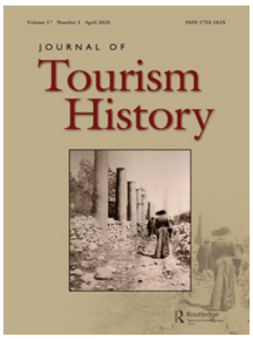

Journal of Tourism History

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: www.tandfonline.com/journals/rjth20

From object to practitioner: Japan and the tourist gaze in colonial Taiwan and Korea

Chris Wearden

To cite this article: Chris Wearden (04 Apr 2025): From object to practitioner: Japan and the tourist gaze in colonial Taiwan and Korea, Journal of Tourism History, DOI: 10.1080/1755182X.2025.2485933

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/1755182X.2025.2485933

Published online: 04 Apr 2025.

JOURNAL OF TOURISM HISTORY
https://doi.org/10.1080/1755182X.2025.2485933

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

From object to practitioner: Japan and the tourist gaze in colonial Taiwan and Korea

Chris Wearden

Korean Studies, School of Languages, Cultures and Linguistics, SOAS, University of London, London, UK

ABSTRACT

This paper provides a historical overview of a hitherto neglected area of historical research on tourism: how Japan transitioned in the late nineteenth century from the object of Orientalist fascination among Western nations, to a power projecting its own tourist gaze on its colonies of Taiwan and Korea. Despite the growing attention afforded to colonial-era tourism in European and American colonies, Japanese tourism to its principal colonies of Taiwan and Korea has yet to receive sustained critical treatment, particularly in English language research. As this paper will demonstrate, travel and tourism were mechanisms of colonial power, allowing Japan to project an Orientalist tourist gaze whilst simultaneously creating a more reliable, dedicated imperial subject. Beginning with an exploration of how modern conceptions of 'travel and tourism' arrived in Japan through increased interactions with the West, the paper will then examine the junctures at which Japan began projecting an imperial gaze on Taiwan and Korea. This was a two-way process, whereby delegations from Taiwan and Korea visited the colonial metropole and Japanese tourists visited their two principal colonies. Both forms of mobility impressed notions of difference on the users, allowing Japan to reinforce its anomalous status as East Asia's sole colonial power.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 31 October 2024
Accepted 23 March 2025

KEYWORDS
Tourist gaze; colonialism; representation; Japan; Taiwan; Korea

Introduction

Long before low-cost flights began taking Japanese tourists to Taipei and Seoul, Japanese travellers in the colonial period visited the cities of *Taihoku* (Taipei/臺北) and *Keijō*[1] (Seoul/京城) not as 'foreign' travellers, but as fellow subjects of the emperor (J: *kokumin* 国民) within the Japanese Empire. These travellers were emissaries for the imperial project, aligned in spirit with groups of entrepreneurs, settlers and industrialists referred to by historian Kate McDonald as 'colonial boosters', all of whom aimed to profit from and expand Japanese authority onto the colonial periphery.[2] Histories of

CONTACT Chris Wearden 610024@soas.ac.uk

[1]Taihoku and Keijō were the Japanese transliterations for current-day Taipei and Seoul.

[2]Kate McDonald, *Placing Empire: Travel and the Social Imagination in Imperial Japan* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2017).

colonialism have explored the varied means through which colonial powers exercised and extended their influence, yet these same histories tend to overlook colonial tourism (and tourists) as a valuable area of study. As this paper demonstrates, travel and tourism were vital avenues for projecting Japanese imperial power. These activities facilitated the physical manipulation of colonised land and the distortion of colonial culture through the tourist gaze, both of which presented opportunities for the Japanese to reaffirm notions of superiority relative to their neighbours.

Although latecomers to imperialism, the Japanese participated enthusiastically in colonial tourism after colonising Taiwan (1895) and Korea (1910), utilising the same techniques as Western powers to justify colonialism under the auspices of development and modernisation, all of which were undergirded with entrenched notions of superiority.[3] Given their proximity to Japan and shared cultural roots, there was a strong popular interest in these two territories, a fact reflected in the level of investment which went into tourist infrastructure.[4] Other than the fact they were better connected to the colonial metropole than their Western counterparts,[5] the tourist industries established in their two principal colonies resembled Western models of tourism so closely in visuality and representation, they qualify as an act of colonial 'mimesis' on the part of the Japanese, to borrow Peter Duus' maxim.[6] These models of visual representation were on display during The Chosŏn Industrial Exhibition of 1915, a popular tourist event. In the promotional poster (Figure 1), dichotomous models of comparison were employed by the colonial state to propagate their successes in Korea.

It is difficult to state with complete accuracy how many Japanese visited Taiwan and Korea during colonial rule. In Korea, we can reasonably estimate a figure of five million.[7] This is a huge figure compared to other colonial contexts, reflecting the relative ease of travelling to Korea from the metropole and the strong interest in Korea as a tourist destination among Japanese travellers. Without any reliable records on travel to Taiwan, it is impossible to give an accurate figure. However, we can glean the popularity of travel to Taiwan in contemporaneous visual media and travel accounts. Even before the formal colonisation of these two territories however, there were lively markets in Japan for travel accounts, photographs and postcards capturing their peoples, cultures and customs.[8] The tourist industries established in these two territories can therefore be seen as a continuation of a process of cultural othering of Japan's neighbours during the early years of the Meiji Restoration (1868-1912). Throughout Japanese rule (1895-1945 in Taiwan, 1910–1945 in Korea), both colonies were important subjects of visual and literary production through which Japan could articulate notions of superiority and its

[3]Alexis Dudden, 'Mission Législatrice', in *Japan's Colonization of Korea: Discourse and Power* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'I Press, 2005).

[4]Hyung-Il Pai, 'Travel Guides to Empire: The Production of Tourist Images in Colonial Korea', in *Consuming Korean Tradition in Early and Late Modernity*, ed. Laurel Kendall (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2017), 69.

[5]Lewis H. Gann, 'Western and Japanese Colonialism: Some Preliminary Comparisons', in *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895–1945*, ed. Ramon H Myers and Mark R Peattie (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020). Gann touches on some of the contrasts in Japanese/Western models of colonialism, including their comparative spatiality, 497–505.

[6]Peter Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword: The Japanese Penetration of Korea, 1895–1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 424.

[7]Pai, *Travel Guides to Empire*, 87. Pai's research for example shows that in 1936 alone 42,586 tourists from Japan visited Korea and in 1940 the total of foreign visitors (Japanese, Chinese, Western) was 398, 299.

[8]See for example Seung-Mi Han, 'Korea through Japanese Eyes: An Analysis of Late Meiji Travelogues on Korea', *Core Publications* (1998): 49–72.

Figure 1. The official poster for the Chosŏn Industrial Exhibition of 1915, a major tourist event for domestic and foreign travellers. Note the contrast between antiquity (the traditional architecture above) and the modernity (modern buildings below) introduced under 'benevolent' Japanese rule. Open access: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ch%C5%8Dsen_Industrial_Exhibition#/media/File:Official_poster_of_Choson_Industrial_Exhibition_1915,_in_1916.png

own imperial identity. Travel and tourism were central activities within this process, creating spaces to project an Orientalist tourist 'gaze' which helped Japan reinforce and reaffirm its anomalous position as East Asia's sole imperial power. John Urry's research on the tourist gaze addresses how tourism can appear a trivial, even superficial topic without a discerning eye, but implores us to recognise its importance in facilitating spaces of encounter through which visitors confront and negotiate their positionality relative to the 'Other'.[9] His research helps us to understand Japanese motivations in establishing such sophisticated tourist networks in Taiwan and Korea. By differentiating themselves from their neighbours using a prescriptive set of indices (industrialisation, modern technology, 'civility'), tourism could help Japan join the league of 'civilised', 'advanced' powers.

[9]John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, [3rd ed.] (Los Angeles, California; London: SAGE, 2011), 14.

This paper will examine how (and why) a range of state and individual Japanese actors conjured and projected this gaze over their colonies. Rather than considering this topic in isolation, it will historicise this process by exploring Japan's early engagements with tourism in the context of late nineteenth-century modernisation. In doing so, it will outline how the modern concepts of travel and tourism – both of which were intimately linked to imperialism – arrived in Japan through increased interaction with the West. It will then investigate how the Meiji government recognised the importance of these activities and created a systemised network of transport to cater to increasing numbers of foreign visitors. Finally, it will explore how travel and tourism were conceptualised in the Japanese colonial imagination and deployed within new networks of intercontinental mobility. After acting as the 'host' country and using tourism to distinguish themselves from their Asian neighbours with a set of prescriptive indicators – industrialisation, a centralised bureaucratic state – Japan began using travel and tourism to deploy their own imperialist projections on peripheral territories. The final section will demonstrate how travel to Taiwan and Korea actualised colonial power in a model of co-constitution with the colonial 'Other'. To do this, it will make use of contemporaneous tourism materials (advertisements, guidebooks) drawn from secondary research, whilst also incorporating a number of indicative primary sources which demonstrate how Taiwan and Korea were discursively constructed in the gaze of the Japanese tourist.

