The Ethnographic Conservation Newsletter

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NOTE FROM YOUR EDITORS

It is with heavy hearts that we report the sudden and untimely death of Lynn Arden, on May 6. Lynn was our friend, colleague, and co-editor of this newsletter. We will miss Lynn's gentle manner, wonderful sense of humor, talent as a conservator, and invaluable skill as an editor. With great sadness, we have completed this newsletter without her, but wish to dedicate it to her memory.

FROM THE CO-COORDINATORS

Nancy Odegaard and Sherry Doyal

The ICOM 12th Triennial Meetings will be held in France from August 29 through September 6, 1999. The city of Lyon was chosen in view of their recent achievements in the field of conservation/ restoration of cultural artifacts, its cultural vitality, and its convenience. The sessions will be held in the center of Lyon in a new complex designed by the architect Renzo Piano. The complex includes the Musee d'Art Contemporian, the Palais des Congres and the

Hilton Hotel. The Ethnographic Working Group meetings are scheduled from August 30th through September 2nd.

Registration fee is: FF2.500 for ICOM members; FF3.000 for Non-ICOM members; and FF1.250 for accompanying persons. The fee includes:

- participation in the meetings
- the conference Preprints
- lunches and coffees
- access to posters, trade and book exhibitions, and receptions
- the Friday excursions to conservation workshops

Please note that the optional program in Paris on September 4-6 is not included in the conference fee.

To register contact:

AOICOM - CC 99
Association pour l'organisation de la 12eme reunion triennale du comite pour la conservation du conseil international des musees 6, rue des Pyramides
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OR

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E-mail: Mohen@culture.fr

Participants may make arrangements to arrive via the Lyon-Satolas International Airport or by train. The high speed train (TGV) connects Lyon to Paris in two hours. Participants must also arrange their own room accommodations.

The Ethnographic Working Group will have five papers and three posters included in the printed volumes. The papers to be published are:

Storage, Display and Packing Systems for Australian Aboriginal Bark Paintings in the Collection of the National Gallery of Australia. Gloria Morales-Segovia and Beata Tworek-Matuszkiewicz, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, ACT, Australia.

Stabilisation Treatments for Black-dyed New Zealand Flax. Vincent Daniels, The British Museum, London, UK.

Imitations Made from Early Plastics as Trade Goods. Margrit Reuss, National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden, Netherlands.

Paint Stabilization without Consolidants: Three Treatment Studies on Mexican Dance Masks. Nancy N. Odegaard and Marilen A. Pool, Arizona State Museum, Tucson, AZ, USA.

Conservation et Montage d'un Costume de Deuil Tahitien pour Exposition. Morwena Stephens. Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter, UK.

Additional papers and several posters from the Ethnographic Working Group will be presented at the meetings. Preprints will be distributed at the meetings. We look forward to seeing all of you who plan to attend in Lyon.

PREVENTIVE CONSERVATION TRAINING IN ARGENTINA

María Esteva

Introduction

To address cultural patrimony conservation problems in Argentina, *Fundación Antorchas*, a private foundation that supports the arts, the humanities and the sciences, provided financial support to organize and conduct an ongoing pilot program in preventive conservation of museum collections. Because of the lack of formal conservation studies in Argentina, training of local technicians and conservators was considered to be a high priority. Education, therefore, was thought to be the best way to help museums in Argentina develop sound preservation programs for their collections.

The pilot program was designed to train up to twenty museum conservators and technicians in the field of preventive conservation, upgrade their general conservation knowledge and skills, and create a standard of practice among colleagues from different museums in the country. This first group of trainees would then become the country's training pioneers and would subsequently introduce preservation practices to their home institutions.

Program content and design

The format and content of the training program was suggested by Carolyn Rose, Senior Research Conservator at the Department of Anthropology, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, and is the result of many years of conservation teaching experience in the United States. The training program addresses preventive conservation for artistic, historical, archaeological, and ethnographic collections. The design and content of the program focuses on the study of the materials that compose museum collections and their response to agents of deterioration. Participants learn about each material's structure (physical and chemical), the technological processes involved in the object's fabrication, and the impact of the environment on objects. This allows students to understand the reactions involved in the deterioration of objects, assess the condition of museum collections accurately, and propose adequate long-range care strategies. Lectures on collection management and curatorial topics are also included for the

participants to become aware of the need of integrating preventive conservation with other museum activities.

Program length and format

The pilot training program began in April 1998. It is organized into two distinct and complementary sessions, each 20 weeks in duration, separated by a 20 week break between sessions. The first session examines organic materials found in museum collections and focuses on the agents of deterioration, and the second session emphasizes inorganic materials and specific solutions to storage, exhibition, disaster and administrative issues. Prior to the beginning of each session, a three week course in basic organic and inorganic chemistry is taught for the participants in order for them to master the fundamentals. During the 20 week break between training sessions, participants conduct a preventive conservation research project in their own museum. Participants attend class six hours per day. The morning sessions include lectures, presentations and discussions. The afternoons consist of laboratory exercises, hands-on practicums, field work, and library research.

Student selection

Sixteen participants were selected by competitive methods, taking into consideration the following criteria: educational background, formal and informal training in conservation, experience in conservation, teaching experience, the museum or institution for which they currently work, and their previous positions. Participation in the program also required a paid leave of absence from their work, a working knowledge of English, manual skills, and communication skills. Of the sixteen participants, all came from Argentina, except two participants from Brazil who had special funding from the Vitae foundation in São Paulo.

Instructors

As program coordinator, I have been responsible for recruiting various instructors, both local and foreign, for the training sessions. This required discussing the goals and content of the seminars with the instructors as well as their respective roles within the program. Course outlines, bibliographies and course materials were collected in advance of the training sessions for translation and compilation.

The University of Buenos Aires proved to be a wonderful source for local instructors for the program, particularly the different departments of the Faculty of Exact and Natural Science. A number of craftsmen, curators, and researchers gave special lectures. Local conservators and professionals with expertise in specific areas (architects, chemists, photographers, and art historians) also taught other seminars and special classes. Each of the seminars included field trips such as technical visits to industries, museums, private collections, university departments, and research institutes. For some institutions and lecturers, this was their first exposure to the conservation of cultural heritage. We hope that this experience will establish the foundation for the development of conservation studies and research in the field.

Between April and September 1998, local and foreign instructors taught the first session on organic materials. All prepared their classes and bibliographic materials thoroughly and with enthusiasm. Each seminar involved an enormous preparation process. Some preparations were awkward such as when the Canadian ambassador*s wife learned that the home freezer she was

lending for Mary Lou Florian*s class on pest control in museums was going to be used to kill insect infestations!

The foreign instructors and the course subjects for the first session were:

Carolyn Rose (Introduction to Conservation, Protein Materials Conservation)
David Erhardt (Environmental Agents and Their Impact on Objects Composed of Organic Materials)
Dianne van der Reyden (Paper Conservation)
Mary Ballard (Textiles Conservation)
David von Endt (Protein Materials Chemistry and Deterioration), all from the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC,
Mary Lou Florian (Biological Agents, Plant Fiber Materials), Emerita - Royal British Columbia Museum of Canada.

Methods
During the training sessions participants work in teams. They are also involved with some aspects of the program*s organization, such as care and control of tools, control of supplies, gathering and filing information, preparation of directories and bibliographies, etc.

During the first training session the students carried out considerable laboratory work that included basic chemistry, identification, and testing of materials to be used in conservation. As an example, during the paper seminar, the instructor submitted different types of paper to each group. They had to perform a battery of tests to identify fibers and pulp type in order to determine if the samples were adequate for conservation purposes.

Evaluation
There was an evaluation procedure for each seminar, such as a final exam or practicum as determined by each instructor. Student reports documenting technical visits and practicums were evaluated, as well as each student's attitude and effort. The project that the participants conducted during the 20 week break included testing their museum's environment and analyzing a problem or a collection object. This work was evaluated, and based on the results, the students were invited to attend the second session. As a final evaluation at the end of the program, the participants will be required to organize and teach a seminar on preventive conservation for museum technicians.

We would like to acknowledge Carolyn Rose's commitment to our program. It would not have been possible to accomplish this project without her knowledge, teaching skills and hard work.
The program has provided us with many special opportunities to create partnerships as well as a unique learning approach and environment that has fostered information sharing. Hopefully, the program will add an analytical perspective to the ways in which institutions care for their collections in the future and will set a solid foundation for the development of important conservation and exhibition programs throughout Argentina.

María Esteva
Conservation Projects Coordinator

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THE STORAGE OF ETHNOGRAPHIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM COLLECTIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL

Gedley Belchior Braga
Yacy-Ara Froner

A large project to improve the 500 square meter storage area at the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at the University of São Paulo (MAE-USP) was carried out in the last two years. As part of this project, 100,000 archaeological and ethnographic objects were merged and re-organized to better serve two museum mandates: first, active collecting and scientific research; and second, public progamming and exhibits.

The re-storage project was funded by two foundations: the Fundaçao de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo (FAPESP), a State of São Paulo public institution that supports scientific research, and the Amparo à Cultura, Educaçao e Promoçao Social Foundation (Vitae), a private organization that supports cultural intitiatives. These foundations provided funds for the development of curatorial projects, the purchase of furniture, the installation of environmental control and fire supression systems, the building of a fumigation chamber/room, the re-modeling of the storage area, and the purchase of supplies and special materials for housing collections.

We planned our storage work in three phases, organized by culture and materials of manufacture: first, the storage of Brazilian and North American ethnographic artifacts; then, African, South American and Mediterranean archaeological and ethnographic artifacts; and finally, the storage of prehistoric artifacts from Brazil.

Pest Control and Superficial Cleaning

We found that many ethnographic objects had been attacked by insects, requiring drastic measures of pest control. Fumigation using Gastoxin (the Brazilian commercial label of phosphine or hydrogen phosphide) was used to purge large objects such as baskets, arrows and clothing. Freezing was used to eradicate insects from smaller artifacts (as recommended by Mary Lou Florian in the course, "Principios Cientificos de Restauracao", CECOR/UFMG, Belo Horizonte, Brazil, 1996). As freezing and phosphine leave no residue in the objects, regular inspections and monitoring of collections are part of our program.

All materials were superficially cleaned using small, soft brushes on a "cleaning table" (made in Brazil by Dinaman - it is a small table with a low pressure suction system like a vacuum cleaner) usually used to clean paper and books. This equipment was satisfactory in eliminating superficial dust. Interventive treatments were not carried out during this process, but those objects requiring complex treatments were identified and listed in a report for future attention.

Documentation
All persons involved in the re-storage project, both conservators and archivists, were responsible for documenting the location and condition of the objects as work proceeded. We created a simple index card report to record object location, as well as a primary survey of degradation and documentation problems such as missing or incorrect documentation and inventory problems.

Storage System
An environmentally controlled modular mobile compactor storage system was planned with the help of Telos Company, a factory that builds pre-fabricated steel structures of this kind in Brazil. Articles published in *Storage of Natural History Collections: Ideas and Practical Solutions* (edited by C.Rose and R. Torres, 1985) were very helpful in our planning. The mobile systems were designed specially for our storage area and needs, with a space savings of 50% over conventional storage furniture. Objects could now be stored in a controlled environment free of light, dust, insects, and damaging climatic variations. In addition, access to objects is improved as the storage system allows for the typological organization of collections as designated in visible storage criteria. Five types of special modular structures were used to create special cabinets for the artifacts: rolled storage for large, flat, and flexible objects such as textiles; two kinds of movable trellis for the vertical storage of arrows, staffs, masks, and large baskets; drawers to store small objects; and shelves to store baskets, ceramics, and other kinds of artifacts.

Storage Materials, Tools and Supplies
Materials and methods employed in this project were selected in accordance with current literature, as well as information received from training courses in preventive conservation such as the "Conservacion Preventiva: Colleciones del Museo y su Medio Ambiente" (Oaxaca - 1995). Examples of the kinds of storage materials used include hot melt silicone as an adhesive to make acid-free boxes with Ethafoam (expanded polyethylene foam), hollowed Ethafoam tubes for supports for textiles, and non-woven polyester fabric to protect textiles and arrows.

The first priority was to group similar types of artifacts made of like materials. These objects were then placed in drawers and boxes made to support their particular structural and material requirements. We planned the furniture (large scale) and the boxes and drawers (small scale) addressing the structural, dimensional and weakness differences among particular materials. The goal of using polyethylene foam boxes with a separator/support system was to protect fragile artifacts and isolate them from each other. This system also provides easy access to objects stored inside drawers. Blankets made from non-woven polyester fabric (made by Freudenberg - Brazil) were employed to protect large objects such as masks and clothes stored in a sliding steel trellis on which objects can be hung vertically. Two types of Ethafoam tubes were used: the first one, with an 8 inch diameter was used to cover PVC tubular supports for rolled textiles; the second one, with a 4 inch diameter was used to protect arrows against contact with the wire of the trellis. On the base of the module we used an Ethafoam plank to protect the lower extremities of the arrows. Baskets and fragile objects were carefully wrapped in the non-woven polyester fabric and stored on shelves.

Conclusion
As of this writing, we have re-stored more than 40,000 objects. We verify that this method was

the best way to follow preventive conservation guidelines. It also allowed us to evaluate which artifacts need more complex treatments and which need immediate care. We are, however, open to changes and adjustments as necessary should we observe any problems in daily collections work.

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INDIGENOUS CURATION

Christina Kreps

The specialized collection, storage, and care of objects is often considered a Western pre-occupation. But nearly all cultures keep objects of special value, and many have created elaborate methods for storing, conserving, classifying, displaying, and transmitting knowledge about them. These methods, in many respects, are analogous to professional museum curatorship. Yet, until relatively recently, non-western, or "indigenous," curatorial practices escaped the attention of western museologists and scholars. This lack of attention has largely been due to the dominance of a western, scientifically based museology and a belief in the superiority of its methods.

The growing recognition of and respect for indigenous curation, or "traditional care," can be attributed to several developments that have occurred in the museum world over the past decade or more. One is the sheer proliferation of museums across the globe. No longer confined to metropolitan centers and catering to urban elites, today museums of all sizes and forms can be found in some of the most seemingly "out-of-the-way" places. As scholars have begun to investigate the forms museums take in diverse settings they have observed how the museum is transformed to take on local cultural characteristics. While some have been concerned with the "indigenization" of the museum concept, others have begun to explore people's own indigenous models of museums as well as curatorial practices.

Greater awareness of the importance and value of traditional care is one of the many outcomes of the changing power relations between mainstream Euro-American museums and Native American communities in the post-NAGPRA era. The increasing presence of Native American curators, traditional scholars, and advisors in mainstream museums is challenging the hegemony of western, scientifically based museological paradigms. Although the co-curation of collections has met resistance in some quarters, in others it has been embraced as an exciting opportunity to

establish collaborative relations with Native American communities, to gain a deeper understanding of the meanings and values of certain classes of objects, and to expand our knowledge of alternative methods of curation. The establishment of museums and cultural centers on the part of native American communities themselves has also added to our awareness of the diversity of curatorial approaches–that what is appropriate in one context may not be in another.

Acknowledging the value of indigenous curation should not diminish the role of professional curatorship in museums. Certainly, it would be shortsighted and irresponsible to suggest, for example, that professional conservation techniques are categorically unsuitable. But rather, recognition opens up possibilities for dialogue and the exchange of information, knowledge and expertise. The point is to give credence to bodies of knowledge and practices that have been historically overlooked, or worse, devalued. (It is worth noting here that professional conservators have been some of the first to systematically analyze and document traditional conservation techniques in their search for solutions to conservation problems [see Wolfe and Mibach 1983]).

While indigenous curatorial practices are unique cultural expressions that deserve documentation and preservation in their own right, they can also be heuristic, awakening us to some of the assumptions and values embedded in our own practices. Through their study we may come to see how professional curatorial practices, regarded as "natural" and "logical," are cultural constructs and products of our own museum culture. As true in the deconstruction of any paradigm, we begin to unravel its meanings when we place it in critical and dialectical relationship to another.

