

Regarding Contributions to *The Annual Report: the Study of Nonwritten Cultural Materials*

The study of human societies is aimed at conducting research on human beings and societies shaped by humans, and such research has been carried out mainly targeting written materials. However, human activities and their achievements are not necessarily recorded in words. Some are recorded in the form of paintings, photographs, movies, architecture, *mingu* (folk implements), sounds or voices, while others are preserved in geographical features, landscapes or human bodies. Moreover, smells, gestures, tastes or touch, aspects that can hardly be “recorded,” are also important elements that constitute human societies.

The Research Center for Nonwritten Cultural Materials aims to gain a more comprehensive understanding of human beings and their societies through systematizing as “nonwritten cultural materials” those nonwritten records and human activities that are barely expressible in words, like the elements mentioned above, and developing new ways of studying these materials. Since the launch of our “Systematization of Nonwritten Cultural Materials for the Study of Human Societies” project (from fiscal 2003 through 2007), selected in the 21st Century COE (Centers of Excellence) Program, we have carried out joint research on a few chosen research tasks in the fields of “illustrated materials,” “physical techniques,” and “the environment and landscape” in order to achieve the center’s aim. This joint research has been supported by researchers at home and abroad specializing not only in history and folklore, but also in cultural anthropology, cross-cultural studies, fine arts history, architectural history, disaster history and information science.

Nonwritten cultural materials, which involve the wide range of academic disciplines mentioned above, reveal various aspects of local cultures in countries around the world in specific and visible ways, and have been gathered in many different areas and at many different times. Thus they require research methods that utilize a comparative historical approach, and may even enable the study of human societies to develop in comprehensive and interdisciplinary ways.

Nonetheless, the difficult tasks of creating indexes to analyze research materials and deciphering these materials call for the universality of research concepts and outcomes. Mutual verification by researchers around the world in related fields of study is essential for the documentation and systematization of research materials in internationally standardized and universal ways, and the research activities of the center need to be carried out in collaboration with these researchers.

The Annual Report: the Study of Nonwritten Cultural Materials welcomes contributions by researchers specializing in nonwritten cultural materials who play important roles in countries around the world, in the hope that the report will further develop as an academic forum for researchers in many fields of study to exchange new ideas, and contribute to enriching the study of human societies.

Entry Period : From July to September, every year

Deadline : The end of November, every year

Entry Sheet : Download from our web site. (<http://himoji.kanagawa-u.ac.jp/>)

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