Tourism, imperialism and power

Edward Said described how, as a framework of knowledge, Orientalism was deployed by Western powers not to know and understand 'the Orient' (outside Europe and North America, non-Christian), but rather to oppress and control territories and peoples considered inferior to them.[10] There is a considerable overlap here in the theories advanced by Said and the rhetoric of colonial-era tourism materials. These materials, and the travel accounts which followed them, described pre-colonial societies as timeless, inert and stagnant. Often, the object of the tourist gaze was not the indigenous culture itself, but sites of development which reaffirmed spurious notions of the coloniser's superiority.[11] Take Egypt for example, a prominent recipient (or victim) of these characterisations in the late nineteenth century.[12] Ignoring the fact that stops on the tourist trail were physical testaments to the existence of ancient, sophisticated historical civilisations, tourism offerings to Egypt reduced the country to a land of camels, deserts and primitivity. Conversely, the tourism infrastructure established in the country was used as evidence of Western science and technology's ability to 'tame' the landscape. Promotional material for tours of the country were framed to juxtapose the 'old' Egypt with the 'civilisation' introduced to the country, represented by railways, steamboats, and other tourist infrastructure.[13]

[10]Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 95.
[11]McDonald, *Placing Empire,* 59. McDonald explains how local cultures were often omitted entirely, at the expense of sites of colonial development.
[12]Waleed Hazbun, 'Travel to Egypt. From the Nineteenth Century to the Second World War: Thomas Cook, The Mechanization of Travel, and the Emergence of the American Era', in *Red Star Line Cruises (1895-1934)*, ed. Marie-Charlotte Le Bailly (Leuven, Belgium: Davidsfonds Uitgeverij, 2016), 125.
[13]Waleed Hazbun, 'The East as an Exhibit: Thomas Cook & Son and the Origins of the International Tourism Industry in Egypt', in *The Business of Tourism: Place, Faith, and History*, ed. Philip Scranton and Janet F. Davidson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 21.

The relationship between tourism and colonialism during the nineteenth century has been described as symbiotic, one of dependency, with the historian F Robert Hunter even suggesting that tourism was inseparable from the West's conquest of the Middle East.[14] Popular travelogues proliferated Orientalist images of peripheral territories as exotic, mysterious and 'fantastical' places.[15] The local inhabitants of colonies were rarely discussed and when they were, they were framed as obdurate figures, mired in tradition and being hoisted towards modernity by the 'benevolence' of their colonial rulers.

In the late nineteenth century, the idea of European cultural, technological and moral superiority was at its peak. This supposed 'superiority' inferred that countries outside Europe were inherently inferior, requiring European colonial powers to expand their influence to and, eventually, colonise them.[16] These exploits were justified under the pretence of guaranteeing security and bringing civilisation to previously 'barbaric' (often interchangeably 'non-Christian') places. This notion of superiority was prominent within tourist materials for colonised territories, and would have a profound impact on how Japan later came to understand and deploy tourism as a political tool in Taiwan and Korea. Indeed, after colonisation, Japan's most powerful argument was an insistence they had come to these countries to lead their people along the modernising path they themselves had taken, which would benefit all parties.[17] As later sections demonstrate, this insidious narrative was ever-present within tourism materials.

By the early 1870s, tourism was no longer local or even continental in scope. Thanks to improvements in technology and the decreased costs of travel, it was possible to visit regions outside the traditional boundaries of tourist interest. Japan, which had become an object of fascination among the upper-classes of Europe,[18] was one such new tourist destination. After the gunboats of Commodore Perry forcibly opened the country in 1853, Japan grappled with an internal crisis which culminated in the downfall of the Tokugawa Shogunate (1603-1868). The years 1868-1912, known as the Meiji Restoration (J: *Meiji Ishin*明治維新), witnessed the rapid development of Japanese industry, infrastructure and military capabilities. The importance of travel and tourism were recognised soon after Japan adopted its new government, although these topics have received scant attention in existing research. As the next section will demonstrate, travel and tourism (both inbound and outbound) were methods by which the Meiji state could demonstrate Japan was on par with the West and had, in fact, 'left Asia'.[19]

[14]F Robert Hunter, 'Tourism and Empire: The Thomas Cook & Son Enterprise on the Nile, 1868–1914', *Middle Eastern Studies* 40, no. 5 (2004): 28.
[15]F. Robert Hunter, 'Manufacturing Exotica: Edith Wharton and Tourism in French Morocco, 1917–20', *Middle Eastern Studies* 46, no. 1 (2010): 59–77.
[16]Alexis Heraclides, 'Humanitarian Intervention in the Long Nineteenth Century: Setting the Precedent', in *Humanitarianism: Key Debates and New Approaches*, (Manchester University Press, 2015), 31.
[17]Li Narangoa and Robert Cribb, eds., *Imperial Japan and National Identities in Asia, 1895–1945* (London: Routledge, 2020), 132.
[18]Jean-Pierre Lehmann, 'Old and New Japonisme: The Tokugawa Legacy and Modern European Images of Japan', *Modern Asian Studies* 18, no. 4 (1984): 757–68.
[19]Myers and Peattie, *The Japanese Colonial Empire,* 71. Peattie discusses the theory that Japan was no longer 'Asian' in a pejorative sense and was now on par with Western powers.

Civilisation and enlightenment: modern tourism in Japan

Facing insurmountable pressure and the threat of coercion with the arrival of Commodore Perry in 1853, Japan was forced to open to Western trade and revise its policy towards foreign entry. Starting with the Kanagawa Treaty in 1854, Japan made a number of political concessions to Western countries, including extraterritorial rights for non-Japanese citizens in port cities, the establishment of consulates within Japan and the guarantee of protection and assistance for foreign nationals stranded on Japanese shores.[20] Effectively, these treaties brought an end to the two-century old isolationist policy of *sakoku* (鎖国, closed country).

In the 1860s, several Japanese delegations visited Western Europe and the United States, either aiming to reverse the unequal treaties or on educational missions.[21] These missions helped to change the xenophobic attitudes among the Tokugawa elite – typified by the policy of *Sonnō jōi* (尊皇攘夷, Revere the Emperor, Expel the Barbarians) – leading to a begrudging respect for the West and recognition of Japan's technological inferiority. Japanese travel accounts between 1860–1880 offer fascinating insights into how Japan underwent a conceptual reconfiguration of 'civilisation' from east to West during this period. A travelogue by a student named Nakai Hiroshi, originally published in 1870 but later republished in the series *Meiji bunka zenshū* in 1928, captures this sentiment. During a visit to the Crystal Palace, which Nakai estimates is about 'three and a half *li* south of the city', he describes the scene in a manner which conveys his sense of awe and fascination:

> Trees and flowers from each country are cultivated, their verdant leaves open in the sun, their flowers tempting the nose. Outside are fountains and reservoirs … inside there is nothing that the various shops and team rooms do not provide. I feel perhaps the saintly paradise could not hold a candle to this.[22]

The accounts of Japanese travellers to the West in this period are diverse, capturing a wide range of emotions and interpretations. Whilst some accounts are wistful, defensive or contemptuous, others, like Nakai's above, appear deferential towards the West, demonstrating the transformative impact of travel in the era of industrialisation.[23] One additional side effect was that by travelling to foreign countries, the Japanese became more conscious of their own nationality, helping them recognise the need for a centralised, unified state.[24] The move towards this unified state began in 1867, when Tokugawa Yoshinobu resigned and the young emperor Meiji ascended to the throne. Yoshinobu's reign was the shortest of any Shogun.

After imperial rule was proclaimed in 1867, the new government instituted reforms which resulted in the country becoming an industrial, military and colonial power by 1895. During their increased interactions with the West, the modern concepts of travel and tourism emerged in Japan within the flurry of new ideas and knowledge entering

[20]Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).
[21]Marius B Jansen, *The Making of Modern Japan* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2009), 317–20.
[22]Nakai Hiroshi, 'Manyu kitei', in *Meiji bunka zenshu*, vol. 16, ed. Yoshino Sakuzo (Tokyo: Nihon hyoronsha, 1928), 331.
[23]Susanna Fessler, *Musashino in Tuscany: Japanese Overseas Travel Literature, 1860–1880* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, U of M Center for Japanese Studies, 2004). For an excellent overview of the transformative impact of travel in the early Meiji period see Chapter 2 'New Lands: The Early Travelogues 1860-80'.
[24]Jansen, *The Making of Modern Japan,* 321.

the country. After becoming a centralised, modern bureaucratic state along Western lines, Meiji's political leadership invested in models of tourism, travel and leisure deemed to be 'correct' and 'civilised', befitting Japan's new status.[25] The actions of the Meiji government in prioritising a modern, integrated travel network from the 1870s would have a significant impact on how the Japanese public came to understand the concepts of tourism, travel and leisure.[26]

In 1874, the Meiji government revised its 'Rules for domestic travel' and allowed foreign travellers to move through the country freely, although they did need to apply for a permit through their consul.[27] This legislation signalled the start of tourism in Japan for foreigners on a noteworthy scale; between 1877 and 1878 the British consulate alone received 435 travel applications.[28] Interest in visiting the newly opened country reflected the prevailing fascination with Japan held by European upper-classes. This trend was labelled *Japonisme* by French art critic and collector Philippe Burty in 1872,[29] a term used to denote the popularity and fascination with Japanese art, architecture and design in the nineteenth century. European artists and collectors were heavily influenced by the innovations of Japanese art in this period, particularly *ukiyo-e,* which created dramatic compositions entirely different from those in the Western tradition.[30] As Japan opened to Western influence and began to institute a series of sweeping reforms, Japanese influence – under the rubric of *Japonisme* – began to permeate Western art. This influence was evident in painting, attire and architecture, much of which bore distinct signifiers of Japanese culture. These depictions served as reference points for the West's understanding of Japan in the late nineteenth century, much as images of Africa, the Middle East and India had helped to consolidate certain notions of these diverse cultures in the Western popular imagination. Claude Monet's 1876 oil painting *La Japonaise* (Figure 2), which depicts his first wife Camille in kimono surrounded by Japanese fans, provides a window into the popularity and commercial potential of *Japonisme* in the late nineteenth century.

