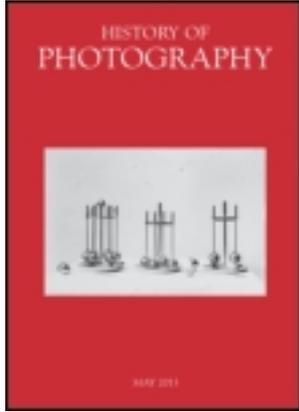


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Staging 'Koreana' for the Tourist Gaze: Imperialist Nostalgia and the Circulation of Picture Postcards

Hyung Il Pai

This article analyses the production and distribution of the first generation of picture postcard views of historical monuments in the Korean peninsula. These sites were preserved, reconstructed and promoted as tourist destinations by the Japanese colonial administration, the transportation industry and local developers in order to promote Japanese tourism during the colonial occupation of Korea (1910–45). Through an analysis of picture postcards and other tourist materials made for Japanese tourists in Korea, this study argues that the aesthetic, historical and ethnographic knowledges contained in this body of colonial-era visual materials were pivotal in the creation of a 'timeless' image of Korea and its peoples as the most picturesque and ancient land in the Japanese empire.

Keywords: *Early Korean photography, Murakami Kōjirō, George Rose (1861–1942), colonialism, ethnography, print culture, tourist industry, Japan Tourist Bureau, gisaeng images*

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In this article, the Revised Romanisation of Korean System was used for transliterating Korean-language sources. The names of East Asian origin are transliterated in the order with surname preceding given name.

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1 – See F. Beato *Bakumatsu Nihon shashinshū*, ed. Yokohama kaikō shiryōkan, Yokohama: Benridō 1987; and *Brush and Shutter: Early Photography in China*, ed. Jeffrey W. Cody and Frances Terpak, Los Angeles: Getty Publications 2011.

2 – On the picture postcard, see Frank Staff, *The Picture Postcard and its Origins*, New York: Frederick A. Praeger 1966; and Christraud M. Geary and Virginia-Lee Webb, *Delivering Views: Distant Cultures in Early Postcards*, Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press 1998.

Local subjects framed by decaying monuments are the most common tourist images of nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century East Asia. The dissemination of tourist information of the region packaged into train and steamer manuals, brochures, maps and photographs enabled curious consumers and potential travellers their first glimpse of exotic customs and newly 'discovered' peoples. With the expansion of British and French colonial interests into the far corners of the globe, a new class of merchants, photographers and dealers established businesses in such newly opened ports as Shanghai, Hong Kong, Fusan (Busan) and Yokohama.¹

By the late nineteenth century, both public as well as private institutions had begun to print postcard sets for mass distribution. The infinite variety of subject matter and design, as well as the postcard's portability and affordability, ushered in the golden age of the picture postcard, when the medium was universally adopted as a tool of mass visual communication and tourist promotion. For more than a century and a half, the visual representation and commodification of ethnicity has determined the selection of subjects and objects of the 'tourist gaze' around the world.² However, no study in the English language has analysed the vital role of the parallel development of photography and the tourist industry in the making and marketing of destinations in the Japanese colony of Korea, then known as Chōsen (1910–45).

This article examines the first generation of postcard views of Korea's destinations produced in the early twentieth century by commercial photographers and postcard companies for the Japanese tourist market. It begins to unravel the

historical origins, aesthetic conventions and commercial agendas of picture postcards preserved today in major collections and libraries in Korea and Japan. This vast archive of materials deserves close attention for its insights into the Japanese colonial period and its visual commodification of Korean society and culture. The production, consumption and circulation of picture postcards contributed to the creation of 'authentic' images of Korea's cultural sites for Japanese and western audiences alike.

The Mass Circulation of Views of Korea

The year 1905 marked a turning point in the history of the picture postcard in Korea. In that year, four major geopolitical events transformed the Korean peninsula into the administrative and business hub of Japan's rapidly expanding empire. Firstly, the Russo-Japanese War (1904–05) boosted the production and sale of postcard sets of soldiers and battleships en route between Korea and Manchuria.³ Attractive commemorative postcard sets, designed by artists and graphic designers and issued by the Japanese Ministry of Communications as well as private entrepreneurs, were not only a major event in the history of Japanese postcards but also signalled the official debut of Japan as an imperial power on the world stage.⁴

Secondly, national pride in Japan inspired the first packaged group tours to the new colonies in 1906. The *Asahi shinbun* advertised cruises to the victorious 'battle-sites' featured in news reports on the Sino-Japanese (1894–95) and Russo-Japanese wars. Three days after the first announcement of the 'Cruise touring Manchuria and Korea (*Man-Gan junyū sen*)', the *Asahi shinbun* announced that all three classes of cabin tickets had sold out. This was indeed an auspicious start for the newspaper, which had promoted Manchuria and Korea as 'the new world (*shintenchi*) where one could see for oneself the farthest edge of the Emperor's authority and domain'.⁵

Thirdly, in that same year the floundering postal agency of the Great Han Empire of Korea (1897–1910) was incorporated into Japan's Postal Agency, linking the peninsula to the empire's communication network of telegraph and telephone lines. Finally, the opening of the Fusan (Busan) and Keijō (Seoul) lines by the Chōsen Government Railways Company advanced Japan's reach into northeast China and Russian Siberia.⁶ The Japanese transportation industry, spearheaded by the steamship company *Nippon Yusen Kaisha*, and the South Manchuria Railway Company, not only built harbour docks and railway tracks but also constructed a chain of station hotels and other tourist infrastructure facilities. By the time of the Japanese annexation of Korea in 1910, the peninsula was no longer the 'hermit' kingdom, since thousands of bureaucrats, soldiers, businessmen, labourers and settlers were using the main line en route to Manchuria, Russia and China.⁷ With the rapid advancement of Japanese colonisation into continental Asia, the picture postcard attracted a diverse range of producers and buyers as the most efficient and economical means for mass communication. Throughout the formal and informal territories of the Japanese empire, from Manchuria to Singapore, a wide range of public institutions and private organisations were engaged in postcard production and distribution.⁸

According to museum curators of early photography in Korea and Japan, the first domestic postcards can be traced to two Japanese-owned photographic studios that were located in the neighbourhood of the newly renamed Korean capital of Keijō's Nanzan (South Mountain). The oldest, Gyokusendō (玉川堂), was established in 1889 by Fujita Shōzaburō (藤田庄三郎), a disciple of Ogawa Kazumasa (1860–1929), the official photographer to the Imperial Household as well as the owner of one of the most famous studios of the Meiji era.⁹ Murakami Kōjirō (村上幸次郎), the owner of two photographic studios known as Namaeikan (生影館) and Hōsenkan (鳳仙館), was the second photographer to market early postcards in Korea. Murakami placed some of the earliest photography-related advertisements in the *Hwangseong sinmun*, Seoul's oldest

3 – Anne Nishimura Morse, J. Thomas Rimer and Kendall H. Brown, *Art of the Japanese Postcard: The Leonard A. Lauder Collection at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, New Haven: Yale University Press and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston 2004; and Frederic A. Sharf, Anne Nishimura Morse and Sebastian Dobson, *A Much Recorded War: The Russo-Japanese War in History and Imagery*, Boston: MFA Publications 2005.

4 – According to Anne Nishimura Morse, the Japanese Ministry of Communications issued five different postcard sets between 1904 and 1906. The pictures followed the progress of the war and the victory celebrations that followed the signing of the treaty of Portsmouth in September 1905. A total of four hundred to seven hundred thousand sets were sold. Morse, Rimer and Brown, *Art of the Japanese Postcard*, 18. The same postcard sets were also displayed prominently at the St Louis World's Fair in 1904, where the Japanese pavilion featured the products and natives of the newly incorporated colonies of Taiwan, Korea and Manchuria. See Itō Mamiko, '1904nen sentoruisu bankoku hakurankai to nichirōsenshi kaigo', *Shigaku zasshi*, 112:9 (2003), 67–86; and Kōgō Eriko 'Teishinshō hatsukō nichirōseneki kinnen hagaki sho: so no jitsujō to ii', *Bijutsushi kenkyū*, 41 (2003), 103–24.

5 – Ariyama Teruo, *Kaigai kankō ryokō no tanjō*, Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan 2002, 33.

6 – Japan Imperial Government Railways, *An Official Guide to Eastern Asia*:

Transcontinental Connections between Europe and Asia, Vol. 1 Manchuria and Chōsen, Tokyo: Tetsudōin 1913.

7 – Hyung Il Pai, 'Travel Guides to the 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 2010, 67–87.

8 – For example, see Paul D. Barclay, 'Peddling Postcards and Selling Empire: Image-making in Taiwan under Japanese Colonial Rule', *Journal of Japanese Studies*, 30:1 (2010), 83–112; and Lim Shao Bin, *Images of Singapore from the Japanese Perspectives (1891–1941)*, Singapore: The Japanese Cultural Society of Singapore 2004.

9 – Ōzawa Kiyoshi, *Shashinkai no senkaku Ogawa Kazumasa no shōgai*, Tokyo: Kindai bungeisha 1994.

10 – Gwon Hyeok-hui, *Choseoneseo on sajin yeopseo*, Seoul: Mineumsa 2005, 86–7.

11 – Choi Injin, *Hanguk sajin, 1631–1945*, Seoul: Noonbit 1999, 215.

12 – Yi Don-su and Yi Sun-u, *Baengnyeongjeon Seoul jujae Italia Oegyogwan Kkareuro rojeti eui Daehan Jeguk gyeonmun-gi Kkorea e Kkoreani sajin haeseolpan*, Seoul: Hanulche 2009, 14–16.

13 – Choi, *Hanguk sajin*, 215–16.

14 – Gwon, *Choseoneseo on sajin yeopseo*, 90.

15 – Korai Bijutsukan, *Shashin ehagaki no nakano Chōsen minzoku: Hyakumen mae eno jikū no ryo (1900–1945)*, Kyoto: Goryo Museum of Art 2010, 11.

16 – Ibid.

17 – *Yeopseo sokui gisaeng ilkki*, ed. Kim Yeong-hui, Seoul: Gungnip Minsok Bangmulkwan 2009, 96.

18 – Paul D. Barclay, personal correspondence with the author, 2011.

19 – Edo rekishi hakubutsukan, *Utsukushi Nihon Taishō Shōwa no ryō*, Tokyo: Edo rekishi hakubutsukan 2005.

20 – Korai Bijutsukan, *Shashin ehagaki no nakano Chōsen minzoku*, 11.

21 – For example, see Bank of Chōsen, *Pictorial Chōsen and Manchuria*, Keijō, Chōsen: Bank of Chōsen 1919; and *Heigō kinen Chōsen shashinjō*, ed. Sugi Ichirōbei, Tokyo: Gengentō Shobō and Keijō: Shinhantōsha 1910.

22 – Gwon Haeng-ga, 'Ilje shidae upyeon yeopseo natanan Gisaeng imiji', *Misulsa Nondan*, 12 (2001), 83–103; and Gwon Haeng-ga, 'King Gojong's Portrait and the Advent of Photography in Korea', *International Journal of Korean Art and Archaeology*, 5 (2011), 59–69.

newspaper.¹⁰ His advertisements boasted of the technical prowess of the studios' seasoned photographers as well as their up-to-date printing and colour techniques imported from France.

By the 1900s, these Japanese-managed studios were not only patronised by local Japanese residents, but also counted prominent clients from the diplomatic community. Among the studios' customers was Mrs Mary Scranton (1832–1909), the American missionary and the pioneer of women's education in Korea as the founder of Ewha Girls' School in 1886.¹¹ Murakami's studio was also a favourite with diplomats such as the Italian Consul-General Carlo Rossetti (1876–1948), who purchased the bulk of his postcard collections from his studio in Seoul in 1902 and 1903.¹² About sixty-five photographs attributed to Murakami were included in Rossetti's travelogue *Corea e Coreani* (1904). Choi Injin, a prominent collector of and prolific author on Korean photography, includes Fujita and Murakami amongst the first generation of professional photographers who successfully introduced the 'manners and customs' genre of souvenir photographs and postcards to Korea.¹³

Most postcards dating from the 1920s were printed by the local manufacturer Hinode Shōkō (日之出商行), a stationery store located in the centre of Keijō's retail district at Honmachi 4-chōme near South Gate. The founder Shiinoki Unosuke (椎木宇之) came from Kyoto in 1901 to open a store that sold souvenirs and postcards.¹⁴ By 1915, he had opened another branch in Meijimachi (present-day Myeongdong), which burned down in a fire in 1933.¹⁵ At its peak, the company had four printing offices either directly under its management or presses contracted with the company. It had a thriving business for packaged sets of eight postcards illustrating topical events of the day. Some of the titles included annexation commemorative sets, representative manners and customs, as well as *gisaeng* or 'beauties' of Chōsen.¹⁶ According to Kim Yeong-hui, the curator of an exhibition of *gisaeng* postcards at the National Folk Museum in Seoul, Hinode is reported to have sold ten thousand postcards daily at its height. The company held the rights to an archive of seven hundred views of famous places (*meishō*) and six hundred 'manners and customs' photographs of Chōsen (*Chōsen fūzokushū*).¹⁷

In the 1930s, the Taishō Publishing Company (*Taishō shashin kōgeisho*) was the main supplier of postcards sold at major traffic junctions, ports and famous sites in Korea. Consequently, the company's logo, a flying pigeon (*hattō*), is to be found on the largest portion of extant postcard collections of the Japanese empire from this decade.¹⁸ The company's postcards, which are still widely offered for sale through Internet auction sites and used book stores, reflect the surge in travel advertising during the first boom in Japanese mass travel, both domestic as well as outbound, on the part of middle-class citizens of Japan.¹⁹

Taken together, these manufacturers dominated the postcard trade and distributed their merchandise via hundreds of retail outlets, including the Japan Tourist Bureau travel offices and South Manchuria Railway Company stations located at important transportation hubs, department stores and major ports throughout the empire. Postcards were also available for sale at photographic studios and souvenir shops located along the main streets of Honmachi (present-day Euljiro), Jongno and the port of Busan.²⁰ Reprints of postcard views also found their way into news and current affairs' publications, including the Governor-General's commemorative photograph albums in celebration of official milestones such as imperial tours to Korea in 1907 and the 1910 annexation ceremony.²¹

Because identical photographic views and angles were recycled in a wide variety of colonial-era media formats, scholars have been able to identify the original photographer and date of publication in only a handful of cases. As a result, only certain contextual information can be surmised through architectural clues and street signs, dress styles and hair ornaments, in order to assign relative dates or identify locations or personalities.²² For this paper, the author has selected postcard views with archival information concerning the photographer, the publisher or the

source. Contemporaneous travelogues, guidebooks and photograph albums also supplement the descriptions of postcards in this article.²³

Destinations and Postcard Views

A view of the Gwanghwamun Gate is one of four thousand historic postcards preserved in the archives of the Busan Museum in Seoul (figure 1).²⁴ This is a rare example of an early postcard with a provenance, including mailing address, post office stamp, dated signature and the names of the manufacturer and distributor. The photograph originated with a studio named Tenshindō, another shop managed by Murakami, and hence this postcard closely resembles the many views of the same gate featured in Carlo Rossetti's above-mentioned album.²⁵ As indicated on the back of the postcard, the seller was a souvenir shop. On the front, the sender, Tamaki Kameya, addressed the postcard on 8 May 1906 (Meiji 39) and noted that he had returned safely and in good health from Korea. Tamaki sent the postcard to a relative at the First Girls' High School Dormitory in Kyoto. Judging from the stamp, he had purchased the postcard in Keijō but did not send it until his ferry docked in Moji, southern Japan, probably saving a few sen on postage.

The postcard's date, image, postal information and brief text provide us not only with a document of a particular historical moment and context, but also a view of the geopolitical circumstances surrounding Korea's emergence as a colonised

23 – All of the surviving postcards, photographs albums and guidebooks located for this study were printed either in Japanese or European languages (English, French, Russian, German), indicating that the tourist industry was mainly interested in attracting foreigners with deep pockets.

24 – Busan Museum, *Sajin yeopseoeseo mannan gwan-gwang myeongso*, Busan: Busan Museum 2008.

25 – Yi and Yi, *Baengnyeongjeon Seoul*, 62–3.

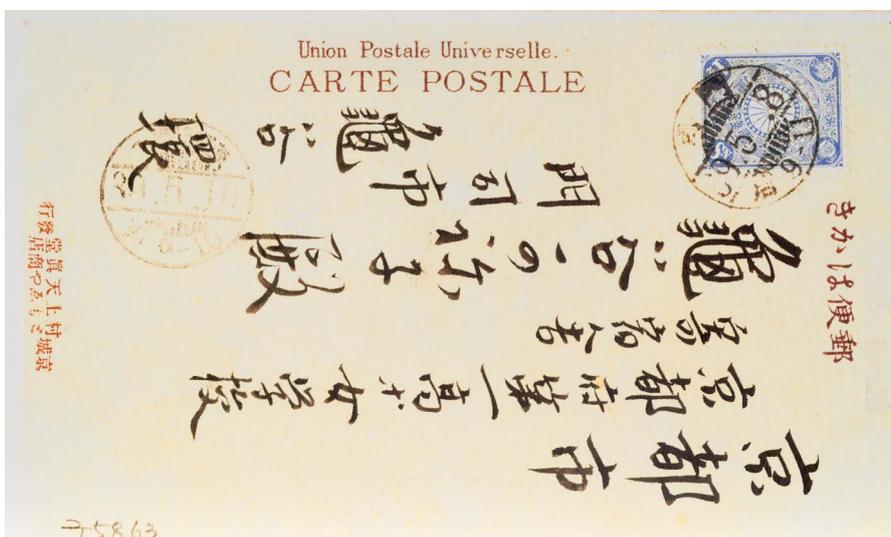


Figure 1. Tenshindō studio, Gwanghwamun Gate/Gate of Queen Palace, coloured picture postcard, front and back, ca. 1906. Courtesy of Busan Museum, Busan.

destination for Japanese tourists. It is significant that the postcard manufacturers chose to title the card using two languages and two different names: 'Kōkamon' (Gwanghwamun Gate) written in Japanese script under the illustration on the right, and the printed title 'Gate of Queen Palace' on the left. The English-language title refers to Queen Min or Myeogseong Hwanghu (1851–95), who was the most famous victim of an assassination plot masterminded by Miura Gorō (1847–1926), then Japanese Resident-Minister. The addition of the English caption indicates that the postcard manufacturers wanted to capitalise on popular memories of the queen's brutal murder amongst globetrotting missionaries and foreign correspondents. However, by the time the postcard was sold, Myeogseong had already been dead for ten years. This serene postcard view of the palace gate contrasts sharply with the violence of the times, for the newly appointed Resident General, Itō Hirobumi (1841–1909), was managing the peninsula as a *de facto* police state. Despite signs of local discontent, Tamaki may have chosen this card of Gwanghwamun Gate because it signified the declining fortunes of the Yi dynasty (1392–1910) and the ascendancy of Japanese imperial power in Korea.

Furthermore, this postcard was also carefully hand-coloured by a professional artist, who painted in blue skies so that the earth tones of the streets would contrast with the white masonry of the walls. These embellishments have effectively aged the stone masonry, making the gate appear much older than its forty years.²⁶ A blurred figure of a bearded *Yangban* – a representative symbol of the ruling classes of Yi civil officialdom – strolls in front of the gate's three entrances. The photographer also took care to focus the camera lens on two small street children: one sits facing the camera before the foundation stone, while the other climbs the pedestal of one of the sculptures guarding the palace gates. These 'lazy' *Yangban* and 'bedraggled' street urchins represent two of the most iconic signifiers of the last days of the Yi dynasty and echo the tropes of many contemporary travel narratives and ethnographic reports that blamed the arrogance and ignorance of *Yangban* bureaucrats, whose xenophobia, corruption and ineffectual administration led to widespread poverty, for the collapse of the kingdom to foreign invaders.²⁷

Arranging street children next to monuments for scale was also a photographic convention adopted by the globetrotting Australian photographer George Rose (figure 2). Rose was in Korea to take pictures for his stereoview company, based in Melbourne.²⁸ In Rose's stereograph, three adolescent boys stand in front of Pagoda Park (*Tapgol gongwon*), named after the remains of the thirteen-storey Wongaksaji Pagoda. A travel guide to Keijō introduced this pagoda as a present from the Mongol Yuan emperor to the Goryeo King, Chungseon (1308–13). Another oft-cited anecdote relates that a famous general serving under Toyotomi Hideyoshi, Kato Kiyomasa

26 – The original palace was built by Yi Tae-jo, the founder of the Yi Joseon dynasty (1392–1910). It was burned down during the Hideyoshi invasions (1592–98) and had been left in ruins for close to three centuries. In 1867, a major reconstruction project was undertaken by Heungseon Daewongun (1820–98) who during his ten-year reign as regent became obsessed with the grand vision of restoring the power of the monarchy in order to pave the way for his young son, Gojong, the heir to the throne.

27 – Imamura Chijun (Tomoe), *Chōsen fuzokushū*, Keijō: Sadokan 1914.

28 – Norman Thorpe organised a major retrospective exhibition of Rose's photographs of Korea, which opened at the Munye Gallery in Daehangno in 2002. See Norman Thorpe, *Korea through Australian Eyes*, Seoul: Kyobo 2004. In his annotated catalogue, Thorpe notes that Rose inaccurately identified the remains of the Wongaksaji thirteen-storey pagoda as the 'Famous Eleven-Storey Pagoda, Temple of Heaven'. The latter is a shrine built in 1897 during King Gojong's reign.



6144. FAMOUS ELEVEN-STOREY PAGODA, TEMPLE OF HEAVEN, SEOUL, KOREA. The top was blown off by a storm Copyright, 1904.

6144. FAMOUS ELEVEN-STOREY PAGODA, TEMPLE OF HEAVEN, SEOUL, KOREA. The top was blown off by a storm Copyright, 1904.

Figure 2. George Rose, *Pagoda Park*, albumen print stereograph, ca. 1904. Courtesy of Keystone Mast Collection [1996.0009.A1504], California Museum of Photography, University of California, Riverside.

(1562–1611), had attempted to dismantle the pagoda as loot when he returned to Japan. Unable to accomplish his scheme, Kato had abandoned the pagoda in its dismantled state, with the top three storeys removed and discarded to the side as depicted in Rose’s picture.²⁹ Although the exact year remains in dispute, the area was re-landscaped in 1892 as Keijō’s first public garden at the suggestion of an Irishman named John Mcleavy Brown, then Chief Commissioner of Korean Customs to the British Consulate. As Korea’s oldest public park, it was later registered as Ancient Remains number one in 1916, the first year the Colonial Registry of Ancient Sites and Relics was promulgated by the Committee on Korean Antiquities.³⁰

As these examples indicate, it was common practice for travel photographers to pose street children next to monuments. As native markers, sympathetic portraits of street children are recurrent motifs of the ‘conquered other’ in views of the capital of Keijō. From the perspective of the commercial photographer, the children’s innocent expressions and demeanour embellished the exotic and pristine quality of their travel experiences and affirmed their status as discoverers of unknown, distant lands and peoples. Rose was one of numerous commercial photographers to capture dishevelled street children amid historic ruins in order to enhance the ‘nostalgic’ appeal of the six-hundred-year-old capital for a world audience. Portraits of Koreans as ‘child-like’ and somewhat ‘helpless’ barbarians who needed to be saved by civilised nations mirrored contemporary missionaries’ travel photographs and narratives.³¹

Throughout the colonial era, panoramic views of the South Gate were included in every type of printed medium, including Japanese controlled newspapers, official photograph albums, railway brochures and guides (figure 3). As the single most reproduced architectural landscape in the past century, its visage became synonymous with ‘Old Korea’ for several reasons. Firstly, the South Gate was widely known in Japanese historical accounts as the main passageway through which several generations of conquerors had entered the city. Due to its historical connections to the Hideyoshi invasions (1592–98), the gate was often referred to as the door-step (*kenkan*) to Keijō in Japanese travel guides.³² Secondly, the colonial authorities wanted to emphasise not only its six-hundred-year-old antiquity, but

29 – Chōsen tetsudō, *Keijō, Jinsen, Suigen, Kaijō*, Keijō: Chōsen Insatsu 1929, 15. From the Japanese records, I have confirmed that the original caption in figure 2 is inaccurate, since the three storeys abandoned on the ground represented the failed attempt by General Kato to dismantle the pagoda.

30 – Hyung Il Pai, ‘The Creation of National Treasures and Monuments: The 1916 Japanese Laws on the Preservation of Korean Remains and Relics and Their Colonial Legacies’, *The Journal of Korean Studies*, 25:1 (2001), 72–95.

31 – See, for example, Horace N. Allen, *Things Korean: A Collection of Sketches and Anecdotes, Missionary and Diplomatic*, New York: Fleming H. Revell 1908, 131; and *Missionary Photography in Korea: Encountering the West through Christianity*, ed. Donald Clark, New York: The Korea Society Gallery and Seoul: Seoul Selection 2009.

32 – Chōsen tetsudō, *Keijō, Jinsen, Suigen, Kaijō*, 10.

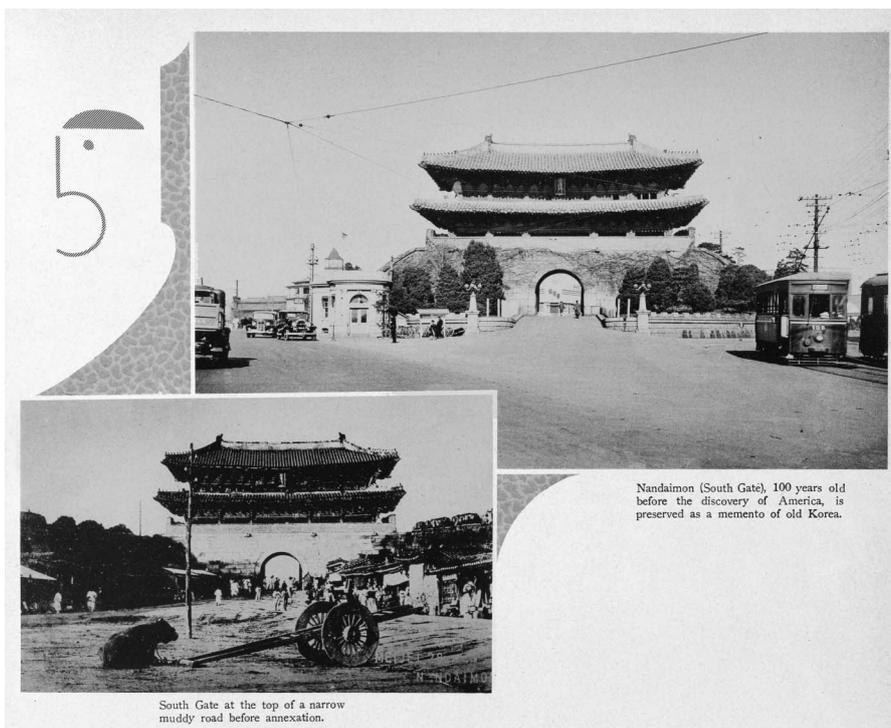


Figure 3. Photographers unknown, *Two Views of South Gate*, 1895 (lower frame) and 1935 (upper frame). Reproduced from *Thriving Chosen: A Survey of Twenty-five Years of Administration*, ed. Foreign Affairs Section, Governor-General of Chōsen, Wakayama City, Japan: Taishō shashin kōgeisho 1935, unpaginated.

33 – Between the end of the Sino-Japanese War and the Protectorate Treaty brokered after the Russo-Japanese War, the number of Japanese settlers living in the Yongsan army barracks and the Nandaimon area of Keijō increased from fifteen hundred to around eight thousand residents. See Aoyagi Tsunatarō, *Shinsen Keijō annai*, Keijō: Chōsen Kenkyūkai 1913, 272. By 1934, there were 561,384 Japanese and 50,639 foreigners in the Korean peninsula. See *Thriving Chosen: A Survey of Twenty-five years of Administration by the Governor-General of Chosen*, ed. Governor-General Office of Joseon, Joseon: Governor-General of Chōsen 1935, 6.

34 – Kenneth J. Ruoff, *Imperial Japan at its Zenith: The Wartime Celebration of the Empire's 2,600th Anniversary*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 2010, 116–22.

