Swords, seals, cards and dolls: objects in antiquarian discourse in late Tokugawa Japan.

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This presentation addresses the generally overlooked role of antiquarian discourse in late Edo Japan as a significant platform to venture opinions on various issues such as the origin of the Japanese, their culture, regional cultures and histories, and legitimate claims of rulers. The popularity of antiquarianism was supported by a well-developed print culture. Antiquarian claims in publications were backed by practices such as excavations, the collection of oral testimonies, cataloguing temple treasures, and the mutual borrowing and copying of books, manuscripts and images. My aim is to contrast and compare two collections that appeared almost simultaneously and at first view differ widely in scope and intention: the extensive Shūko jisshū (Ten Categories of Antiquities Collected, 1800), a joint effort of officials and others close to the ruling Tokugawa shogunate; and a privately published booklet Keirin manroku (Notes by Keirin, 1800), by Morishima Chūryō, popular fiction writer, poet and member of a family of Dutch-style physicians who also served as personal doctors to the shogun. How can we connect the representations of concrete objects in these books to current views on Japanese society and its past?

Dr Margerita Winkel - obtained degrees in Cultural Anthropology (1986) and Japanese Studies (1992) from Leiden University, and received her Ph.D. in Japanese Studies from the same university in 2004. She is currently a lecturer in its Japanese Studies program and has published on Meiji photography, Japanese prints, Tokugawa popular culture, and antiquarianism in early modern Japan.