There were appreciable differences between depictions of Japan and overtly negative depictions of India, the Middle East and Africa in European print media, and it would be reductive to simply conflate *Japonisme* with Orientalism.[31] Despite important distinctions however, including the simple fact *Japonisme* art displayed clear appreciation for the Japanese aesthetic, the country was nevertheless depicted as fundamentally inferior to the West. Whilst Japan had transformed the artistic sensibilities and was afforded a much greater degree of respect than other objects of the imperial gaze, the country was still being portrayed as feminine, sexual and 'ancient' in the early years of the Meiji restoration.[32]

[25]David Leheny, '"By Other Means": Tourism and Leisure as Politics in Pre-War Japan', *Social Science Japan Journal* 3, no. 2 (2000): 173.
[26]Ibid., 171–86.
[27]Gregory L. Rohe, 'Travel Guides, Travelers and Guides: Meiji Period Globetrotters and the Visualization of Japan', *Interpreting and Translation Studies* 15 (2015): 79.
[28]W Puck Brecher, 'Contested Utopias: Civilization and Leisure in the Meiji Era', *Asian Ethnology* 77, no. 1&2 (2018): 40.
[29]Ayako Ono, *Japonisme in Britain: Whistler, Menpes, Henry, Hornel and Nineteenth-Century Japan* (Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group, 2003).
[30]Ibid., 15.
[31]Pamela A. Genova, 'Beyond Orientalism? Roland Barthes' Imagistic Structures of Japan', *Romance Studies* 34, no. 3–4 (2016): 152–62. The article offers a number of important distinctions between Japonisme and Orientalism.
[32]Chae Ryung Kim, 'East Meets West: Japonisme in the Discourse of Colonialism in the Development of Modern Art' (MA Thesis, University at Buffalo, State University of New York, 2012), 27.

Figure 2. Claude Monet's *La Japonaise,* painted in 1876. Open access: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_Japonaise_(painting)#/media/File:Claude_Monet-Madame_Monet_en_costume_japonais.jpg

There is a strong thematic congruence between *Japonisme* art and the accounts of travellers to the newly-opened country from the early 1870s. These accounts, serialised in newspapers or published as books across Europe, emphasised the strong impression Japan left on travellers. Although we must of course consider how the contents of these accounts were influenced by the intellectual and social climate in which they were written, they are valuable historical sources which provide a fascinating window into how Japan was viewed by the West during the early years of the restoration. They demonstrate an intriguing paradox whereby Japan was 'othered' by visitors from the West, whilst also categorised as somehow 'apart' from their Asian neighbours.

The travel accounts from the 1880s of Isabella Bird, Eliza Scidmore and Thomas Stevens painted a picture of Japan as a tranquil, traditional, unchanging and essentially feminine country.[33] Bird's accounts were often critical when exploring rural areas, particularly when narrating the harsh living conditions and poverty she witnessed. A passage describing her travels through the Kurumatogé mountain pass for example was highly

[33]Rohe, *Travel Guides,* 75.

derogatory, describing 'poverty, industry, dirt, ruinous temples, prostrate Buddhas, strings of straw-shod pack-horses; long, grey, featureless streets, and quiet, staring crowds', adding for good measure that 'the crowd was filthy and squalid beyond description'.[34] The visual material accompanying these travelogues (such as Bird's sketches in Figure 3) rarely included men and when they did, they were typically engaged in physical labour.

The omission of images of Japan's political leadership suggests foreign travellers were fixated on the image of Japan as a pre-modern, 'exotic' country, rather than one in the midst of extraordinary social, cultural and economic transformation. Although these depictions should not be viewed as parallel to some of the overtly negative accounts of the Middle East and North Africa which circulated in Europe during colonial expansion, they nevertheless created a clear dichotomy between a homogenous, modern West and Japan as 'Other'. Despite the fact Japan was a land full of charm, populated by hospitable locals who were in many respects 'superior' to their Asian neighbours, early travellers expressed dissatisfaction with the food, accommodations and transport.[35] In these respects, Japan was seen to be some way behind the tourism infrastructure found in European capitals, or even within the European colonial possessions. Acknowledging that their country could not escape the yoke of imperialist machinations without winning over the hearts and minds of inbound travellers and diplomats, the Meiji government resolved to address these deficiencies as a top priority.

The increased number of visitors to Japan in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries pressured the country into establishing a modern tourism industry. This project was 'largely motivated by a sense of urgency among Meiji elites who found it highly embarrassing to expose Japan's uncivilised ways to the foreign gaze'.[36] The growing number of visitors to Japan therefore presented an opportunity to demonstrate that Japan was in fact a 'civilised' nation.[37] The level of intervention from the Japanese government in establishing a modern tourism network has been described as an 'anomaly' among industrialised nations.[38] The importance ascribed to the industry by the Meiji government, who saw the benefits in chiefly political rather than economic terms,[39] demonstrates a significant degree of anxiety about how Japan was perceived in the West. To understand why the Japanese government took such a keen interest in tourism, one must look to the series of unequal treaties (J: *Fubyōdō jōyaku*, 不平等条約) signed between Japan and Western governments from the early 1854 onwards. To revise these treaties – which Japan did by 1895 – was to join a league of modern, industrialised, powerful nations.

In March 1893, the Meiji government established the Welcome Society of Japan (J: *Kihinkai*喜賓会) with four organisational objectives: the first was to assist *ryokan* in upgrading their facilities; the second was to institute a travel guide system; the third

[34]Isabella Lucy Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan: An Account of Travels in the Interior Including Visitors to the Aborigines of Yezo and the Shrine of Nikko* (London: Kegan Paul International, 2003), 92.
[35]Henry Norman, *The Real Japan: Studies of Contemporary Japanese Manners, Morals, Administration, and Politics* (London: T.F. Unwin, 1892), 237; Rohe, *Travel Guides,* 80; Ryoko Nishijima, 'Aporia of Omotenashi: Hospitality in Post-Oriental and Post-Imperial Japan' (PHD Diss., UCLA, 2017).
[36]Nishijima, 'Aporia of Omotenashi', 3.
[37]Leheny, 'By Other Means', 177.
[38]Ibid., 174.
[39]Brecher, 'Contested Utopias', 47.

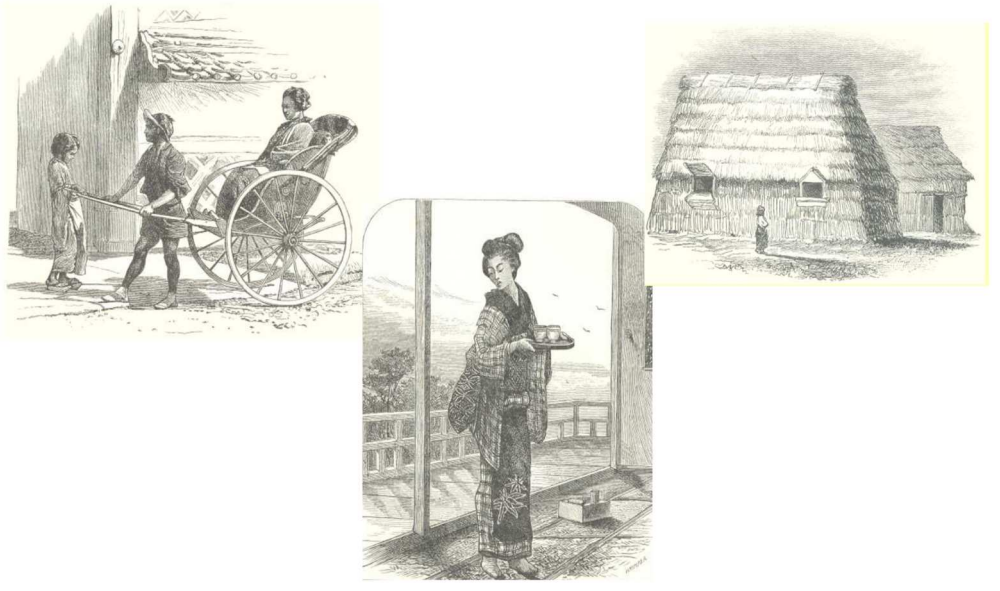

Figure 3. A selection of sketches taken from Isabella Bird Bishop's 'Unbeaten Tracks in Japan', an account of her travels in Japan from 1878. Considering that in the early 1870s Japan was already showing the signs of its nascent industrialisation, demonstrated by the opening of the Tokyo-Yokohama train line in 1872, Bird's account is remarkably absent of any commentary on this process. Open access: https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/2184/pg2184-images.html

was to create a list of tourist attractions such as ruins, buildings and parks; and the final objective was to publish travel information and maps.[40] Eiichi Shibusawa, known as the 'father of Japanese capitalism', was the General Secretary of this organisation and was assisted by Takashi Masuda, head of the Mitsui *zaibatsu* (conglomerate). The organisation operated with promotional and advisory functions. They organised tours and travel itineraries for foreign visitors at sites of historic interest, whilst also urging hotels and inns to upgrade their facilities to meet the standards of those found in Europe.[41] The Society's first lecture to inn managers was published in the *Asahi Shinbun* newspaper in 1893, with the topics of discussion betraying Japanese anxiety about establishing a tourism industry able to cater to Western tastes. The lecture focused on privacy and hygiene, both of which lay at the core of the Meiji elites' sense of shame about Japanese accommodations.[42] This anxiety is evident in the promotional material produced by the Welcome Society, where four of the eight hotels promoted in this brochure (Figure 4) make explicit references to 'European tastes' and comforts.

As with many aspects of Meiji-era development, travel to industrialised nations provided a model from which the government could establish its own systems, in this case a modern tourism industry. Masuda's tours of Paris, where he witnessed how a functional tourism industry brought great numbers of high-spending visitors to the city, left a

[40]Sonia Favi, 'Negotiating the Nation: Public Diplomacy and the Publication of English-Language Tourist Guidebooks of Japan in the Meiji Period (1868–1912)', *Japan Forum* 35, no. 2 (2023): 1–24.
[41]Ibid., 10.
[42]Nishikima, 'Aporia of Omotenashi', 29–30

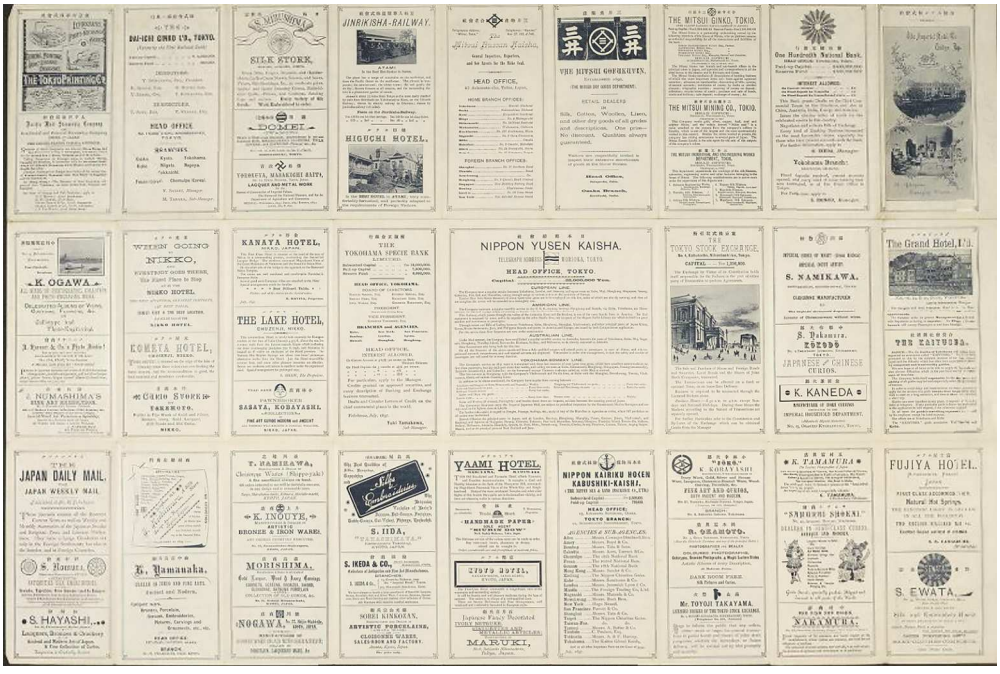

Figure 4. Map of Japan for Tourists (page 2), published by the Welcome Society of Japan. Source: University of Manchester, (MGS Folded: D20 (105)). DOI: https://www.digitalcollections.manchester.ac.uk/view/PR-MGS-FOLDED-D-00020-00105/1. Image provided by The John Rylands Research Institute and Library, The University of Manchester.

lasting impression on him.[43] The logic ran that by establishing a modern tourist network in Japan consisting of railways, hotels, restaurants and other attractions, Japan could stimulate economic activity whilst also convincing travellers that Japan was in fact 'civilised', deserving of the West's respect. It should be added that it was not only Western tourists who were targeted in this process; Japanese policy makers felt that the establishment of a tourism industry would benefit the local population too. They believed the opportunity to spend time engaged in recreation would 'unleash the creative energies' of the Japanese people.[44] Having adopted the Gregorian calendar in 1873, the government delineated the week in 'work' and 'non-work' time.[45] However, without the appropriate infrastructure in place, Japanese citizens would not be able to enjoy the benefits of travel and tourism as imagined by the political leadership. In the late nineteenth century, mastery of modern technology was the most reliable signifier of the strength and 'civility' of a nation. In the case of tourism, the term 'technology' is used broadly here as it did not only refer to railroads, but also included steamships, hotels, and recreation facilities. All were enthusiastically adopted by Japan in efforts to impress foreign visitors and impart new modes of leisure and consumption on their own subjects.

[43]Koichi Nakagawa, 'Prewar Tourism Promotion by Japanese Government Railways', *Japan Railway & Transport Review*, no. 15 (1998), 22.
[44]Leheny, 'The Rules of Play', 46.
[45]Brecher, 'Contested Utopias', 38.

Historian Jun Uchida argues railways helped to inscribe power on territory.[46] Meiji policy makers subscribed to this mantra and applied it to Japan, seeing how a modern railway system could change external perceptions of the country, allowing foreign visitors to travel in comfort and reinforce positive impressions of Japan relative to their Asian neighbours. Whilst China and Korea were viewed as static, inert, timeless societies mired in tradition, Japan's modern transport infrastructure exemplified to Western visitors its embrace of modernity, facilitating exotic yet luxurious travel experiences.[47] From the 1890s there was a systemisation of travel in Japan, with many of the trappings of modern tourism evident across the country. For example, in 1899, train services began offering meal services[48] and by 1903 there were hundreds of Western style hotels across the country.[49] Cumulatively, the improvements made across the tourism industry under the guidance of the *kihinkai* helped to alter perceptions of Japan.[50] Far from a country which lacked the requisite infrastructure and courtesies so valued by Western travellers, Japan in the late years of the nineteenth century was considered 'at present the most interesting and profitable country in the world wherein to spend a holiday'.[51] As the improvements to Japan's travel infrastructure were acknowledged by visitors in glowing terms, descriptions of the country no longer focused on its supposed tranquillity. Japan was now being afforded a new level of respect as East Asia's undisputed regional power. Travel accounts and diplomatic reports moved away from depictions of Japanese exoticism and femininity, instead speaking of industry, growth and increasing military capabilities.[52] This change in attitude was typified by commentaries on Japanese activities in the former treaty ports; here, Japanese businesses had subsumed Western economic interests, which now played an ever-smaller role in the country's booming foreign trade.[53]

Vindication for Meiji's political leadership was achieved in 1895, when Japan revised the final of the unequal treaties agreed with the Western powers,[54] an achievement which was also influenced by Japan's victory over China in the First Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95. Having impressed visitors with their hospitality and adoption of Western transport technologies, it was hoped that the creation of an empire run along the lines of Western imperialism would render the unequal treaties enforced on Japan, now displaying the hallmarks of a 'civilised' power, illegitimate. Tourism therefore worked in tandem with Japan's increasing military power; both relied on the mastery of modern technologies and demonstrated that Japan had surpassed its Asian neighbours in technological and cultural terms.

[46]Jun Uchida, 'A Scramble for Freight: The Politics of Collaboration along and across the Railway Tracks of Korea under Japanese Rule', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51, no 1 (2009): 117–50.
[47]Brecher, 'Contested Utopias', 47.
[48]Leheny, 'The Rules of Play', 54.
[49]Leheny, 'By Other Means', 178.
[50]Basil Hall Chamberlain, 1901, *A Handbook for Travellers in Japan* (London: John Murray, 1891). There are numerous sources which attest to changing perceptions of Japan in the West in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Here, Chamberlain speaks positively of Japan's tourism industry, describing a tiered system of hotel accommodations which are satisfactory for Western visitors: 1–9.
[51]'Good time to visit Japan., Travel There Never More Pleasant – Tourists Very Welcome. *London Times,* June 13 1904.
[52]Fauziah Fathil, 'British Diploamtic Perceptions of Modernisation And Change in Early Meiji Japan, 1868-90' (SOAS, PhD Diss, 2006): 186–222.
[53]Andrew Elliott, 'British Travel Writing and the Japanese Interior, 1854–99', in *The British Abroad Since the Eighteenth Century*, Vol. 1, ed. Martin Farr and Xavier Guégan (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2013), 197–216.
[54]Nishijima, 'Aporia of Omotenashi', 9.

By the end of the nineteenth century, Japan was the world's only non-Western colonial power and an established destination for international tourists.[55] In many respects, Japan had achieved parity with the West. As latecomers to imperialism and the only Asian colonial power however, Japan's political leaders were mindful of xenophobic attitudes held among Western colonial powers, and believed that Japan was held to different standards on account of its ethnic, cultural and linguistic differences with the West.[56] Put simply, it was not enough to demonstrate mastery of modern technology and possess an empire (one which expanded in 1910 with the annexation of the Korean peninsula). To behave as a truly 'modern' nation, Japan had to employ the language and rhetoric of colonial powers regarding their duty to civilise 'lesser' countries. As discussed earlier, tourism facilitated this process through the discursive manipulation of colonised cultures in binary models of comparison (modern/pre-modern, civilised/barbaric). Although it is reductive to compare Japanese and Western imperialism – and indeed many scholars have researched the ways in which they were distinct[57] – Japan's appropriation of the language of 'civilisation' in Taiwanese and Korean travel and tourism was one of many areas where we can see an overlap between Western/Japanese colonial practices and discourse. The second half of this paper will investigate the various ways in which Japan used tourism to consolidate its status as a modern power. As will be demonstrated, there existed a two-way process in which Japan organised inbound travel for delegations from Taiwan and Korea, whilst also utilising tourism in their colonies to consolidate their power and notions of superiority.

