

Indigenous Repatriation

~ Culture, Memory and Knowledge ~

9:00 AM – 6:30 PM Friday 29 November 2024

Hokkaido University Conference Hall 2F

PROGRAM

08:45	Doors Open
09:00-09:05	Opening Remarks Professor Hirofumi Kato, GSI Director, Hokkaido University
09:15-09:55	Report 1 Dr Kanako Uzawa, Hokkaido University / The University of Oslo “Between Worlds: The Ainu Perspective on Human Remains, Repatriation, and the Sacred Continuum of Life and Death”
09:55-10:35	Report 2 Dr Eeva-Kristiina Nylander, Museum of European Cultures “The repatriation of the Ládjogahpir. Provenance research, repatriation and repatriation as examples of decolonial and indigenisation practices in museumworld”
10:35-11:00	= Tea Break =
11:00-11:40	Report 3 Ms Sunna Kuoljok, Ajtte Museum “Indigenous Museums Matter”
11:40-12:20	Report 4 Dr Carl-Gösta Ojala, Hokkaido University / Uppsala University “Colonial Collecting and Colonial Heritage: Indigenous Cultural Rights, Repatriation and Reburial in the Nordic Countries”
12:20-13:20	= Lunch Break =
13:20-14:00	Report 5 Dr Michael Pickering, Hokkaido University / Australian National University “Consolidated experiences in Repatriation: A personal narrative”
14:00-14:40	Report 6 Dr Hilary Howes, Australian National University, Australia Dr Elena Govor, Australian National University, Australia “Accessing Ainu, Searching for Sami: An Overview of Russian Records and Institutions”
14:40-15:00	= Tea Break =
15:00-15:40	Report 7 Mr Jay Kickett, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Mr Shaun Angeles, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies “Returning cultural heritage material with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander custodians: exploring return projects by the AIATSIS Return of Cultural Heritage (RoCH) Program”
15:40-16:20	Report 8 Professor Daryle Rigney, University of Technology Sydney “Ngarrindjeri Repatriation: Issues, Challenges and Success”
16:20-17:00	Report 9 Mr Phillip Gordon, Australian Government Indigenous Repatriation Advisory Committee “A personal reflection on the evolution of processes and politics of repatriation in Australia over 40 years”
17:00-17:30	Wrap-up Professor Hirofumi Kato, GSI Director, Hokkaido University
17:30-18:25	General Discussion
18:25-18:30	Closing Remarks Professor Hirofumi Kato, GSI Director, Hokkaido University

About SPEAKERS

Report 1

Dr Kanako Uzawa, Hokkaido University / The University of Oslo, Norway



I am an Ainu scholar, artist, and cultural advisor dedicated to amplifying Indigenous voices worldwide. Founder of AinuToday and CEO of K. Uzawa Consult, I am an Assistant Professor at Hokkaido University's Global Station for Indigenous Studies and Cultural Diversity, an affiliated researcher at the Historical Museum of the University of Oslo, Norway. With an MA in Indigenous Studies and a PhD in Community Planning from UiT Arctic University, I bridge academia and art to preserve Indigenous knowledge. I serve on the Upopoy National Ainu Museum Council and contribute to collaborative research globally. My artistic work, performed internationally, celebrates the Ainu spirit and envisions an inclusive, culturally diverse future.

TITLE: Between Worlds: The Ainu Perspective on Human Remains, Repatriation, and the Sacred Continuum of Life and Death

ABSTRACT: This presentation explores the philosophical questions of how the Ainu perceive human remains, death, and the continuity between the living and ancestral worlds. For the Ainu, ancestors' remains are not relics to be stored or studied; they embody an enduring presence, remaining deeply connected to the lives of their descendants. Ainu traditions regard them as part of a sacred cycle in which life and death are interconnected aspects of a continuous journey.

Repatriation of Ainu remains offers a critical opportunity to challenge academic colonialism, encouraging institutions to reconsider power dynamics in museum practices. Beyond bureaucratic acts, repatriation represents Indigenous sovereignty, cultural healing, and the restoration of ancestral dignity.

