

SUMMARY

The Repatriation of Ancestral Remains and Secret / Sacred Objects to Indigenous Peoples in Australia.

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Since the 1970s, discussions on the right of self-determination for indigenous peoples have been taken seriously in Australia, and several laws on the return of Indigenous cultural properties including ancestral remains and secret / sacred objects have been enacted. In addition, states and territories have established spaces for exhibition in museums and departments in universities dealing with indigenous issues, where indigenous specialists are employed.

In this paper, I firstly discuss the repatriation of indigenous ancestral remains and secret / sacred objects, paying particular attention to the historical role of Australian museums in collecting them. Focusing on the case of Japan and Australia, I also describe the international network of collecting indigenous remains and secret / sacred objects that was established in the mid-19th century.

Secondly, I give an account of the background and current situation of the repatriation movement for ancestral remains and secret / sacred objects, and how the involvement of indigenous peoples in the repatriation project since the 1970s has attracted attention as a matter of self-determination. However, while this movement led to the establishment of the laws and the legal measures for repatriation, it is argued that there are not many established methods to effectively identify the provenance of ancestral remains and secret / sacred objects.

Therefore, I finally focus on the use of the digitally archived database in the United States, Europe and Australia for identifying the provenance of individual indigenous ancestral remains. I then consider how indigenous peoples utilize the data collected in the digital archive, that is by introducing the case of the "Return, Reconcile, Renew" project post 2012. In the project, indigenous Australian organizations cooperate with the federal government, universities, museums, and even indigenous organizations of the United States and New Zealand. The project aims to establish a network among various actors, to accumulate and share information on the repatriation of ancestral remains and secret / sacred objects through the network, and to make it possible to utilize this information on the initiative of indigenous Australian organizations for the research of provenance conducted jointly by various actors in accordance with the code of ethics of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS).