

MINORU HOKARI

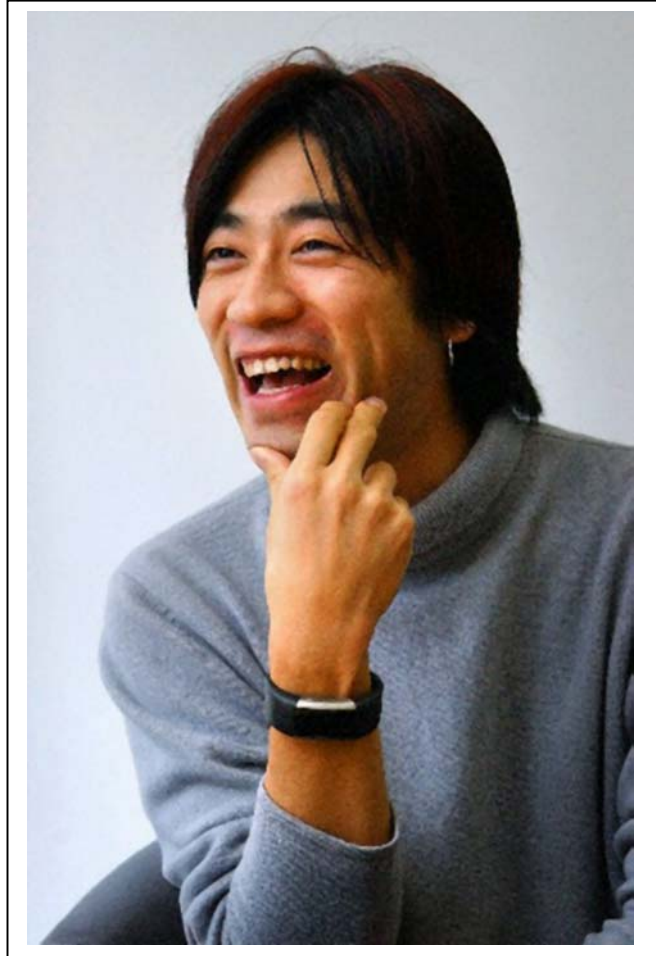
1971-2004

Dr Minoru Hokari was a remarkable man with enormous gifts and talents who touched the lives of so many people in a positive way. Minoru's spirit, personality and character coupled with his vision and ideals were the driving forces in his life as he sought to make a difference in the world.

Minoru Hokari was born on the 8th July, 1971 in Niigata, Northern Japan. This little boy was destined to become an exceptional young man who would leave his mark

on the minds and hearts of many people in the future. Minoru grew up happily in the sea-side city of Niigata and was very quite and shy until he started school. Minoru loved school and enjoyed studying and he became more outgoing and open during this time. He was admired by both his fellow students and by his teachers, who found him to be a loyal and trustworthy young person with leadership qualities. In Junior High and later at Senior School, Minoru was elected School Captain.

At the age of eighteen Minoru left home and enrolled at Hitotsubashi University in Tokyo to study economics, anthropology and history. Minoru obtained his Bachelor's degree and continued with his studies completing a Master's degree at Hitotsubashi University. The subject that held most fascination for Minoru was history. Minoru had developed a strong interest in Australian Aboriginal people, their history and culture. Whilst studying at Hitotsubashi University Minoru dreamt of living with an Indigenous Australian peoples. Following his dream, he obtained prestigious scholarships, including a Rotary Ambassadorial scholarship, to study in Australia and was accepted as a PhD



student in the Faculty of History, University of New South Wales. Minoru applied to and was invited to live and undertake his research and fieldwork among the Gurindji peoples at the remote community of Daguragu in Gurindji country, Northern Territory.

Minoru became a resident at International House in 1997 and so began what would become a rich, rewarding friendship and relationship with the International House community. Minoru's vibrant personality and character was infectious and he quickly formed strong friendship with many people from different countries. He wanted to share of himself but to also learn of other people and their cultures. Minoru was a person of enormous interest to his fellow IH residents. This young Japanese man who was undertaking research and fieldwork with Aboriginal people, the Gurindji peoples in a remote community in the Northern Territory. People were interested and intrigued to hear of Minoru's experience, his philosophy, politics and journey.

While a resident at International House in 1997-98, International House became Minoru's base camp from which he would venture out to undertake his fieldwork and research and then return to process, comprehend and write of his experience. As a resident in International House, Minoru was very popular, highly thought of and there was never a dull moment in his company. People liked to be in Minoru's presence. There was a constant stream of fellow residents and friends coming to Minoru's room to visit him, hang out and share in and listen to his music. Minoru had a deep love and affection for jazz and blues music, in particular the music of Miles Davis and John Coltrane.

As a postgraduate student Minoru was intellectually brilliant. His diligence, effort and hard work enhanced his abundant intellectual talents. Minoru was not content to rest on his immense natural intellectual talents but through hard work, persistence and conscientious effort, he would develop his intellectual gifts. He experienced all of the trials and struggles that invariably accompany the postgraduate journey but maintained his focus and commitment to keep his eyes on the prize. Minoru's enthusiasm and love of his subject matter was evident to see. As part of his obligations under his Rotary scholarship, Minoru would regularly give talks to Rotary of his research and progress.

While a resident at International House Minoru was highly involved in college life, participating in all of the various IH social functions, representing the college in volleyball, socializing with friends in the games room, and always keen and eager to share and participate in the life of the college. Often a simple supper break in the common room with Minoru could turn into a long deep discussion of history, philosophy, politics and spirituality. Minoru enjoyed and valued immensely these intellectual dialogues and sharing. He felt it was an important part of the education and growth experience.

Minoru had a close working relationship with his supervisor and when she transferred to the Australian National University, Minoru followed her to ANU. While Minoru continued his study in Canberra, he would often travel to Sydney to visit and stay with friends in International House. Minoru completed his doctorate, titled "Cross-Culturalising History: Journey to the Gurindji Way of Historical Practice" in 2001. Minoru embarked on a career as an academic and intellectual and lectured at Hitotsubashi University, Keio University and Tokai University in Japan and the Australian National University and University of New South Wales in Australia. He was a Research Fellow, Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, Visiting Fellow, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University and Visiting Fellow, Humanities Research Centre, Australian National University.

In mid 2003 Minoru became ill and was diagnosed with malignant lymphoma cancer. Throughout the 10 months Minoru fought the cancer, he was calm, positive and a study in courage. Minoru Hokari passed away on the 10th May, 2004, aged 32.

In September, 2004 Dr Minoru Hokari's Japanese book, "Doing History! : Paying Attention to the Historical Practices of Indigenous Australians" (Ochanomizu Shobo Publishers) was published. Dr Minoru Hokari was a path-breaking scholar who made outstanding contributions towards "Cross-Culturalising" historical practice and towards developing a respectful collaborative research strategy with Indigenous Australian. Dr Minoru Hokari lived a life of integrity and passion with a wonderful sense of spirit and adventure. In his brief life, he lived life to the fullest and touched so many people's lives. Dr Minoru Hokari life exemplified the values of International House-friendship, cross-cultural understanding and tolerance- and his personality, character and the manner in which he lived his life and conducted himself personified the values deeply cherished by the International House community.

* Please refer to the website for his life and works at "Being Connected with HOKARI MINORU" (<http://www.hokariminoru.org>)