35 – Chōsen tetsudō, *Heijō (Pyongyang)*, Keijō: Senman Annaisho and Japan Travel Bureau 1939.

36 – Nippon ryokōkai, *Dai ni senman shisatsudan kimen*, Tokyo: Nippon ryokōkai 1930. I am grateful to Professor Liu Jianhui for bringing my attention to this volume and for permission to scan his personal copy.
37 – Ibid.

also that the 'enlightened' Japanese authorities had secured its protection and preservation. Thirdly, the Governor-General of Chōsen had chosen the gate as the symbol of 'Old Korea', which demarcated the border between the northern 'old city', populated by Koreans, and the southern 'new town' (*shinmachi*), paved with wide roads to facilitate military transport as well as to make way for new lines of trams and railways.³³ It is also telling that before-and-after views of the gate were included in an official commemorative photograph album – entitled *Thriving Chosen* and written in English – celebrating twenty-five years of Japanese administration of the Korean peninsula (figure 3). This album was printed by the Taishō Publishing Company, which, as mentioned above, was the largest manufacturer of postcards in the 1930s. By juxtaposing these two views of the gate, separated by forty years, the Japanese colonial administration deliberately deployed old postcard views as visual propaganda in order to highlight the successes of their 'civilising mission'.

In figure 3, the upper frame, devoid of tourists, pedestrians and shoppers, demonstrates a standard postcard convention of city views. For the Government-General of Chōsen, the cityscape views highlighted the monument's well-maintained architectural façade and urban streets. At the same time, these views project an image of the colony as a pristine, empty and unpolluted destination, ripe for exploration and colonisation. By the 1920s, South Gate was the designated meeting point where scheduled tour buses and trams departed for 'through' ticket passengers who wanted to rest or dine at the chic Chōsen and Bando hotels or undertake a tour on the way to China or Manchuria.³⁴ Colonial architects and developers had transformed South Gate into the iconic entrance to Chōsen, seen by millions of inbound train passengers disembarking from the Keijō–Busan line. By the 1930s, this gate was the busiest traffic junction in Korea. Thus the sparsely populated street view of South Gate, with only a few bystanders, would have been a highly unusual occurrence. The photographer probably rendered this scene early in the morning to emphasise the gate's architectural splendour amid the distinct signs of urban modernisation represented by the street lamps, tram, overhead cables and a Japanese police box guarding the reconstructed gateway.

The upper frame contrasts with the dark and crowded lower frame of a picture taken in 1895 (Meiji 28) etched prominently in English and Roman numerals on the bottom-right corner of the photograph. The English caption 'South Gate at the top of a narrow muddy road before annexation' is also post-dated by fifteen years, since the annexation of Korea occurred in 1910. This photograph was also carefully staged to include archetypes of 'Chōsen manners and customs' such as a large cow and a bullock cart artfully arranged in the foreground, surrounded by bystanders and peddlars. The juxtaposition of the before-and-after views of the album demonstrates how the Japanese authorities deployed visual tropes in order to emphasise that their annexation of Korea was responsible for bringing modern amenities to an old, decaying country.

Aside from Keijō, guidebooks recommended Pyeongyang as Korea's most picturesque city, accessible by a short train ride from the capital. For the Japanese, the ultimate tourist experience was a boat cruise along the Daedong River accompanied by *gisaeng* performers hired by the operators.³⁵ The highlights of the tour are arranged in three photographs from a commemorative album of the many destinations of the Second Observation Group Tour to Korea-Manchuria (figure 4).³⁶ The three hundred participants of this tour consisted of businessmen and their wives, as well as travel professionals and photographers sponsored by the Travel Club of Japan.³⁷

As we can see in the lower frame, the managers of the tour cruise had decorated the pleasure boat bow with a large bird resembling a phoenix about to take flight. The boat was also equipped with a pavilion for sun and rain protection. From the vantage point of the river, tourists had a commanding view of the historical monuments associated with major sites of the Sino-Japanese War. In the upper-right photograph,



Figure 4. Photographers unknown, *Three Views of the Daedong River Boat Tour*, Pyongyang, before 1930. Reproduced from Nippon ryokōkai, *Dai ni senman shisatsudan kinen*, Tokyo: Nippon ryokōkai 1930. Courtesy of Professor Liu Jianhui, International Center for Japanese Studies, Kyoto.

the group's tour members, wearing an assortment of Japanese and western travel clothes and hiking gear, are posed together with school children in front of Hyeonmu Gate. In guidebooks, the gate was known to be one of the main battlegrounds where the heroes of the Sino-Japanese War had broken through the enemy lines in August 1895. According to the preface written by the travel club members, the educational goal of visiting battle-sites in Korea and Manchuria was to investigate the history of Japan's ancient trade and diplomatic relations by tracking the same routes as their ancestors who had once conquered Korea during the age of the gods (*kami jidai*). They were also interested in making observations of the manners and customs of the colonies as well as their local souvenir products (*omiyage*) and gauge market conditions in order to further the racial, cultural and economic integration of the colonies (*naisen yūwa*).³⁸

The upper-left frame shows a classic postcard pose of a courtesan, identified simply as 'Kisang', standing serenely by the riverbank presumably to greet passengers. Usually translated as *dancing girls* in English tourist literature, the *gisaeng*, like

38 – Ibid., 1–5.

39 – Gwon, 'Ilje shidae upyeon yeopseo natanan gisaeng imiji', 83–103; and Mio Wakita 'Selling Japan: Kusakabe Kimbei's Image of Women', *History of Photography*, 33:2 (May 2009), 209–23.

40 – Kim Yeonhui, *Yeopseo sokui kisaeng ilgi*, Seoul: Kungnip minsok pangmulkwan 2009.

41 – Ibid.