Indigenous curation is a rich field of anthropological inquiry that is just beginning to be explored. As a research topic it has much to contribute not only to museum and materials culture studies, but also to other research domains such as the anthropology of time. For instance, the study of indigenous concepts of conservation and preservation can lead to insights into people's sense of temporality, historical consciousness, and modes of expressing concerns for the future. Indigenous curation also constitutes a form of "indigenous knowledge," which has become important for understanding the ways people order and communicate about the world, and what serves as the information base of a society. Through the study of indigenous knowledge systems we have come to see that there is not one, but many ways of knowing.

The recognition of indigenous curatorial practices is another step toward the decolonization and democratization of museums and museum practice. It reminds us that while museums are as diverse as the communities they represent, so too are the ways in which people care for and preserve their cultural heritages.

References

Wolfe, Sara and Lisa Mibach. 1983. Ethical Considerations in the Conservation of Native American Sacred Objects. *Journal of the Association of International Conservators* 23:1-6.

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF TETRAPANAX PITH PAPER ARTIFACTS

Fei Wen Tsai

In 1996, the Anthropology Department in the National Museum of Natural History received a grant from the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange to survey and conserve Chinese paper-based artifacts in the department. The survey shows that the following types of artifacts are likely to contain pith: hair pins decorated with flowers, flower bouquets, and watercolor paintings.

Pith paper is made from thin slices of the spongy tissue in the stem of a small tree named "Tung-tsaou", abundant in southern China and Taiwan. The botanical name of Tung-tsaou is Tetrapanax papyriferus, belonging to the Araliaceae (ginseng) family. Pith paper is soft, white, and spongy, with a velvety feel. It has been used for making flowers in China for centuries. In addition, the paper has also been used as a substrate for watercolor paintings because of its ability to maintain vivid colors and to produce raise images after absorbing water-based media, creating a special effect. Pith paper was not exported to England until 1805. In the 19th century western tourists in China and Taiwan brought back souvenirs of watercolor paintings on pith papers. Objects made of pith paper are rarely sold in today's market place; most are now found in archives, museums, and private collections.

Pith Paper Artifacts

Artificial flowers

The use of pith paper probably originated with making artificial flowers. The earliest literature is documented in "Jiann Kang Shyr Luh" (Official Records in the Year of Jiann Kang) in the Tsin Dynasty (265 - 420 A.D.). The records state that the Emperor Huey Ti ordered servants to arrange five-colored Tung-tsaou flowers. People also began to earn a living by making artificial flowers at that time (Wang, 1997). During the Tang and the Sung Dynasties (618 - 1279 A.D.), artificial-flower hair pins were worn by men and women. Mass production of flowers probably did not begin until the Ming Dynasty (1368 - 1662 A.D.). At that time, flower pins were only used on special occasions, such as the Chinese New Year period, and then only females wore the flowers in their hair. For making flowers, thin slices of pith are sometimes lined with paper, such as Xian paper, Pi (bast-fiber) paper, Zhu (bamboo) paper, etc. After the flowers are made, they are dyed in different colors and secured with metal wires. Kiangsu Province was famous for making pith paper flowers.

Watercolor Paintings

There is little literature recording the earliest use of pith as a watercolor painting substrate in China. Pith paper paintings appear to have originated in South China. Not until the mid 19th century did these paintings become popular for the tourist trade (Bell, 1985). They were usually

bound into an album, and sold to foreigners who were allowed to visit Hong Kong or Canton. Most images in pith paintings in the Anthropology Department display aspects of Chinese life, such as customs, occupations, costumes, etc. Some present an aesthetic view of Chinese flora and fauna. In addition to these conventional scenes, images of unusual content were also painted. For example, an album illustrating various scenes of Chinese methods of punishment is now held in the National Anthropological Archives at the National Museum of Natural History. Most pith paintings found in archives and museums are executed in finely detailed style. Ink-wash style paintings are occasionally seen. For example, landscape paintings in ink-wash style, about 8" x 15" in size, were presented to the author by a Chinese painting scroll mounter in Taiwan in the summer of 1998. Commonly, a pith paper painting is mounted in the following way: After images are painted on the pith paper (which may be done on both sides of the pith), paste is applied at the back of the four corners and the painting is lined with a sheet of paper. Four strips of textile (usually silk) are pasted around the image to form a frame. The mounted pith painting is then bound into an album. In general, the size of the album is small, although some are as large as 8"x10".

Notes on Tetrapanax Pith Papermaking Procedures by Hand

In the summer of 1998, the author interviewed Kelly Chang, who took over her mother's pith papermaking business a few years ago. The following are notes on Tetrapanax pith papermaking procedures, primarily based on her narrative. (The procedures of pith papermaking are also explained in great detail in Bell, 1985.)

Obtaining the Pith: After the trees are chopped down, the pith is obtained on site from 1 to 2 meter length logs. A wooden or bamboo plug about the size of the pith diameter is selected to push the pith out of the log. The plug is inserted in the pith area, and held tightly with one hand to secure the plug and log; the log is then pounded vertically with both hands against a solid surface such as a stone to push the pith core out. Then the log is pounded onto the ground several times in order to split the tree bark. No soaking or cutting branches after the harvest was mentioned.

Preparation Before Sheet Formation: Making pith paper requires a sharp knife and a slicing board, normally made of brick. Metal strips fastened to the upper and the lower edges of the brick are used to gauge thickness. In order to adjust the paper thickness, two or three layers of newspaper strips are sometimes pasted, and then inserted into a gap between the metal strips and the brick. The laminated paper strips have to be extremely even in order to produce an even thickness of the sheets. Thicker pith paper is used for paintings, and thinner pith paper for making flowers.

Sheet Formation: The whole pith core is cut into rods in a desired width starting from the best end to maximize the quantity and quality of pith. After the rods are cut, each is placed along the right edge of the board and sliced by rotating it on the board from right to left with the knife advancing in the same direction. A moderate amount of pressure is applied with the palm of the hand and fingers to the pith during rotation. It is crucial for the makers to apply even pressure on the pith rod in order to achieve an even thickness of sliced pith. Once the pith reaches the left edge of the board, it is returned to the right edge. The slicing procedure is continued from right to left.

Trimming: Once scrolls of sliced pith are stacked to a certain height, they are trimmed into sheets.

Tool Maintenance: It is very important to make sure the knives are sharp and the bricks are leveled to obtain the finest quality of sliced pith. The tools are checked every morning at the pith papermaking shop before the pith rods are sliced.

Current Status of Tetrapanax Pith Papermaking Business in Taiwan

Bell recorded that pith paper continued to be made on a limited scale in Hsin-Chu, Taiwan in the1980's. By the time of my visit in 1998, pith paper was no longer produced in Taiwan due to the expensive labor cost. Ms. Chang has moved her company to Fukien Province in Mainland China to improve her profit margin. Most modern pith paper is made by machine; according to Chang, handmade pith paper objects are periodically found in Kweichow Province in southwestern China. Modern pith paper is used primarily for making flowers, such as red roses, and occasionally for greeting cards and paintings. South Americans are today's biggest buyers of pith paper objects.

Other Uses of Pith

Tetrapanax Pith

In addition to making flowers and paintings, Tung tsaou is a very useful plant. The pith rods are sometimes dyed in different colors and sold to school children for making toys in handicraft classes (note 1). The juice of the plant obtained by boiling the wood is considered a cure for uremia. The juice can also be used as a tonic for postnatal care (note 2 for recipe). Scraps of pith pieces were sold to funeral homes where the pith was placed in the bottom of coffins to absorb body fluids. The pith may also have helped preserve and insulate the bodies from heat and moisture (Murdock, 1953). This practice was limited to high-class Chinese funerals. Today this use of pith is rare because of the dwindling business of pith plant cultivation in Taiwan.

Solapith

Solapith, obtained from Aeschynomene Indica or Aeschynomene Aspera (bean family), is used in India for making helmets, called Sola hats. It is also currently used for making decorative sculptures, toys, ornamental boxes, decorative hangings, etc. (note 3).

Notes:

1. Tetrapanax pith is available from:
Su Ho Memorial Foundation
68, Chang An E. Road
Taipei
Taiwan
Tel: 886-2-507-5539

2. Recipe for Postnatal Care obtained from SS Wan's homepage:
(Helps in blood circulation and in increasing milk flow for new mothers. Can be drunk often during the breastfeeding stage.)