Projecting the 'gaze': Taiwan, Korea and the logics of 'civilisation'

Historian Alexis Dudden's monograph *Discourse and Power* presents a fascinating investigation into how Japan appropriated terminology used by the West to justify their colonial endeavours, particularly during their campaign to colonise Korea. Dudden describes this as the 'Vocabulary of Power',[58] a set of terms and practices adopted by Meiji-era policymakers to reinforce the legality of Japan's imperial ambitions in Korea. This 'Vocabulary' was not only present in the realms of law and politics however, it also permeated the tourism industries established in Taiwan and Korea. By employing language and discourse adopted from Western tourism, Japanese tourism created distinctions between Japan (civilised, modern) and its colonies of Taiwan (savage, barbarian),[59] and Korea (timeless, stagnant, sickly).[60] This process involved bilateral flows of mobility from metropole to colony. Colonised subjects from Taiwan

[55]Leheny, 'By Other Means', 174.
[56]Myers and Peattie, *The Japanese Colonial Empire:* 104–07. Discusses Japanese anxieties about their actions in Korea. Japanese suspicions were confirmed years later by the rejection of a proposed racial equality clause in the Treaty of Versailles after the First World War. See Paul Gordon Lauren, 'Human Rights in History: Diplomacy and Racial Equality at the Paris Peace Conference', *Diplomatic History* 2, no. 3 (1978): 257–78.
[57]Hyman Kublin, 'The Evolution of Japanese Colonialism', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 2, no. 1 (1959): 67–84; Mark Peattie, Part IV 'The Japanese Empire in Historical and Global Perspective', in *The Japanese Colonial Empire 1895–1945*, ed. Ramon Myers and Mark Peattie, 453–526.
[58]Alexis Dudden, 'The Vocabulary of Power', in *Japan's Colonization of Korea: Discourse and Power* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'I Press, 2005).
[59]Robert Thomas Tierney, *Tropics of Savagery: The Culture of the Japanese Empire in Comparative Frame* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).
[60]Robert Cribb and Narangoa Li, *Imperial Japan and National Identities in Asia, 1895–1945* (London: Routledge, 2020), 133.

and Korea were given tours of Japan to showcase the strength of the imperial metropole, whilst visitors to Taiwan and Korea from Japan helped to construct images of countries which were backward, being ushered into the modern age under the leadership of their colonial rulers.

Inviting our guests: inspection tours in imperial Japan

Historian Jordan Sand's research on Taiwanese tourism to the Japanese metropole offers insights into the early Japan-Taiwan tourist network. The etymological focus on the use of the word '*kankō* (観光/tourism)' overlaps with Dudden's work, exploring how and why particular phrases were deployed by the Meiji state when organising tours for Taiwanese visitors.[61] The word is a kanji composite of the Chinese characters *kan* 観 (to see) and *kō* 光 (light), first utilised in classical Chinese text the Book of Changes (or the I-Ching), but later used by Japanese officials to symbolise something more than simply sightseeing. As Sand explains, 'Its derivation suggested both a civilising function and the idea of duty to a sovereign'.[62]

Whilst Meiji leaders used tourism in Japan to demonstrate their strength and level of civilisation to Western visitors, they arranged tours of the Japanese metropole for Taiwanese visitors with the objective of striking fear into their colonised subjects.[63] A glance at the itinerary for these visitors certainly supports this theory; sites of recreation such as zoos and theatres were followed by visits to armouries and munitions factories.[64] Tourism served to demonstrate the cultural and technological acumen of Japan to Taiwanese visitors in the clearest possible terms. To this end, groups were forced to watch Japanese military drills (Figure 5), an activity incongruent with modern conceptions of leisure and tourism but nevertheless a vital component of the travel itinerary for visitors from Taiwan. Much like contemporaneous Western visitors to Japan, these Taiwanese visitors were greeted with hospitality and enjoyed the most comfortable, modern modes of transportation Japan had to offer (although, unlike their Western counterparts, they suffered the ignominy of being escorted by police at all times).[65]

The itinerary and language used by the Meiji state alludes to the propagandistic overtures behind these tours. For Western visitors, tourism was used to address the anxiety they felt towards the West, whereas for Taiwanese visitors, it was used to convince visitors of the justification and logic of colonialism. As Sand attests, Taiwanese visitors 'felt the gaze of others upon them, compelling them to acknowledge the imperial hierarchy and to identify themselves within it'.[66] Throughout the fifty years of Japanese rule in Taiwan, Taiwanese tour groups were regularly invited to Japan, suggesting they were an important component of Japan's strategy of colonial maintenance.[67] By committing to regular cycles of Taiwanese delegations to Japan, the Meiji government hoped these visits could impact the sensibilities of Taiwanese visitors across generations, who in

[61] Jordan Sand, 'Imperial Tokyo as a Contact Zone: The Metropolitan Tours of Taiwanese Aborigines, 1897-1941', *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 12, issue. 10, no. 4 (2014): 1–11.
[62] Ibid., 2.
[63] Ibid., 8.
[64] Ibid., 3.
[65] Ibid., 3.
[66] Ibid., 9.
[67] Ibid., 1.

Figure 5. Postcard of Taiwanese aborigines being shown military drills in the metropole. Open access: https://apjjf.org/2014/12/10/jordan-sand/4089/article.

time would succumb to the 'logic' of Japanese colonialism.[68] The arrangement of these visits during the early years of colonial rule in Taiwan demonstrates a muscular, increasingly confident Japan, which at this point had its sights firmly fixed on the next target: Korea.

Systemised inbound travel groups from Korea began during the protectorate period (1905-1910) and continued in the first years of colonisation. The Meiji government was aware of a large influential group of Koreans who held positive views of Japan in the late nineteenth century, believing that Meiji modernisation offered a blueprint to prevent Korea's own subjugation to Western colonial powers. The first large scale travel group was organised in 1909, when two hundred Koreans comprised of aristocrats, noblemen and *yangban* were dispatched to Japan.[69] After 1910, regular tours were arranged by government and private organisations within the colony, targeting Korea's traditional ruling class but also impressionable school students, teachers and agricultural workers, many of whom were more amenable to Japanese overtures.[70] Starting from the early 1910s, Korean travel groups visited Japan regularly, typically on an itinerary which started in Busan, Korea, then took in the Japanese cities of Shimonoseki, Hiroshima, Osaka, Kyoto, Nara and

[68]Leo Ching, 'Savage Construction and Civility Making: The Musha Incident and Aboriginal Representations in Colonial Taiwan', *Positions: Asia Critique* 8, no. 3 (2000): 796

[69]Sŏngun Cho, *Yŏhaenggwa kwan'gwangŭro pon kŭndae (Modernity seen through travel and tourism)*, (Seoul: Kuksap'yŏnch'anwiwŏnhoe 2008), 222

[70]Ji-seon Bang, '1920-30nyŏndae chosŏnin chungdŭnghakkyoŭi ilbon/manju suhak yŏhaeng (School Excursions to Japan and Manchuria among Korean Middle Schoolers in the 1920s/30s)', *Sŏktangnonch'ong*, no. 44 (2009): 167–216.

Tokyo.[71] This itinerary, which included both sites of urban modernity – Hiroshima, Osaka, Tokyo – and the refined, well-protected heritage sites of Kyoto and Nara, was carefully curated through collaboration between the Meiji government and the Government General of Chōsen (J: *Chōsen Sōtoku* 朝鮮総督) (Korea), the ruling authority on the peninsula. These tours were designed to showcase Japan's status as the new leader in Asia and to convince Koreans that Japan guaranteed urban, industrial development, whilst also protecting and celebrating heritage.

As an interesting case study offering insights into the concerns and priorities of the Meiji government in hosting these travel groups, we can refer to the thousands of colonised subjects invited to attend expositions (J: *Hiroshi*博覽會) held in Japan in the early years of the twentieth century. These events could display Japan's strength and unique status to colonised subjects and foreign visitors alike. The Osaka National Industrial Exhibition of 1903 is perhaps the most notable example of the interplay of tourism and forms of colonial coercion. This exhibition included a 'Human Pavilion' consisting of living exhibits (people) in native costume from Taiwan, Korea (at that time not yet part of the Japanese Empire as colony or protectorate), Okinawa[72] and Hokkaido's Ainu community. The event was open to foreign visitors, showcasing 'the structure of domination between the colonised/discriminated representatives on display'.[73] By neglecting to include any Japanese participation in this Pavilion, the organisers sent a coded message to attendees that Japan could no longer be classified alongside these 'lesser' peoples. In the last twenty years, much research has been conducted on colonial-era expositions. These studies reveal the political culture of Western imperial power and its impacts on political imaginations in colonial territories.[74] By organising these events as a method of performative spectacle with clear propagandistic overtures, we see how, by the early twentieth century, Japan had internalised the prevailing obsession with taxonomy and classification, both hallmarks of colonial authority.[75]

The Japanese government invited hundreds of Korean inspection parties to these expositions, tailoring the tourist offering to the sensibilities of Korea's intellectual class. Unlike tours for Taiwanese visitors which aimed to subjugate 'aborigines' and were undergirded with implicit threat, tours for Koreans worked in conjunction with colonial assimilation policy (J: *naisen ittai* 内鮮一體, literally 'Japan and Korea as one body').[76] By showcasing aspects of Japanese modernity and impressing Korean visitors

[71]Ch'ansung Park, 'Singminjisigi Chosŏnindŭrŭi Ilbonsich'al - 1920nyŏndae Ihu Irŭnba '内地視察團'Ŭl Chungsimŭro (Koreans' Observation Trip to Japan during the Colonial Period – The So-called 'Inner Inspection Tours' of the 1920s)', *Yŏksa Munhwahakhoe* 9, no. 1 (2006): 204

[72]Stanisław Meyer, 'Between a Forgotten Colony and an Abandoned Prefecture: Okinawa's Experience of Becoming Japanese in the Meiji and Taishō Eras', *The Asia-Pacific Journal - Japan Focus* 18, issue. 20, no. 7 (2020): 2. There is a long-standing debate among historians of Japan as to whether Okinawa should be included in the history of Japanese colonialism. For the purposes of this paper and considering the similarities in how tourist images of Okinawa circulated within Japan, it seems suitable to discuss in this context.