42 – The *gisaeng's* low social status as indentured labourers and availability as sex partners also made them very desirable marketing tools for consumer products such as cigarette boxes, cosmetics, record albums, restaurant advertisements and tourist postcards. Gwon, 'Ilje shidae upyeon yeopseo natanan Gisaeng imiji', 83–103.

43 – Hyung Il Pai, 'Navigating Modern Seoul: The Typology of Guidebooks and City Landmarks', *Seoulhak Yongu*, 44 (August 2011), 25.

44 – For example, see Oda Kanjirō, 'Keishū no nipaku', *Chōsen*, 93:12 (1922), 48–53, and 'Keishū no nipaku', *Chōsen*, 94:1 (1923), 108–16; and Ōsaka Rokuson, *Shūmi no Keishū*, Tokyo: Keishū koseki hozonkai 1931.

45 – Takimoto Jirō, *Guide-book to Japan, Manchuria, Korea and China*, Tokyo: Ōbeiryokō annaisha 1928, 102–3.

46 – Hyung Il Pai, 'Resurrecting the Ruins of Japan's Mythical Homelands: Colonial Archaeological Surveys in the Korean peninsula and Heritage Tourism', in *The Handbook of Post-colonialism and Archaeology*, ed. Jane Lydon and Uzma Rizvi, Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press 2010, 101.

47 – *Bukkokuji to Sekkutsuan*, ed. Governor-General of Chōsen, Tokyo: Chōsen sōtokufu 1938, 1; and Kim Hyeon-suk, 'Ilje Gangjeomgi Gyeongju gojeok bojonhoe eui balchok gwa hwaldong', in *Sigak munhwa eui jeontong gwa haeseok*, ed. Kim Ri-na Retirement Commemoration Volume Compilation Committee, Seoul: Yegyong Press 2007, 561–83.

48 – I want to thank Professor Yoshii Hideo for his permission to use this figure attributed to Tanaka Kamekuma, the owner of the Tōyōken printed album. This album was donated by the late Professor of East Asian Art and Architecture at Kyoto University, Murada Jirō (1895–1986). He had probably acquired the album during his thirteen years at the South Manchuria School of Technology (Dairen) in the 1920s.

49 – Yoshii Hideo, 'Ilje gangjeomgi Seokguram josa mit haechae suri wa sajin chwallyeong e daehaeseo', in *Gyeongju Silla yujeok eui eoje wa oneul: Seokguram, Bulguksa, Namsan*, vol. 2, Seoul: Seongyun-gwan University Museum 2007, 198–209.

the *geishas* of Japan, have been perennial subjects of commercial photographers, both Japanese and foreign.³⁹ The *gisaeng* were the class of professional entertainers whose dances and musical performances were promoted as essential tourist experiences until the late 1970s, when *gisaeng* houses were officially disbanded in the Republic of Korea. Comparable with teahouses in Kyoto and Tokyo, *gisaeng* houses operated as both talent-scouting and grooming agencies with day-to-day affairs managed by an experienced former *gisaeng* who trained young girls in the art of entertaining male customers.

During the colonial period, the most famous of all the *gisaeng* houses was the Giseong Gweonbeon, which operated the only formal School for Gisaeng (*Gisaeng hakkyo*) in the colony.⁴⁰ Headquartered on the banks overlooking the scenic Daedong River, the school was known for its expensive fees, competitive admissions process, extensive curriculum, and staff and choreographers, some of whom had been invited from as far as Tokyo to instruct the young girls. The *gisaeng* of Pyeongyang became famed for their versatile talents in Japanese and Korean traditional musical instruments, songs and dance routines. As celebrities, many went on to prosperous careers as recording artists, stage performers, fashion icons or movie stars, and were often photographed accompanying colonial authorities at important events featured in newspapers.⁴¹ By the late 1920s, due to the widespread demand for *gisaeng* services and performances, every city and tourist destination was producing official photographic guides to *gisaeng* houses.⁴² By the 1930s, many travel photographers were also hiring the most popular *gisaeng* of the day to pose for the camera sitting in contemplation or strolling in pairs.⁴³ Due to the close collaboration of the entertainment/sex industry, photographic studios and a nationwide network of *gisaeng* houses, 'Chōsen Beauties' dressed in colourful costumes and staged dancing poses remain the most iconic image of traditional Korea to this day.

Of Korea's scenic historical sites excavated by archaeologists, seasoned travellers and collectors, such as Fujita Ryōsaku, Asakawa Hakkyō, Ōsaka Rokuson and Oda Kanjirō, many considered a visit to Gyeongju, or Keishū in Japanese, the oldest dynastic capital of the Silla dynasty, well worth a detour from the standard itinerary.⁴⁴ Takimoto Jirō, a former officer of the South Manchuria Railway Company and author of the *Guide-book to Japan, Manchuria, Korea and China*, also observed that Silla's remains reminded him of his 'pristine homeland' of Nara because of the presence of ancient tombs belonging to the House of Jimmu, the mythical founder of the Japanese imperial family.⁴⁵ When the Gold Crown Tomb (*Kingantsuka*) was excavated in 1921, it was widely hailed by the Japanese press as the greatest archaeological discovery of the century.⁴⁶

Another archaeological site celebrated by Japanese visitors to Korea was the ancient remains of Seokguram Grotto, dating to the late eighth century. According to the laudatory reviews of Sekino Tadashi, the site was the best preserved of its kind anywhere in Japan or Asia. These accounts persuaded Japanese government officials to launch an extensive restoration project in the colonies so as to preserve the grotto as 'standing witnesses to history' (*rekishi shōko*). The reconstruction project for Seokguram was carried out in several phases and took sixteen years to complete (1913–28). The cave and all its relief panels and walls around the Buddha statue were completely dismantled by the Japanese construction department's team of engineers. The grotto was then rebuilt from the foundation with a separate roofed entrance to accommodate tourists' sightseeing and the taking of group photographs.⁴⁷