Herbal Lei-Yu Soup

1 Lei-Yu / li-yu (live Chinese carp)
20g Tung Choe / tongcao (tetrapanax) - available from Chinese medical shops

Remove gills and rinse fish. Rinse herbs. Put fish and herbs into crockpot and fill with hot water. Boil for two hours. Drain soup to drink warm. No need to eat fish.

3. Solapith products are available from the following two sources:

The Great Indian Baazar
Dr. Amit Kumar Chattopadhyay
New Delhi
India
Tel: 91-11-6961886

R.Kundu and Associates
Block-C19, Flat-8,Kalindi Housing Estate
Calcutta-700089.
Tel: (91)(33)442-3019/5228
E-mail: bellcomp@hotmail.com

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THE REPAIR OF PITH PAPER OBJECTS

Jayne Girod Holt, Paper Conservator

I had the privilege of treating several sets of Chinese pith paper paintings over the course of a two year project at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History. Although, technically, pith is more an ethnographic material than a paper, many of the techniques used in paper conservation are applicable to the treatment of pith.

Most of our sets of paintings are mounted in the traditional manner onto paper pages and then bound into books. The paintings are mounted onto the pages with a framework of paper-backed textile ribbons which cradle the pith and are adhered directly to the page with wheat starch paste. Theoretically, the 'floating' pith panel is then free to expand and contract independently of the paper page. However, in our collection, most of the corners and edges of the pith papers mounted in books were caught in the adhesive that was used to attach the mounting ribbons to the pages. The resulting tension created splits in these areas as the pith contracted differently from the paper page to which it was adhered. In addition, all the pith paper paintings in our collection exhibited other structural damage. Most were fractured and had losses and many were creased or folded.

Before choosing a treatment protocol or initial testing of treatments, I consulted with several paper conservators who had experience or interest in pith paper. In general, I was cautioned about two things regarding pith: its extreme sensitivity to water and its propensity to trap surface grime due to its open pore structure.

Flattening creases

My experience with modern samples and subsequent treatment of the collection provided additional information qualified the advice that I was given on water sensitivity of pith paper. One word of caution that I received was that water applied directly to the surface of pith will cause the pith to expand and leave a permanently raised blemish. This is supported when viewing examples of pith paintings and noting that the heavily painted areas tend to be raised, giving them a look of having been embroidered. (In retrospect, I believe this is due more to the heavy, coarse pigments filling and expanding the surface cells of the pith). As an experiment, I attempted to "write" my name with water onto the surface of one of my modern pith samples. Try as I might, I could not get the pith to expand, even with a fully loaded brush. The surface character was changed under transmitted light**,** however: the areas exposed to the most water seemed to become slightly more opaque.

Because the pith did not appear to be as immediately reactive to moisture as I had been led to believe, I felt comfortable relaxing and flattening the folds and creases on our older pith with small amounts of deionized water that were applied directly to both sides of the crease. As soon as the area relaxed, the pith was dried under blotter with light weight. No visible change was noted after this treatment.

Sensitivity to humidity, on the other hand, is another matter. Some of my modern samples of pith were placed in a humidification chamber over, but not in contact with, wet blotter. This is the same method often used to humidify paper. When paper is humidified, it expands slightly, opening surface grain, and becomes limp and relaxed. In contrast to paper, within half an hour, the pith became pliable but curled into rolls along the grain, presumably returning to its original shape when on the plant. Even after several hours of humidification, the pith stayed in a roll and never flattened out the way paper would have. Considering the thick, coarse pigmented paints often used, this extreme flexing would be dangerous for a painting. An added disadvantage to overall humidification is that, after manually uncurling the pliable, humidified pith and drying it under light restraint, the pith paper became extremely flat, without the gentle undulations normally associated with it. Therefore, I concluded that overall humidification was not an option for pith paintings.

Mending

Part of the charm of pith paper is its translucency. This characteristic is used to advantage by the painters. Human flesh and white flowers are usually painted with a wash of base color on the back of the pith and details, such as outlines and features, are applied to the front. This same translucency also means that mending strips applied to the back of the painting may be visible as shadows. Consequently, most of the paper conservators with whom I talked prefer to line the entire pith paintings rather than mend individual tears. Lining also provides overall support for the easily fractured pith, and, as a rule, pith paintings tend to be damaged in more than one area. The lining method I chose is one that I had used successfully on tracing paper in the past and that was favored by Murray Lebwohl, a paper conservator in the D.C. area experienced in working with pith paper. Lens tissue was chosen as the lining paper because it is very thin and even. Although machine-made, it does not have a strong grain direction. Nevertheless, the orientation of the grain of the lining paper, vis-a-vis the pith paper, is important.

In experiments with modern pith, I found that lining with the grains parallel to each other resulted in tightly curled pith. This was not a big surprise. However, what did surprise me was that lining with the grains perpendicular to each other resulted in a definite curl, although not as strong as in the previous orientation. I wondered if the regular honeycomb grain pattern of the pith enabled it to curl in two directions. Turning the lining paper 45° to the pith grain consistently resulted in a flat surface.

The adhesive that I chose was Klucel G, a cellulose ether. Klucel G is soluble in ethanol as well as water. I prepared the lens tissue by coating it with a 2% (weight per volume) solution of Klucel G in water. Two coats were adequate. After the adhesive had dried, the lining paper was cut to size with the grain direction running at a 45° angle to the pith, (Be sure to mark the grain direction at the edge of the lens tissue with pencil *before* coating with adhesive.). The pith painting was laid face down on Hollytex polyester web and blotter. The lining sheet was laid adhesive side up on a second piece of Hollytex and the adhesive was brushed with enough ethanol to reactivate the Klucel G but not flood it. The lining sheet was picked up by the Hollytex and laid over the pith painting and brushed into place with a wide soft brush to ensure even contact. Then additional blotter was quickly laid on top and light weights applied. This was left overnight before removing the lined painting and trimming the edges of the lining paper.

If mending strips are desired for small, unobtrusive repairs, the lining tissue may be cut into strips and applied as local mends. Another paper that is good for lining or mending is Tengujo Japanese paper.

One caution regarding the use of ethanol: While pith does not react to ethanol, the yellow pigments used in pith paintings can bleed if wetted with too much ethanol. One paper conservator with whom I spoke considered this an unfortunate side effect of mending pith. However, it can be controlled somewhat by judicious use of ethanol during the lining.

Filling Losses

The modern samples of pith in my lab were much thinner and whiter than the older pith paintings and did not make satisfactory fills for the losses. In addition, some of the losses were quite large, extending across the width of the painting. On the advice of Murray Lebwohl, I manufactured a

fake pith using layers of Tengujo Japanese paper and methyl cellulose adhesive. In order to give it the spongy translucent quality of pith, no pressure was put on the fill material while the adhesive dried. These fills were adhered into the losses, and attached directly to the lining paper. Some additional toning was done afterwards with dry pastel.

Cleaning
Pith is tricky to clean because much of the grime tends to be deep inside the cell structure and because pith is easily compressed and abraded. It is best to confine cleaning to a very weak vacuum or soft brush. For heavier grime, a kneaded eraser may be used to gently lift out grime by patting the surface.

Mounting
Two of our sets of paintings came to the lab in polyester L-sleeves (two sheets of polyester heat welded along two adjacent sides) and showed no physical evidence of ever having been mounted. The L-sleeves served to protect the pith but unfortunately some of the coarse pigment used in the paintings was adhering to the plastic. I created new mounts for these paintings using modern paper-backed scroll mounting silk, toned to the traditional pale blue, and a medium-weight Japanese paper.

STANDARDS FOR FIRST NATIONS COLLECTIONS

Patricia Fiori

Editors' Note:
The author underscores that the following is a working document being developed by museums and indigenous cultures in a specific region for specific collections and is in no way intended as a guideline for other institutions. The editors feel that this document is relevant to ethnographic conservators in that it points to a changing role for conservators in direct response to a change in standards of care of collections.

The First Peoples and Saskatchewan Museums Committee of the Museums Association of Saskatchewan, Canada, are proposing a new set of standards for museums with aboriginal collections. These new standards will be added to the Standards for Saskatchewan Museums document, first published in 1988 and revised in 1991.