[73]Toni E Barlow, *Formations of colonial modernity in East Asia*, (Durham, N.C: Duke University Press, 1997).

[74]Hong Kal, 'Modeling the West, Returning to Asia: Shifting Politics of Representation in Japanese Colonial Expositions in Korea', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 47, no.3 (2005): 510.

[75]Kwŏn Hyeokhui, 'An Analysis of Korean Intellectual Responses to the Exhibition of Koreans at Japanese Expositions: Nationalism and the Discourse on Northeast Asian Solidarity at the Turn of the Century', *Sungkyun Journal of East Asian Studies* 17, no.1 (2017): 20.

[76]Che Ok Kyŏng, 'Ilbonsich'aldan'Ŭi Kŭndaegwan'gwangjŏk Sŏnggyŏk -Kŭndaesŏngŭi Yangmyŏnsŏng(Rogosŭ-Erosŭ) Kaenyŏmŭl Chungsimŭro (The Modern Tourism Character of Korean Observation Tours to Japan in the Era of Japanese Imperialism - Focused on the Concept of Two-Facedness of Modernity(Logos-Eros)', *Ilbon Kŭndaehak Yŏn'gu*, no. 56 (2017): 291.

through the sheer force of spectacle during expositions, tour organisers hoped to find a common ground with Korea's intellectuals, nationalists and young educated class, all of whom recognised the need for modernisation.[77] These tours took on a new significance after the March 1st uprising of 1919, a nationwide explosion of nationalist sentiment across Korea which represented the first serious challenge to Japanese rule.[78] The heavy-handed, violent response from the Japanese authorities was condemned by Western observers, ushering in a period of relative leniency on the part of the colonial state known as 'cultural rule' (K: *munhwa t'ongch'i* 문화통치/J: *bunka seiji* 文化統治). In the early 1920s, tours of the metropole served as a method of winning over Koreans who appeared, at best, ambivalent towards Japanese rule, and in many cases, openly hostile.

Through their visits to the colonial metropole, Taiwanese and Korean visitors negotiated with the structures of colonialism and were encouraged to recognise their (subordinate) position within the Japanese empire. Winning over and coercing their colonial subjects through tours of Japan was only one function of the increasingly integrated travel networks however. As the next section will show, the tourism industries and travel accounts penned on Taiwan and Korea were also vital parts of the imperial project.

Visiting the colonies

As the first major colony annexed into the Japanese Empire after the Sino-Japanese war, Taiwan quickly became an object of intellectual curiosity in Japan. Travel and tourism to the newly acquired territory were used to circulate stories of Japan's remarkable modernisation efforts. Accounts of travel to Taiwan from this period offer an image of the country which chimed with the narratives of 'civilisation and enlightenment' adopted from the West. This image was brought to life by the booming postcard trade, depicting the ethnic and cultural characteristics of Taiwan's indigenous populations.[79]

Likewise, contemporaneous travelogues capture the juncture at which Japan began to display a new confidence as a modern colonial power. Employing the anthropological fad of seeking to document and classify distinct ethnicities within colonies, Japanese travel writers split the Taiwanese population in *hontojin* (islanders) and *banjin* (savages).[80] The nomenclature used here is an indication of the hierarchy Japanese travellers created between these groups; *hontojin* were those who settled on the island before Japanese occupation, whilst *banjin* were inhabitants of the country's mountainous, unnavigable interior. Interestingly, these ethnic identities carried over into Taiwanese society post-colonial rule.[81]

Tokotumi Soho (1863-1957) is described by Naoko Shimazu as 'the archetype male colonial traveller, whose principal objective was to witness for himself the success of

[77]Michael Robinson, *Cultural Nationalism in Colonial Korea, 1920–1925* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988).
[78]Michael Shin, *Korean National Identity under Japanese Colonial Rule: Yi Gwangsu and the March First Movement Of 1919* (Milton, United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis Group, 2018).
[79]Paul D Barclay, 'Peddling Postcards and Selling Empire: Image-Making in Taiwan under Japanese Colonial Rule', *Japanese Studies*, 30, no. 1 (2010): 81–110.
[80]Yuko Kikuchi, *Refracted Modernity: Visual Culture and Identity in Colonial Taiwan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007), 4.
[81]Ibid., 4.

Japanese colonisation in Taiwan'.[82] From 1898, Taiwan did indeed experience a period of sustained development as internal infrastructure and connections to Japan were improved.[83] This development, more so than the culture or customs of Taiwan's indigenous inhabitants, seemed to be the main attraction for Tokotumi.[84] His travel accounts thus focused not so much on Taiwan, but Japan *in* Taiwan. Touring the colony allowed Tokotumi and his contemporaries to see Japan in a new light, juxtaposing the 'barbarism' they witnessed in the country with the Japanese-administered improvements on the island. These tours were therefore an important method of consolidating Japan's new imperial identity. Taiwan provided a visual and cultural contrast to the strength of Japan and with increasing numbers of Japanese wishing to visit the colony to see these developments first-hand, the colony developed into a major tourist destination in the 1920s and 30s.[85]

Historian Paul D Barclay's research into colonial Taiwan focuses on visual depictions of Taiwanese culture and customs, reproduced as postcards for tourist memorabilia.[86] As Barclay explains, picture postcards erupted in popularity around the world in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1890 95 million postcards were mailed in Japan; by 1913 this figure was 1.5 billion.[87] Private producers of postcards brought colonial Taiwan to life for Japanese consumers, who could experience a version of the country mediated by the tourist gaze. Postcards painted Taiwanese inhabitants of the island as 'isolated, culturally intact, and indebted to a benevolent state'.[88]

Unlike travel accounts which focused on scenes of Japanese development and provided a commentary in line with the propaganda of the colonial state, postcards captured the 'danger and exoticism' of the territory.[89] This was a standard trope within Western depictions of colonial cultures, and Japan's appropriation of this technique suggests that they had joined the league of colonial powers by objectifying non-industrialised nations as objects of curiosity (Figure 6).

The use of postcards delineating Taiwanese ethnic groups into categories showed consumers that Japan had assumed a position of permanent superiority to their Asian neighbours, in which they became arbiters of ethnic and cultural distinctions. The medium itself was an important part of this process. As Barclay explains, 'In the context of colonialism, the 'divine' power of photography comes to reflect a Western technological and epistemological prowess'.[90] Ethnographic travel accounts complemented these images, demonstrating Japan's deft appropriation of the ethnographic and anthropological tropes for their own colonial project.[91]

[82]Ibid., 22.
[83]Han-Yu Chang and Ramon H. Myers, 'Japanese Colonial Development Policy in Taiwan, 1895-1906: A Case of Bureaucratic Entrepreneurship', *The Journal of Asian Studies* 22, no. 4 (1964): 433–49.
[84]Kikuchi, *Refracted Modernity*, 24.
[85]Tsun Hsiung Yao, 'Images of Taiwan' as Visual Symbols in Official Propaganda Media During the Japanese Colonial Period', *The Science Design Bulletin* 54, no. 1 (2007): 59–68.
[86]Paul Barclay, 'Playing the Race Card in Japanese Governed Taiwan: Or Anthropometric Photographs as 'Shape-Shifting Jokers', in *The Affect of Difference: Representations of Race in East Asian Empire,* ed. Christopher Hanscom (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2016), 38–80.
[87]Barclay, 'Peddling Postcards'.
[88]Ibid., 81.
[89]Ibid., 104.
[90]Barclay, *Playing the Race Card*, 46.
[91]Tierney, *Tropics of Savagery*, 78.

Figure 6. Portraits of a Tsarisen Tribe male and female, appearing in numerous publications between 1900 to 1905. Open access: https://ldr.lafayette.edu/concern/images/f7623d62t.

Soon after colonisation, ethnographers from Japan travelled to Taiwan to inform their countrymen about the 'exotic' aborigines now under the authority of the emperor. The following account from prominent anthropologist Torii Ryūzō demonstrates all the hallmarks of late nineteenth century ethnographies, offering reductive descriptions of colonised culture(s) through the prism of the pseudo-scientific gaze:

> In the rich, beautiful Japanese colony of Taiwan … several savage tribes can be found who have completely turned their backs on civilisation … From the point of view of civilisation and human solidarity, they are in an unhappy state that merits our pity; but for the anthropologist they constitute a marvellous field of studies.[92]

The account presents a temporal disconnect between Torii – the observer, exemplifying modernity in his Western dress and ability to study and document – and the 'savages', who are presented as occupying a close proximity with the primitive origins of man.[93] As with Western observers of their colonies generations before,[94] the colonial power relationship is submerged within both written accounts and ethnographic visuals.[95]

[92]Ibid., 82.
[93]Ibid., 82.
[94]James R. Ryan, 'Framing the View', in *Picturing Empire: Photography and the Visualization of the British Empire* (London, United Kingdom: Reaktion Books, Limited, 1997): 45–72. This chapter provides an excellent overview of the interplay between photography and colonial power.
[95]Ka F. Wong, 'Entanglements of Ethnographic Images: Torii Ryūzō's Photographic Record of Taiwan Aborigines (1896–1900)', *Japanese Studies*, 24, no. 3 (2004): 283–99. Wong's paper explores how Torii used photography to study race, using the methods of natural science – such as anthropometric and statistical techniques – to analyse the indigenous inhabitants.