The presentation concludes with a seven-minute art film depicting an Ainu ancestor awakening in a colonial museum, realizing she is far from her homeland. As she dreams of returning home, her journey questions conventional views of death as an end, presenting it instead as a bridge between past and future, ancestors and descendants. This closing invites the audience to reflect on repatriation as an essential step toward decolonizing academic spaces and honoring Indigenous knowledge as a living continuum.

Report 2

Dr Eeva-Kristiina Nylander, Museum of European Cultures, Germany



Dr. Eeva-Kristiina Nylander defended her PhD thesis in the university of Oulu, Giellagas Institute (Institute for Saami Studies) in Finland last year. Her thesis deals with repatriation, rematriation and dismantling the attitudes and potentials behind Sámi repatriation in Finland. She has worked in Sámi museums in Norway and Finland, as well as in the Historical Museum in Sweden, for example. Nylander is specialized in Sámi collections in Nordic and European museums, ethical

questions and repatriation. She has worked for a long time with these subjects together with the Sámi society. She has also been a part of curatorial teams in two Sámi exhibitions in Finland. Currently she works in a project called The Sámi Collection at MEK. A Multiperspective Approach of Provenance Research in Museum of European Cultures in Berlin.

TITLE: The rematriation of the Ládjogahpir. Provenance research, repatriation and rematriation as examples of decolonial and indigenisation practices in museumworld

ABSTRACT: In the European museum world, there has been a change of Paradigm and we can today speak of the age of repatriation. Also in the Nordic museum field, there is an increasing discussion about the return or repatriation of Sámi objects, the duodji to Sámi museums. I contribute to the debate by highlighting the importance of provenance research on repatriation in collaboration with Sámi communities. I propose a methodology for researching Sámi museum collections, which I describe as decolonisation and indigenisation. Finally, I introduce the concept of rematriation to describe the process of building new Sámi ontologies through these methods. Through these processes, difficult and challenging experiences of colonialism can be useful and helpful, for example, in the work of the Saami Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The methods I present may be of interest to other Indigenous people and museums that house indigenous objects from other parts of the world. My presentation is based on my doctoral thesis (2023) "From repatriation to rematriation. Dismantling the attitudes and potentials behind repatriation" and my practical work with the Sámi contemporary artist Outi Pieski regarding the Ládjogahpir-hat and the provenance research project together with eight Sámi duojárs, the crafters in the Sámi collections of the Museum of European Cultures in Berlin.

Report 3

Ms Sunna Kuoljok, Ajtte Museum, Sweden



Sunna Kuoljok is an ethnologist and curator at the Swedish Mountain and Sámi Museum Ajtte in Jokkmokk, Sweden. She has a long career as a Sámi museum professional, including repatriation issues in Sweden. Her work at Ajtte is mainly focused on managing the collection of objects and making them accessible to visitors, especially within the Sámi community. This has given her a deep awareness and understanding of the importance of Sámi museums for Sámi individuals as well as for the Sámi community as a whole. Ms Kuoljok has also visited several museums in Sweden with Sámi collections, enabling her to contribute knowledge to these museums.

TITLE: Indigenous Museums Matter

ABSTRACT: Many indigenous museum collections are currently located in museums far away from the original community. Often the museums lack knowledge about the artefacts and photographs. The collections thus in a way become 'dead'. Today, however, many large museums are taking initiatives to collaborate with indigenous communities in order to share their collections with them and in return gain knowledge. These

collaborations often take place digitally, offering museums a 'simple' and resource-saving way to repatriate artefacts and photographs. But what does it mean to have a museum in your community that has knowledge about your culture?

I would like to share my experience of working at Ájtte, a Sami museum that opened 40 years ago. One of the goals of Ájtte is to strengthen Sámi identity and pass on Sámi knowledge to new generations. What has it meant for the Sámi community to have its own museum in its area, a museum where the own culture plays the main role? And in return what has it meant for the museum to be situated in the Sámi community? How do Sámi visitors use the artefacts in our collections and what does their presence mean for the museum? The same question applies to the museum's photo collections.

