilities and some words in guide signs. To meet these challenges, various groups of people participate in the consideration and decision-making process: the Ainu-language expert staff in Upopoy, external Ainu language researchers, Ainu language learners, and practitioners, including many Ainu themselves. In this presentation, I discuss some of these efforts, especially those related to information displays and exhibition texts.

(2) 'My Grandfather, My Father, and I – A Role of Each of Us'

Mr Kenyu YAMAMARU (Keni), the National Ainu Museum (the Foundation for Ainu Culture)

In this presentation, I will report on the importance of museums as a cultural institution to the local Ainu community, referring to my own family history as an example, and discuss how we can connect to the next generation in the future. Three generations of my family: me,



my father and my grandfather, have all worked at the Ainu Museum which was in our community. It sounds like, on the surface, that we had inherited a great deal of Ainu culture within the family, but that was not the case. My grandfather, who was a member of the town council, came to work at the Ainu Museum to contribute to the tourism sector, while my father came to work at the museum to support his family. Though reasons may vary, the existence of the museum allowed my grandfather, father, and I some time and occasion to face our identity and Ainu culture. Reflecting on my own story, I share my thoughts on what role the museum -- now known as Upopoy National Ainu Museum and Park-- can play for the local Ainu community and for the coming generations to face their culture and roots.

(3) 'Dancing with museum objects – Exploring Ainu Indigeneity in a museum space

through Ainu collections-'

Dr. Kanako UZAWA, Hokkaido University & the University of Oslo



This presentation explores a new way of understanding the term Ainu Indigeneity by opening up space for further discussion on how we can find our narratives and new expressions in museum space with focus on the Ainu collection. The presentation will make a reference to the most recent projects: 1) Ainu art exhibition project in collaboration with the University of Michigan Museum of Art in the United States and 2) The video art project on the Ainu collection in the Museum of Cultural History at the University of Oslo in Norway. By this, Uzawa will share a new way of giving our own narratives to the historical Ainu collections in museums, and furthermore discussing how we can transfer Ainu Indigeneity to the next generation.

(4) 'Museums as interfaces of authority and knowledge – an Australian experience'

Dr. Michael PICKERING, Hokkaido University & Australian National University

Every museum, art gallery, or university has its own internal culture. They have systems of governance and project implementation that are guided by that internal culture. Like all

cultures, they reproduce themselves, generally promulgating a conservative approach to certain issues over time. One outcome of this is that the concerns and contributions of Indigenous people, both as staff and as external interest groups, are often explicitly under-represented. Indigenous input is managed, mediated, and moderated, often to the point of sterilization of content. Indigenous driven change is rejected, while trends to conservative 'traditional' and inoffensive representations of culture prevail. This presentation looks at some of the issues that have arisen in the author's experience as a curator, researcher, and corporate manager.



(5) 'Mapping the collection store and making it a place for people'

Dr. Vanessa RUSS, the University of Melbourne



Museums are designed with exhibition spaces and cafes, and collection stores that no one gets to visit. Any museum with Aboriginal cultural material in it today also includes visits to the collection store. It's a privilege to visit with an Elder who might as they pass sing to the objects they see having remembered the song of their creator or the country from which that object comes from. On their departure, it can feel like the object was just as happy to see them too. As the University of Melbourne works towards a new home for its Indigenous Collections, the strategy for the Place for Indigenous Art and Culture started with the principle that objects have feelings too. This paper unpacks this work and presents on the new museum model that is best for Australian Aboriginal people in a time of deep divide.

(6) 'Museums and ancestral futures – new modes of cultural work'

Dr. Jilda ANDREWS, Australian National University

This presentation demonstrates a new method of museum collections research, developed in line with an Indigenous land management tool known as 'cool burning'. Here I

will explore ways that regenerative cultural land management practices can be extended and applied to the tangled and overgrown environment of museum archives and collections. By considering collections research as 'regenerative', it is possible to productively reframe cultural material as a contemporary tool and active in producing new knowledges. Such



an approach gives historical collections an important role in the making of strong, continuing cultural futures.

(7) 'The changing Indigenous art centre model: reclaiming processes of cultural expression outside of western needs'

Ms. Mayatili MARIKA, the University of Melbourne & **Mr. Kade MCDONALD**, Agency, moderated by **Dr. Jilda ANDREWS**, Australian National University

For too long, Indigenous Australian art centres have been valued principally as a foundation of art making and sales. This has in part arisen from the flourishing Australian art industry and the increasing global demand on Indigenous art and craft production. Today, art centres as Indigenous-led enterprises have evolved to support a range of important cultural activities that generate dynamic cultural



outputs – only some of which are made to meet market-demands. Other outputs include comprehensive archives of Indigenous knowledge, libraries, and repositories for collections of significant cultural material, some of which are still used in ceremony and cultural practice



today. As art centres increasingly play this role of archive, issues around institutional power and control over museum collections arise, including their ongoing management, access, conservation, preservation, and repatriation. Innovative and collaborative solutions are today being initiated and embraced by cultural leaders rather than museums, but discussions are still limited by western constraints around

concepts of property, ownership, and resourcing. This moderated discussion explores some contemporary examples and the new modes of collaboration required to support Indigenous self-determination in the continuously evolving art-center model.



Conclusion:

The 2023 GSI Week was a significant step in contributing to bringing new perspectives and Indigenous traditional knowledge to the international symposium table. It was initiated by Indigenous scholars of JAPAN and Australia, which was the first time Indigenous scholars engaged themselves in the planning phase. This resulted in having more open and dialogue-based panel discussions, which enabled non-academic and local Ainu participants to be part of the discussions. The diversity of panelists from various areas of the world also helped to articulate ongoing common issues and challenges, which helped to form future collaboration, such as an issue on the repatriation of Indigenous human remains and cultural property stored in museums. In addition, the Early Career Researcher's session for graduate students organized by Ms. Amanda GOMES contributed to creating more space for graduate students to present and discuss their research with Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars with expertise in the fields. Lastly, the excursions and encounter with the Ainu people and culture highlighted the importance of participatory action research where Indigenous peoples can create their narratives in research and bridges between valuable local knowledge and academia with the question of how Indigenous-related research should be represented and practiced in the University space.

Photo Album:



Gift from Ms. Mayatili MARIKA and Dr. Jilda ANDREWS to Prof. Hirofumi KATO



Participants from overseas attending at the lecture "Hokkaido University Campus and the Ainu people" by Prof. Jeffry GAYMAN



At Pirka Kotan



Waiting for lunch at a restaurant where the average age of the staff is 84



Dancing with Nibutani Ainu Culture Preservation Group



With Ainu Artist, Mr Toru KAIZAWA



Preparing lunch