Having been the object of the Orientalist gaze, Japan by the 1890s was producing materials which created a clear dichotomy between their country and its colonised territory. There was a strong didactic dimension to these postcards, images and travel accounts, which attempted to situate the 'Japanese Self' in a model of co-constitution with colonised subjects.[96] The subjects of these photos were static, documented and objectified by the traveller's gaze, whilst Japan used the medium of modern photographic technology to make plain the 'inferiority' of Taiwan and the logic of their colonisation. Japan thus created a contrast between the 'backward' and the modern in their postcards. These visual materials always carried the distinct implication that any tangible signs of modernity in the frame were the results of Japan's good governance.[97]

Tourism in Korea bore a number of similarities in terms of objectification and the discursive manipulation of local culture. The important distinctions between Japanese tourism in their two principal colonies however are partly due to the idiosyncrasies of Japan's relationship with Korea, their closest neighbour with whom they shared a long (and in the case of Korea, painful) history. Historian of Korean tourism Cho Sŏngun claims Japanese tourism in Korea bore no discernible difference to the tourist practices of Western powers in their colonies, which helped to circulate dichotomous distinctions between colonial and colonised subjects.[98] Examining the practices and visual depictions of Korea in tourism and its adjacent industries, we can see how tourism allowed Japan to project its own gaze and consolidate its dominant relationship over Korea, whilst concurrently presenting positive images to Japanese and foreign tourists. In Taiwan, visual depictions of indigeneity mainly focused on 'barbarity', whereas in Korea no theme was more prominent than those visuals which equated Korea with femininity, a proxy for Korea's perceived weakness and inferiority.[99]

The Japanese impulse to 'feminise' Korea began before colonisation as part of a concerted, state-sanctioned campaign to justify their colonial designs on the country.[100] Take for example Shiga Shigetaka's literary sensation, *Great Responsibility, Small Ambition (*J: *Daiyakushosi*大役小志). This travelogue described Shigetaka's travels in Korea around the time of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05), offering descriptions of various sights, from industry and agriculture to prosaic descriptions of everyday Korean life. A recurring theme in this travelogue was the representation of Koreans as docile and essentially effeminate. This is articulated in an episode where Shigetaka explains that foreign visitors could only distinguish between Japanese and Korean men due to the latter's supposedly feminine features; we can read this supposed femininity as proof of Korea's 'weakness'.[101] This notion was carried over into Japanese-language materials on Korea in the colonial

[96]Barclay, 'Playing the Race Card', 45.
[97]Ibid.
[98]Sŏngun Cho, *Shisŏnŭi t'ansaengr Shingminji Chosŏnŭi Kŭndaegwan'gwang (The Birth of the Gaze: Modern Tourism in Colonial Chosŏn)* (Sŏninhan'guk'ak, 2011), 179.
[99]Haeng-ga Kwŏn, 'Iljennidae up'yŏnyŏpsŏe Nat'anan Kisaeng Imiji (The Image of Kisaeng in Postcards under Japanese Colonial Rule)', *Center for Art Studies Korea* 12 (2001): 83–103. Kwŏn's paper explores the typical visual depiction of Korean kisaeng across the colonial period, drawing lines of comparison between the sexualization of these subjects and wider patterns of objectification seen in colonial-era anthropological accounts.
[100]Seung-Mi Han, 'Korea through Japanese Eyes: An Analysis of Late Meiji Travelogues on Korea', *Core Publications* (1998): 63.
[101]See for example Chapter 2 'Ilboninŭi chosŏnyŏhaenggiroge pich'in chosŏnŭi p'yosang t'rtaeyŏksojit'rŭl chungshimŭro (The Representation of Korea Reflected in the Travel Reports of the Japanese -on the focus of Daiyakushosi(大役小志)' In *Shisŏnŭi t'ansaengr Shingminji Chosŏnŭi Kŭndaegwan'gwang (The Birth of the Gaze: Modern Tourism in Colonial Chosŏn),* edited by Cho Sŏngun, 53–79.

period, particularly in tourism materials targeted at Japanese travellers. Here, the physical representations of Koreans almost exclusively focused on femininity, youthfulness and innocence.[102]

The fixation on Korean femininity did not portray an accurate representation of the country, but rather the manifestation of two, interrelated Japanese anxieties. The first was an obsession with differentiating themselves with their closest neighbour. Because Korea and Japan shared a common root culture, as well as ethnic and linguistic similarities, it was vital that the Japanese created these axes of distinction, lest they be lumped in with other Asian nations by their competitors in the West. Japan's mastery of modern technologies in the civilian and military realms were testaments to their quintessentially 'masculine' qualities. Korea, a country which had succumbed to Japan's imperialist machinations possessed no such mastery and was therefore framed as perpetually 'feminine' in tourism materials. The second is a more complex anxiety, namely that within Japan proper, the speed of modernisation had been so rapid it had irretrievably changed Japanese culture. By portraying Korea(ns) as feminine, pre-modern and stagnant, tourism on the peninsula became a means of reconnecting with Japan's past. Or as historian E. Taylor Atkins argues, Korea became a mirror of Japan's lost 'primitive self',[103] with Koreans (or *Chosenjin* in Japanese) depicted as their long-lost cousins.[104]

Alongside images of Korean femininity typified by the ubiquitous *kisaeng* (Korean courtesan), postcards and guidebooks consolidated impressions of Korean decay, inertia and stagnancy. Sites of Korean heritage such as Bulguksa Temple in Kyŏngju were utilised as visual manifestations of this decay, with visual materials (Figure 7) creating powerful juxtapositions to emphasise the successes of Japan's modernisation efforts.[105]

Visual materials emphasised Japan's successes in 'civilising' the country. Because of the infinite variety of subject matter and design, as well as their affordability and portability, this was a golden age for postcards as a tool of mass communication and tourist promotion.[106] By the mid-1920s, demand was sufficient enough that four printing facilities entered operation in colonial-era Seoul, all producing postcards.[107] These postcards then became the visual representation of Japan's 'developmental agenda', which had served as a defence for Japan's designs on Korea leading up to colonisation.[108] Japanese travellers to the colony wrote accounts which chimed with narratives of Japanese successes, forming an influential body of literature within the home islands.

In their exploration of the relationship between power and tourism, geographers So-Min Cheong and Marc Miller explain how, when engaged in tourism, the tourist sees

[102]Soyŏng Yun, 'Shingmint'ongch'i p'yosang Konggan Kyŏngjuwa t'uŏrijŭmr Ilbon Kihaengmun Chungshimŭro (Tourism and Kyŏngju as a Symbol of Colonial Rule: A Study of Japanese Travelogues)', *Tan'guktaehakkyo Tongyanghakyŏn'guso* 45 (2009): 159–84; Sonhui Kim, Sajin'gŭrimyŏpsŏrŭl t'onghae Pon Kŭndae Sŏurŭi Kwan'gwang Imijiwa p'yosang (A Study on the Tourism Image and Representation of Seoul through Picture Postcards of the Japanese Colonial Period)', *Taehanjirihak'oeji* 53, no.4 (2008): 569–83.

[103]E. Taylor Atkins, *Primitive Selves: Koreana in the Japanese Colonial Gaze, 1910–1945* (California: University of California Press, 2010).

[104]Pai, *Travel Guides to Empire*, 83.

[105]See Kim, 'A Study on the Tourism Image'. Kim has collected a selection of images, many of which use juxtaposition to create powerful narratives on Japan's developmental successes in Korea.

[106]Hyung Il Pai, 'Staging "Koreana" for the Tourist Gaze: Imperialist Nostalgia and the Circulation of Picture Postcards', *History of Photography* 37, no. 3 (2013): 301.

[107]Hyung Gu Lynn, 'Moving Pictures Postcards of Colonial Korea', *Asia's Colonial Photographies*, no. 44 (2007).

[108]Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword*, 397–400.

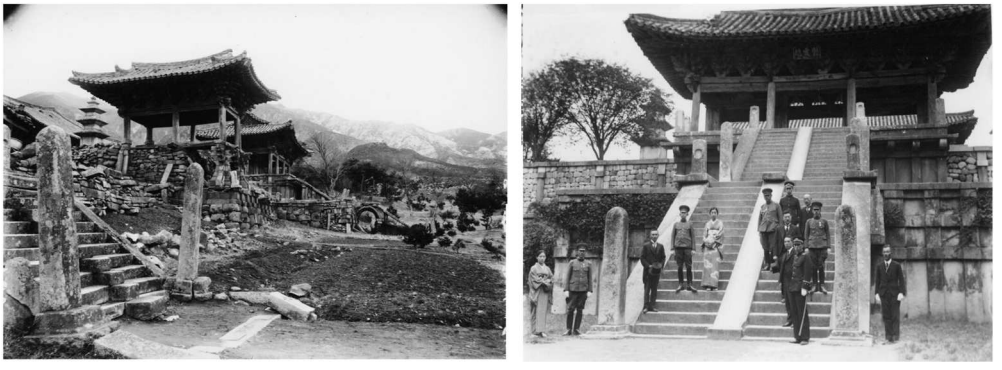

Figure 7. Bulguksa Temple before and after Japanese reconstruction. The picture on the left is of Bulguksa Temple in 1914, and the picture on the right is from 1935. Both pictures courtesy of the National Museum of Korea.

what is set out for them, or rather 'what they are meant to see'.[109] This aphorism certainly appears appropriate for Japanese travel accounts on Korea. There were precious few Japanese travellers who went on to express sympathy with Koreans – *mingei* artist Yanagi Soetsu being a notable exception[110] – rather, Japanese travellers internalised the prevalent discourse within the state-controlled tourism industries and produced accounts which trumpeted the successes of Japan's modernisation efforts.