Most Sámi museum artefacts are located outside the Sámi area, but when Ájtte opened, the Ethnographic Museum in Stockholm and Uppsala University deposited 'their' Sámi artefacts with Ájtte. What has this meant for Ájtte? Ájtte has also borrowed Sámi artefacts from other museums. What does such a procedure imply and what challenges have we encountered?

By presenting my experiences of working at Ájtte with the Sami cultural heritage, I want to show the importance of indigenous museums and how they can contribute to society, both to the own indigenous community but also society at large.

Report 4

Dr Carl-Gösta Ojala, Hokkaido University / Uppsala University, Sweden



Carl-Gösta Ojala is Senior Lecturer in archaeology at Uppsala University, Sweden, and Associate Professor at GSI, Hokkaido University, Japan.

His main research interests include archaeology and heritage in Northern Fennoscandia and Russia, especially Sámi history and heritage, and the politics of archaeology and identity, including debates on indigeneity, cultural rights, repatriation and reburial. Ojala has worked with several research projects dealing with research historical perspectives on northern archaeology in the Nordic countries and Russia, colonial histories and relations in Sápmi, early modern collecting of Sámi material culture, 19th- and early 20th-century collecting of Sámi ancestral remains, as well as present-day cultural revitalization and decolonization movements, and repatriation and reburial processes in Sápmi.

TITLE: Colonial Collecting and Colonial Heritage: Indigenous Cultural Rights, Repatriation and Reburial in the Nordic Countries

ABSTRACT: In recent years, histories and legacies of Nordic colonialism in Sápmi have been increasingly explored by scholars, and the public awareness of the colonial dimensions of the past and present has been growing. As part of this much needed broader examination of Nordic colonialism in Sápmi, it is also necessary to critically investigate histories and legacies of colonial collecting, concerning, for instance, the early modern collecting of Sámi material culture, such as the sacred Sámi drums, and the collecting of Sámi ancestral

remains in the 19th and early 20th centuries, as part of racial science in the Nordic countries. Sámi individuals, groups and institutions have for a long time raised demands for greater self-determination in heritage issues and recognition of Sámi cultural rights, including demands for repatriation and reburial. Importantly, the situation regarding Sámi heritage management varies greatly between the different countries in Sápmi (Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Russian Federation).

At the same time, issues of colonialism in Sápmi remain controversial and contested in the Nordic countries. Conflicts over land rights and land use are increasing, for instance in relation to the exploitation of natural resources and the rights to hunting and fishing. History writing, and ways of relating to the past, become central in these conflicts.

In this field of tension between past and present, there are many challenges for research and heritage institutions. This paper discusses the current situation concerning repatriation and reburial processes, and their wider implications and importance, in the Nordic countries, focusing mainly on Sweden – stressing the importance of critically examining the politics, ethics and power dynamics of archaeology and heritage management.

Report 5

Dr Michael Pickering, Hokkaido University / Australian National University, Australia



Dr Michael Pickering is a researcher of Australian First Nations Heritage. He has worked extensively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organizations, heritage agencies, and museums across Australia. From 2001 to 2022 Dr Pickering worked at the National Museum of Australia focusing on Repatriation and First Nations heritage.

He is an Honorary Associate Professor in the Department of Heritage and Museum Studies, Australian National University, an Associate Professor with the Global Station for Indigenous Studies and Cultural Diversity, Hokkaido University, and a Partner with the Centre for Australian Studies, Cologne University, Germany.

He has a wide range of research interests and has published articles on topics ranging from material culture, cannibalism, settlement patterns, museum exhibitions, museum ethics, and repatriation.

TITLE: Consolidated experiences in Repatriation: A personal narrative

ABSTRACT: As with any subject, the more a person engages with the practice of repatriation, the more they experience and learn. Over time there can be a coalescence of questions, answers, issues, and experiences that lead to secular revelations that might not be explicit in a practitioner's early years of engagements.

In this paper I will address some of the major developments in my own personal journey through repatriation, with the focus on the heritage of Australian First Nations peoples. These include observations on political, administrative, museological, cultural, and academic engagements with repatriation.