These proposed new standards are being presented here in draft form. The First Peoples and Saskatchewan Museums Committee will not formally publish the standards until both the museum community and the First Nations community has considered, discussed, and commented on these 18 new standards.

The writing of these new standards is the result of many requests over the years from Saskatchewan museums for help with their First Nations and Métis collections. Equally important, the new standards are an active response to the Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples that was published in 1992 by the Canadian Museums Association and the Assembly of First Nations. The Task Force Report includes principles and recommendations

guiding the care of First Nations collections and the building of relationships between the museum and First Nations communities.

The mandate of the First Peoples and Saskatchewan Museums Committee is to develop a framework for cultivating mutual respect between the Saskatchewan museum community and the Aboriginal community. The Committee has a number of goals, but has given the highest priority to strategies that will provide access by Aboriginal people into the Saskatchewan museum community. Full participation from the First Nations and Métis communities in the care and interpretation of their heritage is essential for museums if they are to honour their public trust.

Standards for the Care of First Nations and Métis Collections

Disclosure and Participation

1. Inventory of all the First Nations and Métis collections in the museum.
2. Inventory made available to the First Nations and Métis communities upon request; a copy of the information provided to the MAS office.
3. Mailing lists for information and promotional materials include First Nations and Métis groups and organizations.
4. First Nations and Métis people participate in the documentation of First Nations and Métis collections.
5. Full participation of First Nations and Métis people in the planning, development and production of exhibitions about First Nations and Métis objects and story lines.
6. Language and terminology used by the museum, in relation to its First Nations and Métis collections, is accepted by contemporary First Nations and Métis communities.
7. First Nations and Métis people are actively involved in the management and governance of the museum; written strategies for actively involving First Nations and Métis people in the museum.

Repatriation

8. Human remains are not held in the collections.
9. Immediate reinterment of human remains, both partial remains and whole skeletal remains.
10. Immediate reinterment of objects known to be funerary objects.
11. Reproductions of funerary objects are not made or used in the museum.
12. Written repatriation policy or set of procedures for repatriation of First Nations objects.
13. The museum does not repatriate for repatriation's sake.

Sacred/Sensitive

14. Written policy that prevents First Nations objects that may be considered sensitive from being photographed, numbered, exhibited or used in programming.
15. Storage of sensitive First Nations objects in a separate location from the rest of the collections.
16. Restricted access to sensitive objects; access granted only to traditional practitioners.
17. Written policy prohibiting the active acquisition of sensitive objects.

Training
18. Sufficient training for volunteers, staff and board members related to the First Nations and Métis collections.

Definition of "Sensitive/Sacred"

The term "sensitive/sacred" is difficult to define precisely, but it can be described as:

- Objects/anything used in ceremonies
- Anything that a person used that reflected the spiritual power of that person,
- Objects found at grave sites,
- Objects found at sacred sites (left as offerings),
- Cultural objects that have ongoing historical and/or cultural importance to an Aboriginal community,
- Objects are sensitive when their treatment by a museum offends or arouses the sensibilities of the people who know and understand the use/history/meaning of the object.

Here is a list of examples of sensitive/ sacred objects that may be in your collections:

- Medicine bundles
- False Face masks
- Pipes and stems, associated pipe bags
- Eagle feathers and fans
- Rattles
- Bone whistles
- Drums used in ceremonies
- Sweet grass
- Human skeletal remains
- Objects known to be grave goods
- Ceremonial bundles
- Backrest banners
- Painted tipis
- Hawk fans
- Umbilical cord packages
- Headdresses
- Staffs
- Objects with red ochre on them
- Moccasins with beading on the bottom
- Material that was left to the elements after a Sun Dance
- Objects known to come from a sacred site that was left as an offering at the site

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KAITIAKITANGA - LOOKING AFTER THE CULTURE: INSIGHTS FROM 'WITHIN' - TWO CURATORIAL PERSPECTIVES

Arapata Hakiwai

Working on the Mäori exhibitions for the new Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa) has been an experience that has had many dimensions. Adjectives such as invigorating, challenging, empowering, rewarding and difficult easily come to mind - but underlying the work of developing exhibits are processes that challenge the way many museums do things. In an approach described by some as the "new anthropology" of museums, indigenous and native peoples worldwide are taking more pro-active attempts at reclaiming their cultural heritage. My hope is that our experiences in the development of exhibitions at our museum may provide pathways on which other museums can engage and interact with other indigenous peoples.

As a Mäori curator working for the new museum, I recognized positive signs that things were going to be done differently. The change and difference of this planned new museum was poignantly stated in many of the guiding documents. For example, one such document states that the museum would provide a new opportunity for Maori themselves look after their Mäori taonga (treasures). The museum's Bicultural Policy further reinforced such mandates by affirming the right of Mäori to manage their taonga in the most appropriate way.

Empowering Mäori to manage and control their taonga is clearly innovative and embraces many of the concerns that indigenous peoples worldwide raise with regard to museums and what they do. Another important step the museum took to reinforce its stated goals was to employ a Kaihautü (Mäori leader) in a position equivalent to that of the CEO of the museum. The Kaihautü is responsible for the overall management of Mäori taonga held in the museum and directly accountable to iwi (tribes). This position was, and still is, significant, given the bicultural nature of the museum and its commitment to work with, and on behalf of, Mäori people.

For me, the most important dimension of the exhibition process was the empowerment of Mäori people from the first conceptual phase through its completion. Richard West's (1993: 39) discussion of the "new inclusiveness", perhaps sums up the situation whereby the museum should, and must, work for and on behalf of the people whose treasures it holds.

The concept of *Mana Taonga*[1] was central in laying the foundation and setting a course for Mäori participation and involvement in the Museum of New Zealand. Broadly speaking, the concept recognizes the spiritual and cultural connections of taonga with the people, thus acknowledging the special relationships this creates between the museum, the people, and taonga. The concept of *Mana Taonga* as presented by Apirana Mahuika to the Board of Trustees in 1996 stated:

1. Rights of iwi to the [Museum's] marae in equality with all other iwi was their right through their taonga held by the Museum.

2. These rights were enshrined by the fact that they had a whakapapa both in the traditions/history expressed by the taonga as well as that of the creator of taonga.

3. These rights accorded to iwi the mana to care for their taonga, to speak about and with them, and to determine their exhibitionary use or uses by the Museum.

4.These rights gave iwi the mana of co ownership of the marae with all other iwi.

Thus from the very outset every attempt was made to contact and liaise with the Mäori people, whether whänau (family), hapü (sub-tribe), iwi (tribe) and/or organisation. Full consultation was a necessary part of the Mäori process to the extent that Mäori people were giving their approval and permission to go ahead with the exhibition, were involved in the concepts for the exhibition and their taonga, were involved in the selection of taonga, their presentation, and most importantly their interpretation. All these things were considered necessary if the exhibition was to "speak with authority", that is, to speak with the authority of the voices of the people. Secondly, the exhibition acknowledged the mauri or living life force that taonga have. As Barbara Kirshenblatt-Bimblett (1998: 17) says: "For taonga the issue is not a second life as an exhibit. What is at stake is the restoration of living links to taonga that never died...The life force of taonga depends not on techniques of animation but on the living transmission of cultural knowledge and values." The living umbilical cord attached to taonga and the people is further reinforced in the words of Sid Mead (1990: 166): "For the living relatives the taonga is more than a representation of their ancestor; the figure is their ancestor and woe betide anyone who acts indifferently to their tipuna (ancestor)."

The recognition that taonga have as many layers of meaning and significance as there are relationships was especially significant to me because we all knew there were hundreds and thousands of people standing with us and beside us in the development of the Mäori exhibitions. Our Kaihautü, Cliff Whiting, once said that when he stands to speak he stands in the knowledge that his ancestors are standing with him as well as his mokopuna (grandchildren). For Cliff it was the past meeting the present and the future, and, for us Mäori curators, it was reconnecting the taonga with their people to make them live.

One of the critical areas of the Mäori exhibition process centered on the interpretation of the taonga. Questions asked included: How should the taonga be presented and displayed, what should be said about them, who should speak about them, and how should the körero be presented? As Mäori curators and kaitiaki (guardians), the path was very clear; Mäori had to present their own stories, their own histories. Sid Mead (1990: 165) is very clear about what he believes should be done: "One way of recapturing one’s culture is to take control of the language of definitions and descriptions and to have members of the culture speak for themselves, present their culture such as their music, their dances, and their various art forms in a manner they consider appropriate to them."

The area of interpretation caused immense frustration for our team. For the writing process we wanted to inject the first person Mäori voice, or rather, the voices of the peoples. Labeling in the past was done in the third person, very cold and clinical, to the point where the people found it difficult to relate to what was being said. For us, the writing had to be done for a Mäori audience, writing in a way that presented the körero (messages) that particular tribes wanted. It was important in the consultation process to find out what were the important messages they wanted to communicate to the world. Their language, their histories and messages, their mana (authority)

needed to be taken seriously. In large part, the writing process did allow for Mäori to tell their own story but there were areas that still reified typical museum practice. Mäori peer reviews during key stages of the exhibition development gave further validation and mana to the project. Their collective wisdom provided a cloak of protection in the work that we were doing.

Another interpretive area that caused frustration was the design of the exhibition area. We had Mäori designers at Te Papa who interpreted Mäori concepts from an informed knowledge base and these designs were redolent with meaning, significance, and creativity. Unfortunately, many of their ideas were never accepted because of a reluctance to accept other ways of seeing and other ways of doing. The use of certain colours, patterns, and shapes were advanced in the hope that the design of the space would look and "feel Mäori", thus providing mana to the taonga being presented. The "tunnel-vision" and mono-cultural approach to the exhibition design layout meant that crucial layers of Mäori interpretation went missing. For the team, the interpretation of the taonga meant more than putting it onto a plinth and giving it a label. We considered its whakapapa (genealogy), its körero (messages), and hïtori (history), its mana (authority), its presence. Holistically, we wanted to present the mana of the taonga utilizing such things as space, shapes, and colours.

Finally, this paper is merely a brief introduction to some of the processes that we addressed. We knew that the museum had the taonga (treasures), but we also knew that the people were, in large part, alienated from what was rightfully theirs. Our mission was literally to break down the walls of the museum, reconnecting the umbilical cord between taonga and people, building two-way highways so that life could be given back to taonga that had been sleeping for years. Empowering the Mäori people in the whole process, from the initial ideas and exhibition concept phase through the selection and presentation of taonga, gave authority and mana to what we were doing. The creation of a marae (meetinghouse) for the museum was not by inheritance as in some other museums, but by desire. The commitment to become a bicultural museum was taken seriously. The whakapapa (genealogical relationship) of the taonga to their makers and owners was real; through the many hui (meetings), körero (talks) and rituals, the mauri or life force of the taonga was reinvigorated.

Footnote

1The concept of *Mana Taonga* has come under criticism from various quarters because to some it undermines the special relationship of *tangata whenua* (people of the land). For Paul Tapsell (1998: 214 - 215) the concept of *Mana Taonga* "demonstrates that the Museum's biculturalism is in reality no more than a monoculturally governed vehicle for the 'Mäorinization' of post-colonial New Zealand.

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by Awhina Tamarapa-Parata

E kore au e ngaro, he käkano i ruia mai i
Rangiätea...
I am not lost, for the seed was sown from
Rangiätea...

(Mäori proverb that gives reference to our identity and cultural, spiritual origins.)

It seems almost a lifetime since we stood outside on the marae (meetinghouse) promenade in the chill of dawn, and looked down on the thousands of people gathered to watch the opening ceremonies for Te Papa Tongarewa, the new Museum of New Zealand.

That day was an enormous occasion for everyone involved in the project, a project that was challenging and at times seemingly unending. Yet, like the long awaited birth of a child, the pain of labour became a thing of the past, replaced by awe and the humbling feeling of having created something unique and remarkable.

As a relatively young person in terms of my culture and profession, I joined adiverse, visionary, and young team to develop the Mäori exhibitions for the new building. Our Conceptual Leader was Cliff Whiting, contemporary Mäori artist and Kaihautü, equal to the CEO of the museum. Our objectives seemed clear to us. We were simply to create exhibitions about Mäori, for Mäori, by Mäori.

This was a challenge that we felt fundamentally underpinned the motive and purpose of a national museum and its relationships with the communities of Aotearoa New Zealand. It was an exercise in developing not only exhibitions but partnerships, where iwi (tribes) guided the display and interpretation of their taonga (cultural treasures) within the museum. We also wanted to continue a strong working relationship with these iwi to maintain culturally appropriate care and custodianship of their taonga.

The perception, however, of museums by iwi communities was mixed and at times guarded. Even though the hugely significant exhibition of tribal taonga, Te Mäori, which toured North America from1984 to 1985, was regarded as the turning point in museums' presentation of taonga, Mäori people were still very wary of the motives of museums. As a Mäori academic and one of the co-ordinators for Te Mäori, Hirini Moko Mead (1985:16) said, "we bought Mäori art out of the closet, out from obscurity, out from anonymity, and out of the cupboard ofprimitive contextualisation."

The exhibition invited for the first time, ona huge scale, Mäori people to be consulted and reunited with their tribal taonga. Koro Wetere (1983:17:6), New Zealand Minister for Mäori Affairs at the time, explained: "To the unknowing, the pieces themselves are merely made of wood and stone, but when the elders with the young come together to chant the rituals of yesteryear, and to sing the songs that recount the history, the hopes, and the aspirations of the people - then the exhibition lives."

Te Mäori taught the world that Mäoridom is a living culture and that our taonga express who we are - a people with a past,a present, and a future. It was this legacy that we felt compelled to continue.

With this in our minds, our exhibition became larger and more daunting than we had ever imagined. The processes of exhibition development were a great challenge for us to try to resolve, particularly with respect to managing tight timelines and the somewhat painful exercise of filtering fantastic ideas through cold harsh realism. But perhaps the greatest shift for the museum and for ourselves, as kaitiaki (caretakers) of our cultural treasures, was the high level at which we enforced and sought proactive involvement from iwi Mäori. The exhibition gradually took shape, in my belief, by the power of the taonga and their respective iwi. Mana Whenua, mai i a Rangi ki a Papa, the land, the people, the spirit that binds, became an exploration of the essence of what it means to be Mäori.

It is a celebration of the world of our tupuna (ancestors) and the taonga that embody that world and wealth of knowledge. It is also a celebration of revival, of survival, and exploring new boundaries. It is a story spoken by few,and by many. It is a story that continues an experience of thousands.

I have had the priviledge of watching the first wedge split from the totara log that eventually became the framework for the Mäkötukutuku wharepuni (house), recreated for the Mana Whenua exhibition.

We've trekked mountain ranges with members of Ngäti Hinewaka collecting material for this whare and marveled attheir newly revived skill of using traditional stone adzes for the timber work.

We've listened to members of Hau Manu, a small group of revivalists of traditional Mäori wind instruments, share their personal journeys in rediscovery and wonder at the knowledge and skill of our ancestors. I've stripped kiekie root for the binding on their instruments, and listened to the way in which our ancestors healed, celebrated, and mourned with these instruments.

We've witnessed the awesome power of karakia (prayers), whaikörero (oratory), and waiata (song), during many ceremonies for our taonga. We've enjoyed the excitement of hundreds of iwi gatherings and countless recollections of history. We've heard very moving stories of personal sacrifice and challenge, isolation and loneliness. We've supported iwi political stands, and traced their political and social history to today. We've farewelled many people to their final resting place, and welcomed a few into the world.

To me, personally, the reward has been a private journey in accepting the consequences of my own history. My individual story is repeated many times in the words and experiences of other Mäori throughout the exhibition, and in the course of its development. For me, Mana Whenua is more than an exhibition. It is a life story to be lived, and one to remind us of who we are.

As one of our elders has said: "It is written there, toi tu te whenua, the land remains forever, and our people will remain forever too."