Travelogues composed by Japanese travelers in Korea were crucial in bringing the country closer to the home audience by producing knowledge inscribing images of Korea in the Japanese popular imagination.[111] In an account with remarkable similarities to that written by Isabella Bird on Japan only twenty-five years earlier, Okita Kinjō's 1905 travelogue *Rimen no Kankoku (Korea behind the Mask)* offers a typical, almost entirely derogatory interpretation of Korea. He describes the 'seven major products of Korea as excrement, tobacco, lice, courtesans, tigers, pigs and flies', offering a scathing assessment of living conditions, which to him are 'little or no better than those of primitive aborigines'.[112] Ryōshū Kōji's 1910 travel account offers similar characterisations of Korea(ns) which germinated in the pre-colonial period and were consolidated after Korea's formal colonisation. Throughout his account, Japanese colonisation is rationalised by denigrating Koreans and drawing points of contrast from the industrious, orderly Japanese:

> It would be more accurate to say that Koreans are a simple-minded *jinshu* (race) rather than an honest people … They are not pretentious … and obey orders when they are under surveillance … However, they tend to forget easily when they are out of sight of an authority figure, which is to say that they do not devote themselves deeply to anything … If we [Japanese] impose order on them they [Koreans] will resent us and if we extend our generosity

[109]So-Min Cheong and Marc L Miller, 'A Foucauldian Observation', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27, no. 2 (200), 384.
[110]Kim Brandt, *Kingdom of Beauty: Mingei and the Politics of Folk Art in Imperial Japan* (Durham, United States: Duke University Press, 2007). In this book, Brandt explores the life and works of Yanagi Soetsu. In his appreciation for Korean art and promotion of Korean ceramics, Brandt frames him as one of the few Japanese travellers to Korea offering a more nuanced interpretation of the metropole-colony relationship.
[111]Helen J S Lee, 'Voices of the "Colonists," Voices of the "Immigrants": "Korea" in Japan's Early Colonial Travel Narratives and Guides, 1894-1914', *Japanese Language and Literature*, 41, no. 1 (2007), 1.
[112]Okita Kinjō, *Rimen no Kankoku (Korea behind the Mask)* (Osaka: Kibunkan, 1905), 33.

> they will soften and depend on us. In other words, they [Koreans] are a difficult *jinshu* to deal with.[113]

Within this deeply offensive diatribe, Japan is framed as the custodian over Korea, whose 'simplicity' and inconsistent behaviour requires stern, paternal leadership. The notion of Koreans as directionless, simple or somehow lacking the critical faculties so patently possessed by the Japanese, appears often in early-colonial travel accounts. Koreans were said to 'lack a spirit of sacrifice',[114] and constructed as 'voiceless, motionless, and aimless herds'.[115] These characterisations synthesised with popular tourist images of Korea, creating what historian Helen J. S. Lee refers to as 'gazing eyes'. Here, the observers reproduce relations of colonial dominance, which are framed as a natural part of the social landscape.[116] Japan's gaze over Korea was therefore multifaceted and unfixed, entailing the systemisation of imagery and the knowledge of the country through a range of different channels.

Conclusion

Within the large and growing literature of research on tourism, there are several important projects which articulate how tourism – both its initial, nineteenth century iteration and its modern form – creates hierarchies of power through which subjectivities are shaped and reinforced. This paper situates itself within this body of literature by considering Japan's early engagements with tourism, a subject which has, to date, received limited historical attention in broader scholarship on the Meiji period. By analysing Meiji Japan's unique transition from the object to practitioner of the tourist gaze, this paper adds to our understanding of this understudied topic and the inherent power dynamics within tourism. Furthermore, the paper demonstrates how tourism in its early form was as an 'effect or tool of empire',[117] reinforcing calls to afford the topic of colonial tourism a level of scholarly treatment commensurate with its obvious historical significance.[118] By exploring the early history of tourism beyond a Eurocentric spatial remit, it also encourages us to consider how early tourism practices impacted wider processes of objectification and commodification which still characterise tourism today.

After achieving rapid modernisation in the late nineteenth century, Japan managed to reposition itself as a country which was no longer 'Asian', at least not in the pejorative sense in which this term was used by Western powers.[119] By allowing visitors to view the country in a new light, tourism became a vital organ for articulating Japan's anomalous position in East Asia and redefining the country to foreign audiences. The variety of methods the Meiji state used to achieve parity with the West have been systematically

[113]Lee, *Voices of the Colonists*, 9.
[114]Sonia Ryang, 'Japanese Travellers' Accounts of Korea', *East Asian History*, issue. 13/14 (1997): 150.
[115]Lee, *Voices of the Colonists*, 5.
[116]Ibid., 7.
[117]Waleed Hazbun, 'Tourism and the Making of the Modern Middle East', *Journal of Tourism History* 16, no. 2 (2024): 128.
[118]Aline Demay, *Tourism and Colonization in Indochina (1898-1939)* (Newcastle upon Tyne, England: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015): 1–10. In the introduction, Demay outlines not only the inherent importance of tourism within the colonial project, but also colonial tourism more broadly as a valuable topic of historical research.
[119]Said, *Orientalism*, 74–5. Said discusses a number of supposed maxims and truths held by 'learned Orientalist' travellers of the nineteenth century. Among these maxims were the mythology of the mysterious East and notions of Asian inscrutability. By establishing itself as a major travel destination and a military power, Japan was to a much greater extent 'understood' by Western powers, helping the country shed some of these unwanted designations which had permeated travel accounts only a generation before.

examined in historical research, yet within this body of scholarship limited attention has been afforded to tourism. As this paper demonstrated, Meiji Japan's political leadership quickly recognised the value of tourism, not only for inbound travellers to Japan, but also its potential to entrench and perpetuate hierarchical power relations in their colonies of Taiwan and Korea. Tourism could showcase Japan's (self-proclaimed) successes in developing their colonies to foreign and domestic audiences, becoming a tool for articulating power and informing a more dedicated imperial citizen. We can surmise how successful these efforts were by referring to accounts penned by Western visitors to Taiwan and Korea during Japanese rule.

These travellers echoed the discourse of colonial travellers to European colonies generations before, offering praise for Japanese modernisation efforts coupled with lurid, derogatory descriptions of local customs and cultures. In Owen Rutter's *Through Formosa: an account of Japan's island colony* for example, Japan's modernisation efforts are praised and they are lauded as competent colonial administrators.[120] The only real negative commentary in this account stems from Japanese failures to properly pacify the 'natives'.[121] Western visitors to Korea after 1910, including missionaries, journalists or leisure travellers, offer a remarkably consistent set of tropes on Japan's success in Korea. These are, to name a couple, inefficient Koreans versus efficient Japanese and Korean irrationality versus Japanese rationality.[122] Although there were some voices sympathetic of Korea's situation within the overwhelmingly pro-Japanese discourse, most visitors sided with the colonial administrators, believing Korea was now 'enjoying a process of modernisation at the hands of the benevolent Japanese administration'.[123]

Neither Japanese nor Western accounts seemed to consider colonised inhabitants as anything other than curios of fascination, yet there is evidence to suggest the existence of a travel culture within these communities themselves.[124] The processes through which colonised subjects engaged in tourism during colonial rule has been understudied, though fortunately there is a growing body of research on this subject. As this body of research demonstrates, colonial-era tourism was not only used by colonisers to reinforce the existing polity and consolidate notions of superiority, but also adopted by colonised subjects as a means of resisting colonial control.[125] It is hoped that by considering the interplay between colonialism, power and the tourist gaze, this paper can offer a methodological framework for further explorations into how colonised subjects interacted with the power structures of colonialism through travel and tourism.

[120]Owen Rutter, *Through Formosa: an account of Japan's island colony* (London: Unwin, 1923): 95. As one indicative example, Rutter describes the 'progressive methods of the Japan, who have built up this extensive system of education in less than thirty years'.
[121]Ibid., 159–61.
[122]Álvaro Trigo Maldonado, 'Western Travelers in Colonial Korea: Foreign Perceptions on Legitimacy of the Japanese Rule and the Two Nations', *The Review of Korean Studies* 23, no. 1 (2020): 188. Maldonado's paper brings together a series of accounts across a twenty-year period, tracing the consistencies and discrepancies between Western travel accounts to Korea.
[123]Ibid., 185.
[124]There are now increasing numbers of research projects focused on Korean travellers of the colonial period. See for example Miyŏng Woo, *Kŭndae Chosŏn Ŭi Yŏhaengjadŭl: Kŭdŭl Ŭi Nun e Pich'in Chosŏn Kwa Segye (Travellers of Modern Chosŏn: Chosŏn and the World in Their Eyes)* (Yŏksa pip'yŏngsa: Seoul, 2018).
[125]Kenneth Ruoff, *Imperial Japan at Its Zenith: The Wartime Celebration of the Empire's 2,600th Anniversary* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010), 127–8; Chris Wearden, 'History, Heritage and Legend in Colonial-Era Tourism: Kyŏngju and P'yŏngyang as Sites of Ideological Contestation', *European Journal of Korean Studies* 24, no. 1, (2024): 7–48.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

This work was supported by the Korea Foundation 2023–24 Scholarship for Graduate Studies.

Notes on contributor

Chris Wearden is a PhD candidate at SOAS, University of London. His thesis explores how travel, tourism and travel writing contributed to conceptions of Korean nationhood and identity under Japanese rule between 1919-1937, considering both the experiential aspects – the act of travel – and the discursive power of travel literature. His main interest is the interplay of modernity and nationalism in colonial Korea in the contexts of leisure, consumption, travel and tourism. Specifically, he is interested in how new leisure activities allowed colonised Koreans to interact with the power structures of colonialism, and how conceptions of Korean identity were formed through these interactions.