It is hoped that by sharing these experiences and findings that the future engagements of First Nations communities and their supportive researchers, Australian and International, and agencies may be facilitated.

Report 6

Dr Hilary Howes, Australian National University, Australia



Hilary Howes is an Australian Research Council DECRA (Discovery Early Career Researcher Award) Fellow at the RRR (Return Reconcile Renew Project) Centre in the Centre for Heritage and Museum Studies at the Australian National University. Since 2007, her research has focused on German-speaking scientists involved in acquiring and studying Indigenous Ancestral Remains and cultural objects from Australia and the Pacific. Her books include *The Race Question in Oceania: A.B. Meyer and Otto Finsch between Metropolitan Theory and Field Experience, 1865–1914* (2013); *Uncovering Pacific Pasts: Histories of Archaeology in Oceania*, ed. with T. Jones and M. Spriggs (2022); *Repatriation, Science and Identity*, ed. with C. Fforde, G. Knapman and L. Ormond-Parker (2023).

Dr Elena Govor, Australian National University, Australia



Elena Govor, born in Minsk, Belarus, has studied and worked at the ANU since 1990. She completed her doctorate in history there in 1996. Her research focuses on cross-cultural contacts between Russians and the peoples of Australia and the South Pacific, including histories of the acquisition and study of Indigenous Ancestral Remains and cultural objects. She has been widely published in Russia and Australia, including *My Dark Brother: the Story of the Illins, a Russian-Aboriginal Family* (2000); *Twelve Days at Nuku Hiva: Russian Encounters and Mutiny in the South Pacific* (2010); *Tiki: Marquesan Art and the Krusenstern expedition*, ed. with N. Thomas (2019)..

TITLE: Accessing Ainu, Searching for Sami: An Overview of Russian Records and Institutions

ABSTRACT: Although Ainu and Sami people live at the opposite ends of the Eurasian continent, there were similarities in Russian interest towards them. Both peoples were living in the Russian Empire and in neighbouring countries; as a result, it was important for Russians to stress that Ainu and Sami were their subjects. As early as 1799, the German-Russian geographer Johann Gottlieb Georgi represented and discussed Ainu and Sami peoples in detail in his description of peoples living in the Russian Empire. At the same time, both Ainu and Sami became contested grounds for different scholars to construct racial and ethnogenetic theories. Russian scholars felt proud to have such assets living on their territory and realised that they could contribute to international academic networks by studying these peoples. During the 19th and early 20th centuries, Ainu ancestral remains and cultural objects were extensively collected by military, naval and medical visitors, administrators, and Russian political exiles interested in ethnography. In contrast, focused interest in Sami ancestral remains and cultural objects was ignited by preparations for the Anthropological Exhibition in Moscow in 1879, and active collection continued during Soviet times.

In recent years, collections of Ainu cultural objects in Russian museums have been extensively studied and detailed catalogues have been published, often with the involvement of Japanese scholars. Information about collections of Ainu and Sami cultural objects is also widely available online. However, the history of

craniological and anthropological collections has scarcely been studied, and Russian institutions are quite secretive about their holdings. In this report we present our efforts to map out the histories of these collections, including where ancestral remains were taken from, by whom, where they were deposited and where they are now. We also explain how to contact Russian institutions and how to access relevant records.

Report 7

Mr Jay Kickett, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Australia



Jay Kickett A/g Director, Return of Cultural Heritage Program. He is a proud Noongar man. Mr Kickett has worked in various senior positions in Aboriginal affairs over the past 25 years, including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, Department of Education (Indigenous Education), Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Attorney-General's Department as the manager of the Indigenous consultation of the Referendum Council.

He most recently worked at the NSW Aboriginal Land Council as the Zone Director for the Southern Zone for the last 5 years before joining AIATSIS.

Mr Shaun Angeles, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Australia



Shaun is an Arrernte and Kungarakany man from the Northern Territory. He is an Assistant Director of the Return of Cultural Heritage (RoCH) program at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). Previously, Shaun was the Cultural Repatriation Manager at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory and Strehlow Research Centre. He is a former member of the Australian Government's Advisory Committee for Indigenous Repatriation.