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TRIBAL INVOLVEMENT IN EXHIBITION PLANNING AND CONSERVATION TREATEMENT: A NEW INSTITUTIONAL APPROACH

Rose Evans

This paper outlines new institutional approaches the Te Papa Museum of New Zealand has developed for incorporating extensive tribal involvement in its team-based exhibition development process and major conservation treatment projects. The Te Takinga storehouse treatment illustrates the new structure of exhibition teams, the nature of iwi (tribe) involvement, and the impact of these on the outcome of conservation decisions.

Te Takinga is an ornately carved, elevated storehouse on carved piles. Ngäti Pikiao (North Island tribe) constructed this Pataka (storehouse) in 1820. It is considered by Ngäti Pikiao to be a physical embodiment of a major ancestor from whom all the tribe's descendants trace their lineage. The Pataka is a symbol of wealth and status to Ngäti Pikiao and had, accordingly, been used as storage for implements, precious garments, and/or preserved foods.

The Dominion Museum (now Te Papa) acquired the Pataka in 1906. The original shell and legs had been left 'in situ', resulting in loss of the original shell and legs, so the museum's resident carver reconstructed the sides, rear and legs. A new roof was also constructed and an internal wooden frame was made. The 84 carvings were lashed with commercial hemp lengths and then nailed and screwed to this new internal structure in a random fashion. Since these early attempts to reconstruct the Pataka were considered inappropriate, it was decided that the Te Takinga needed to be deinstalled, conserved, moved to the new building, and reinstalled in its new exhibition space for the opening of Te Papa's new museum in February 1998.

The relationship between Ngäti Pikiao and Te Takinga was basic to this project. In acknowledging this relationship we needed to plan and manage a process to ensure credible iwi involvement.

Identifying a key Ngäti Pikiao person to act as tribal liaison was pivotal to this process. This person acted as an advocate for iwi in exhibition planning meetings, was in regular contact with iwi to update them on progress, and took conservation/exhibition issues back to iwi for discussion and resolution. This key liaison person, Sam Jackson, lived in Wellington but frequently visited Rotorua (the region where the Ngäti Pikiao community is located, central North Island) where he was able to liaise with iwi. In addition to this liaison position, Ngäti Pikiao identified a small group of representatives who lived in Wellington, who regularly attended team meetings and contribute to the ongoing development of the exhibition project.

The Te Takinga project represented a positive museum initiative by providing not only a direct dialogue between iwi and Te Papa museum staff, but also providing educational/employment opportunities. Ngäti Pikiao nominees were offered contract employment in the Conservation, Interpretation, Collection Management and Display Departments. Training workshops for iwi and relevant Te Papa staff were funded by the museum for the later phase employment in installation and restoration work**.**

Key Times/Areas of Involvement for Ngäti Pikiao

The following chart demonstrates the extent and manner in which iwi were involved in the development of the project:

Team Formation

- Nominate member/s of urban committee
- Endorsement of the Te Papa project exhibition team members
- Concept Development
- Input into the formation of exhibition concepts
- Endorsement of broad concepts
- Input into the interpretative approaches developed
- Design input
- Participation with and validation of research

De-installation

- Appropriate ceremony conducted, including removal of the mauri (life principle)
- Hands-on involvement with de-installation of the Te Takinga storehouse

Conservation

- Endorsement of proposed conservation treatments
- Hands-on involvement with minor treatments

Preparation of the New Foundation

- Putting in the mauri (life principle)

Movement to the Waterfront Site

- Hands-on involvement with movement to the waterfront
- Conservation technicians (2 contract positions)
- Workshop - lashing (6 participants)
- Workshop - roof thatching (6 participants)
- Workshop - traditional food preparation for display (partially funded)
- Carving – restoration (1 contract position)
- Research (1 contract position)
- Timber preparation – adze (1 contract position)
- Computer interpretation (1 contract position)

Opening

- Handing-over ceremony where Te Takinga is gifted to the nation (the physical aspect only, the mana remains with Ngäti Pikiao)

Conservation tasks within a museum have generally been defined within two museological disciplines of curator and conservator. A curator defines historical provenance concerning an object's function, use and significance. The conservator offers information regarding fabrication materials, manufacture and rates and causes of deterioration. Options for remedial treatment are presented and decisions on

a final treatment are made, with consideration given to all of these curatorial and conservation factors. This process is linear and exclusive. Treatment options are defined by a Conservation Code of Ethics.

However, in the process of negotiation with Ngäti Pikiao regarding the presentation and conservation treatment of Te Takinga, a different approach was required. A new set of factors needed to be taken into account for determining treatment options, treatment processes and outcomes. (The development of a core project exhibition team, of which the Conservation Department was a part, was established early on to facilitate this. This recognized Conservation Department involvement from the initial planning stages of function and use, design and layout, through to conservation treatment, and installation of the storehouse in the new museum.

As an iwi, Ngäti Pikiao had few past dealings with museums in regard to their taonga (treasures). Due to this, negotiations about treatment options required good liaison skills and the ability to translate difficult ethical concerns into practical outcomes.

To aid this consultative process with Ngäti Pikiao, a condition survey of the storehouse was produced. 'Like' elements from the storehouse were divided into twelve groupings of object type. Condition assessments and treatment recommendations were presented for each grouping. By this method it was possible to establish clear treatment options and time estimates per object. Alternative treatment options and recommendations were presented to iwi. Time frames and associated costs were included in the survey report.

Remedial conservation treatment activities were presented as options that could utilise the Ngäti Pikiao community. Ngäti Pikiao assistants were awarded contract positions and were trained and supervised to participate in installation/de-installation activities and to undertake many minor treatments such as carving rear, side and pile carvings. A programme and milestones for these contract positions were set for a three-month period. The development of these positions had the added advantage of allowing more time for myself, as project conservator, to complete the more extensive treatments.

Treatment for the most part on the reconstructed body of the storehouse was minor; emphasis was placed on minimal interference and retaining original materials. In this sense, adherence to a generic code of ethics could be maintained. However, for some of the stone-tooled original carvings extensive structural intervention was necessary and this involved major treatment.

Paint

Paint analysis was carried out on representative elements of the storehouse. Fourier Transform Infra Red and Scanning Electron Microscopy were carried out to establish paint layer formation, density and type. Results showed the original paint layer was poor and was consistent in colour with subsequent museum applications of paint. With the above information, both Ngäti Pikiao and myself deemed removal of original or subsequent paint applications to be inappropriate.

Carvings

The basis for all treatment recommendations was structural stabilisation, however, cosmetic treatments were included as options for Ngäti Pikiao consideration. This was not only to retain visual integrity of the storehouse but also for cultural reasons. For example, where longitudinal splits travelled across the faces of carved figures it was felt necessary to infill and inpaint these areas of loss and therefore restore cultural integrity of ancestral figures. This is a good example of where the perspective of iwi can initiate a different approach to treatment outcome. An institutional conservator may not consider interventions like these, but would more likely carry out treatments for structural or aesthetic reasons, but not necessarily for culturally based reasons.

Small but culturally important sections of the maihi (bargeboard) and paepae (threshold to porch) had been removed on acquisition in 1906. These carved areas were considered by iwi to be culturally integral to the carvings. However, they were not structurally necessary. It was

negotiated that a Ngäti Pikiao carver would be contracted to carve these missing sections and by doing this would create tribal continuity. No original material was removed in this process.

Tikanga (protocol)

All conservation treatment of Maori taonga is carried out under the premise of tikanga (protocol), which is very much rooted in a commonsense and respectful approach. With a few exceptions this parallels good conservation practice.

During treatment, restrictions are placed on the consumption of food and drink, standing or walking over carvings, use of saliva for treatments, and blowing on carvings. If a woman works on carvings, she does not do so during menstruation. Reasons for all of these are based in the maintenance of a spiritual and physical world view. The same considerations also impact upon the support and location of taonga in storage, movement and handling. If deemed necessary, prayers are said to remove a tapu (bringing the artifact into the realm of the ordnary) from the carvings prior to treatment and replace it afterwards.