Shaun has developed research methodologies towards consolidating micro-collections of culturally affiliated materials for Arrernte peoples, incorporating secret-sacred objects, ceremonial film, ceremonial song recordings, photographs, genealogies, and documentation.

TITLE: Returning cultural heritage material with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander custodians: exploring return projects by the AIATSIS Return of Cultural Heritage (RoCH) Program

ABSTRACT: The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) is Australia's only national institution focused exclusively on the diverse history, cultures and heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

AIATSIS leads the Return of Cultural Heritage (RoCH) program to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and their cultural heritage material held overseas. The RoCH program supports Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander peoples to affirm their custodianship of their cultural heritage material held overseas and make decisions about where and how it can be best looked after in the present.

Returning material to Country for the purpose of cultural maintenance and revitalisation is an often-expressed aspiration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. What shape the returns take - repatriation,

loan, digital copy - is a decision for custodians so that they can achieve this aspiration.

The RoCH program aims to:

- facilitate and secure the return of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage material from overseas to Australia
- enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to understand where their cultural heritage material is held overseas
- influence the development of changes to institutional repatriation practices, policy, guidelines and international laws
- foster relationships between overseas collecting institutions and Indigenous communities.

This presentation will explore various aspects of return projects with Indigenous communities, more specifically, to the RoCH program's methodology. It will speak to the way in which return projects begin, what they involve, and the outcomes for Indigenous custodians.

Report 8

Professor Daryle Rigney, University of Technology Sydney, Australia



Daryle Rigney, Ngarrindjeri nation citizen, is Professor and Director of the Indigenous Nation Building and Governance Research Hub at Jumbunna Institute, University of Technology Sydney. Daryle has served as a board member of the Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority, the Ngarrindjeri Native Title Management Committee and Ngarrindjeri delegations in repatriation research, negotiation and returns. Daryle was a chief investigator in the Return Reconcile Renew (2013-2016) and Restoring Dignity (2018-2020) repatriation projects. He has been pivotal to contemporary Ngarrindjeri decision-making institutions and mechanisms and was Ngarrindjeri co-negotiator and appointed Ngarrindjeri spokesperson on treaty negotiations in 2016-17 with the State of South Australia.

TITLE: Ngarrindjeri Repatriation: Issues, Challenges and Success

ABSTRACT: Ngarrindjeri are First Nations people of the southern-most estuarine region of the Murray-Darling Basin where the 'meeting of the waters' takes place, as the fresh waters of Murrundi (River Murray) flow through the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth and mix with tidal salt water of the Great Southern Ocean. The Ngarrindjeri have always occupied these lands and have never ceded nor sold our lands and waters.

This report is primarily designed to outline the Ngarrindjeri Nation's Repatriation efforts since the early 1980's. In doing so it describes the issues, challenges and successes of the nation as we enact our lawful responsibilities to Ngarrindjeri ancestors/Old People and work to secure a future for Ngarrindjeri Ruwe/Ruwar (lands, waters and all living things). Ngarrindjeri believe that for the people to be healthy the lands and waters need to be healthy.

Over the past 30 years, Ngarrindjeri have negotiated with institutions nationally and internationally for the return of their Old People, managed with inadequate resourcing, experienced government and institutional recalcitrance and yet brought home hundreds of Old People and undertaken a number of reburials.

Ngarrindjeri thus have extensive experience in the many facets of repatriation. The complexity Ngarrindjeri face in ensuring all the stolen Old People are laid to rest are identified in this report as a process of research, negotiation, translation, healing, self-determination, and 'restoring dignity'.

This work has not only led to hundreds of Old People being returned, but also the building of crucial alliances and networks with other First Nations around the world and key institutions and researchers connected with this work. This history is included in various publications as well as the RRR website (in particular: <https://returnreconcilerenew.info/community-stories/NRA.html>) to help educate and support new approaches to practice and policy that ensure better outcomes for First Nations peoples around the world.

Report 9

Mr Phillip Gordon, Australian Government Indigenous Repatriation Advisory Committee, Australia



I am a Goorang Goorang man from Central Queensland.

Currently I am a Community Cultural Consultant advising on museum-related matters. In addition, I also provide advice for government agencies on cultural heritage and policy development. Previously I held the role of Manager of Indigenous Heritage at the Australian Museum in Sydney where I advised communities on issues such as museum outreach and repatriation of ancestors and significant cultural property.

I am also Co-Chair of the Australian Federal governments Advisory Committee for Indigenous Repatriation. In areas of strategic policy development and implementation, I am currently a member of the Australia-France Joint Scientific Repatriation Committee, progressing a way forward for the return of ancestors in French public collections. In addition, I am a member of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies' (AIATSIS) National Resting Place Indigenous Advisory Committee in 2019 and 2020.

I was also involved in the development of the National Resting Place Consultation Report that considers the long-term care of Indigenous Australian ancestors that have no identified community of origin.

Mr Gordon is a Member of the Strehlow Research Centre Board of Management, and a Member of the Museums and Galleries of NSW's Board of Management's Aboriginal Reference Committee. He continues to provide advice for government agencies on cultural heritage and policy development.

TITLE: A personal reflection on the evolution of processes and politics of repatriation in Australia over 40 years

ABSTRACT: Australia currently holds a reputation as a leader in the areas of Indigenous repatriation. In many respects this is well founded. But this situation did not come about because Academia, Governments and museums thought that morally and ethically, this was the appropriate thing to do. It came about by several external and internal factors. The major driver of these changes was the agitation and activism of Indigenous Australians who for well over a hundred years demanded the return of their ancestors. I will explore some

these influencing factors during my talk.

An important aspect to of the initial and ongoing discussions between Indigenous peoples Australian Museums and Governments, was that while repatriation was important, museums and governments needed to think of this as a starting point for their new and expanded relationship between Indigenous people and cultural organisations. These discussions on broader issues while initially were brought about by repatriation they have played an important part of the development of cultural organisations becoming more relevant to not only indigenous peoples but to the broader society that they serve and should always be factored into the discussions of repatriation programs .

Currently in Australia there is a comprehensive set of policies, procedure and funding models that have been put together by various levels of government and museums, over the last 40 years as a response to indigenous Australians cultural demands. In many ways they are still fulfilling the intended objective. But there is a need for these programs to be more flexible and expandedvto meet the changing needs of Indigenous Australians. There are several new issues facing repatriation in Australia, one these being the provision of resources in an appropriate manner and the other is the need for the ongoing development of policies in new and evolving areas such as DNA and other medical research.

Repatriation is now an important component of how cultural organisations work, but it needs to evolve to maintain its relevance to indigenous Australians

Wrap-up and Moderator

Professor Hirofumi Kato, Hokkaido University, Japan



Hirofumi Kato is a professor of Center for Ainu and Indigenous Studies, Hokkaido University, specializing in Indigenous Archaeology and Indigenous Cultural Heritage. He currently organizes an international field school on Rebun Island and is involved in collaborative research on cultural landscapes with Ainu communities in Biratori and Teshikaga.

He is also Director of Global Station for Indigenous Studies and Cultural Diversity(GSI), Hokkaido University; Affiliate Professor of Archaeology, Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Uppsala University; Research fellow of Oxford Centre of Asian Archaeology, Art and Culture, Institute of Archaeology, University of Oxford; and Honorary Professor, Irkutsk State University.

TITLE: Indigenous Repatriation and the Responsibility of Academia

ABSTRACT: Indigenous repatriation opens up a new chapter in history, but it does not necessary mean that the light will shine on all sides. In particular, the facts that come to light in the process of repatriation can cause new trauma and psychological stress for Indigenous communities.

The objects of repatriation include not only remains and cultural artefacts, but also memories and knowledge. The Important thing is not to end the repatriation as a process of dealing with the negative legacy of

colonialism. It is also important to develop the repatriated history, memory and knowledge. In this report, based on the current situation of Indigenous repatriation in Japan, I would like to consider what non-indigenous communities can do, and in particular, the meaning and responsibilities of academia in relation to indigenous repatriation.

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