Collection of Natural Material

Collection and utilization of authentic natural materials was an activity undertaken by Ngati Pikiao as part of the Te Takinga conservation project. Harakeke (*Phormium tenax*), gathered in Rotorua by iwi, was dressed and applied for re-lashing of the carvings to the internal frame. Paua shell (*Haliotus iris*) for missing eyes replacement and Raupo (*Typha orientilis*) for re-roofing, was collected by iwi and Te Papa museum staff. Expertise in traditional collection/gathering was aided by workshops financed by the museum to gather information on traditional methods and sources from other iwi around the country. Manuka (Lepospermum *scoparium*) was collected and formed a traditional internal frame, which conveniently served to hide a metal support system. Specific feathers were supplied by Te Papa taxidermy staff for ceremonial dressing of the storehouse once it was finally installed. Ngäti Pikiao saw these activities as a way of strengthening the connection between the storegouse and its place of origin.

Display

Since the interior of the storehouse was to be visible on display, it was negotiated to remove the internal wooden framework previously constructed by the museum's staff on acquisition and replace it with a traditional Manuka timber frame that would have been used in Te Takinga's original construction. A metal mounting system was designed by Te Papa display staff in collaboration with the conservator to fully support all elements without any structural intervention. In addition, structural piles were constructed from Lake Totara (*Podocarpus totara*) from the Rotorua region to replace those no longer existing. A Ngäti Pikiao carver contracted by the museum prepared these for installation.

Conclusion

The Te Takinga project represented the first major conservation treatment at Te Papa incorporating iwi involvement to such an extent. Through this project, a new process was developed that enabled both iwi and museum concerns to be addressed, and which respected both cultural and physical aspects of the storehouse's ongoing wellbeing.

The project involved a steep learning curve for both Te Papa staff and iwi, but the experience laid a sound foundation for working co-operatively with iwi communities in the treatment of their treasures. In retrospect, there were some aspects of the process that could be improved upon and have in subsequent treatment projects. In the beginning, our time frames for iwi consultations were unrealistic. In time we saw the need to have more meetings which allowed more opportunities for negotiation with iwi. This avoided delays in the treatment process while appropriate solutions were negotiated. Lessons also were learned in developing selection criteria for employing iwi assistants. Appropriate skills and aptitudes, in addition to a potential to develop culturally from working closely with their taonga were important criteria. Clear expectations from

both iwi and museum staff, and a structured performance review process, eliminated many problems. Lastly, we learned that budget, timeframe and quality expectations needed to be clearly established and agreed upon by all parties at the outset of such a large treatment project.

On a personal note, as a conservator with both Mäori and European lineage, I found the process of iwi negotiation to be difficult at times when upholding a code of ethics seemingly alien and inexplicable in its reason. However when the project was successfully brought to fruition, all these efforts seemed worthwhile.

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THE CONSERVATION OF WATERLOGGED COAL JET PIECES FROM A 17TH CENTURY PORTUGUESE SHIPWRECK

Aisha Fadhil Ali

Excavations of a shipwreck directly below Fort Jesus, on the Mombasa coastline, revealed many artefacts. Amongst the important artefacts retrieved were several unique coal jet pieces. The coal jet pieces ranged from earrings to pendants of different sizes. These jet objects were part of some 7,000 artefacts retrieved from the Portuguese warship, the Santo Antonio Da Tanna, sunk in 1697, following a siege by the Omani Arabs.

Because literature regarding treatment of coal jet pieces from a marine environment is limited, there were few guidelines for conservation of this material. Therefore, three different methods for drying jet objects were tried and the results were observed.

The first method employed was air drying. The second method used acetone as a dehydrant, and the third method used ethanol as a dehydrant. Objects of a small surface area were chosen in order to observe the maximum exchange of the solvent with the absorbed water in a short period of time. All three dehydration methods were followed by immersion in Paraloid B-72 to prevent cracking.

The procedures and their results are reported below.

Observation before treatment

No visible cracks were seen at the start of the procedures.

Desalination

It is important to note that all the jet pieces first underwent a desalination process. Each experiment involved a desalination process of lengthy and repeated immersion in water. Initially the desalination was conducted using tap water with the rationale that tap water contains less salts than water from a marine environment. Distilled water was reserved for the final stages of desalination. Periodic checks for the presence of chloride ions were made using the standard silver nitrate test.

EXPERIMENT 1

Air Drying

Initial measurements of weight and radius were obtained and each jet piece was observed for any cracks. The jet pieces were placed in a perforated plastic bag for Experiment 1. They were observed on a regular basis.

Jet Piece #1

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 30	% Loss
Weight	1.27 gm	1.16 gm	1.10 gm	12.72 %
Diameter	2.50 cm	2.35 cm	2.26 cm	9.62 %
Radius	2.04 cm	1.96 cm	1.95 cm	4.66 %

Observation on day 2

Cracks had formed on both the upper and lower surfaces and more appeared to be forming. This observation was immediately followed by immersion in 1% Paraloid B-72 (in toluene) for 26 days.

Observation after 1 month

Distortion of shape, cracks/splitting. Many of the cracks were seen to have formed on the lower surface.

EXPERIMENT 2

Dehydration With Acetone

The method in Experiment 2 involved slow removal of water from the coal jet pieces, initially using low concentrations of acetone and then progressing to high concentrations of acetone. To begin the experiment, the jet piece was immersed in a 15% v/v solution of acetone, i.e., 15 ml of acetone and 85 ml of water, for 5 days. This was followed by immersion in a 25% v/v acetone solution for 9 days. Afterwards, the piece was coated by quick immersion (5 minute) in 5% Paraloid B-72 (in toluene).

Jet Piece #2

Day 1 - 5 : Immersion in 15% acetone solution
Day 6 - 14 : Immersion in 25% acetone solution
Day 15 : Coating with 5% Paraloid B-72 in toluene

Observation on day 15

Many tiny cracks were observed to have formed on the surface of the jet piece. However, unlike in air drying, splitting along the diameter and radius was not observed.

	Day 1	Day 15	% Loss
Weight	0.73 gm	0.65 gm	11.58 %
Diameter	2.14 cm	2.05 cm	4.15 %
Radius	1.69 cm	1.62 cm	4.15 %

EXPERIMENT 3

This method involved removal of water from the jet pieces with increasingly concentrated solutions of ethanol for short durations.

Dehydration of the jet piece was done according to the following protocol: 10% ethanol solution for 10 minutes; 20% ethanol solution of 6 minutes; 30% ethanol solution for 3 minutes; 70% ethanol for 1 minute. A coating by quick immersion (5 minutes) in 5% Paraloid B-72 (in toluene) immediately followed removal from the final ethanol bath.

Jet Piece #3

	Initial	Final	% Loss
Weight	4.01 gm	3.98 gm	0.87 %
Diameter	5.61 cm	5.20 cm	7.31 %
Radius	2.05 cm	2.03 cm	0.98 %

Observation after treatment

No cracking of jet was noted.

CONCLUSIONS

Comparison of the % Loss

	% Loss in Weight	% Loss in Diameter	% Loss in Radius
Experiment 1: Air drying	12.72 %	9.619 %	4.656 %
Experiment 2: Dehydration with Acetone	11.58 %	4.15 %	4.15 %
Experiment 3: Dehydration with Ethanol	0.87 %	6.06 %	0.98 %

COMMENTS

The percentage shrinkage in Experiment 1 and Experiment 2 is significantly larger than the percentage shrinkage in Experiment 3. Objects from Experiment 1 and Experiment 2 had acquired various cracks while those from Experiment 3 had acquired no cracks at all. On the basis of these results, the remaining jet pieces were treated according to Experiment 3, i.e., using ethanol as the dehydrant. These pieces are now stored in an airtight bottle with silica gel that had been conditioned to 60% relative humidity. Each jet piece has been packed individually in a perforated plastic bag. The jet pieces are in good condition since their treatment in 1986, exhibiting no apparent cracks or distortions in shape.

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INQUIRIES

The editors have produced an on-line version of the Ethnographic Conservation Newsletter, numbers 13 through 19. Because the nature of the Web audience is vastly different from the original audience of the ECN, the editors have taken the liberty to protect contributors from being potentially inundated with inquiries. Therefore, contributors who have private practices in their homes will have only their names published. Anyone interested in contacting these authors should direct their inquiries to the editors rather than the authors. Those contributors with practices within public institutions will have the names and street addresses of the institutions published. Should a contributor prefer not to have his or her article published on the Web, please contact the editors.

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