Figure 5 illustrates one of the plates from a photograph album of Silla's oldest Buddhist cave temple.⁴⁸ This album was printed by Tōyōken, a commercial studio that had opened a store near the Keishū Museum in the heart of Gyeongju to cater to tourists, school children and visiting dignitaries.⁴⁹ This figure illustrates the Buddha monument depicted not only in its 'sublime beauty' but also in its glorious state of decay. As we can see, the entrance to the cave

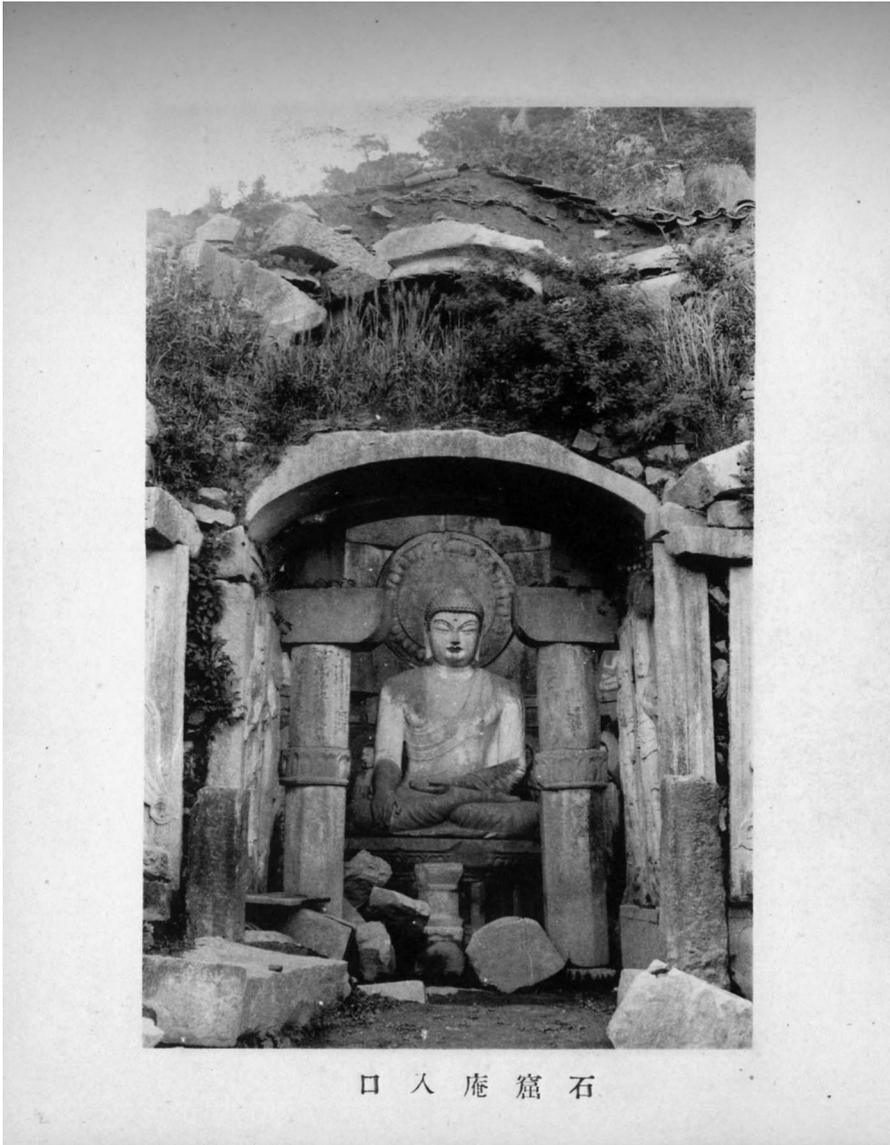


Figure 5. Photographer unknown, *View of Sokkuram*, ca. 1913. Reproduced from Tōyōken Photo-studio, *Silla koseki sekkutsuan*, Keishū: Tōyōken ca. 1918. Courtesy of Professor Yoshii Hideo, Department of Archaeology, Kyoto University.

temple was in a precarious state, surrounded by archaeological debris and the intrusion of vegetation that threatened the entire structure. Nonetheless, the photograph records the fine detail and elegance of the carvings as well as the painted surface of the monument.

By the 1930s, the restored ruins of the temples of Seokguram and Bulguksa had become a favourite destination for royal visitors, such as Crown Prince Adolf Gustaf VI of Sweden (1882–1973), the amateur archaeologist and founder of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities in Stockholm. The popularity of Gyeongju as Korea's premier heritage destination thus originated with the promotion of Keishū as the most 'picturesque' and authentic destination in the Japanese empire.⁵⁰ The region's scenic sites and nearby mountain Buddhist remains and sculptures are now all part of the UNESCO designated historical areas.

Conclusion

Colonial-era postcards painted an idyllic view of the Korean peninsula, whose poor and downtrodden Chōsen people, exploited by their own rulers, were saved by the timely arrival of the enlightened Japanese. This romanticised narrative of the 'predestined return to the mythical homelands' is evident in the sentiments of Japanese journalists, scholars, educators and bureaucrats who visited Korea from their posts in Tokyo and Kyoto. The consensus among well-travelled and seasoned intellectuals,

50 – Hyung Il Pai, 'Tracing Japan's Antiquity: Photography, Archaeology and Representations of Gyeongju', in *Oriental Aesthetics and Thinking: Conflicting Visions of "Asia" under the Colonial Empires*, ed. Shigemi Inaga, Kyoto: International Center for Japanese Studies 2011, 289–316.

51 – Kim Brandt, 'Objects of Desire: Japanese Collectors and Colonial Korea', *Positions*, 8:3 (2000), 712–46; *Ilbon chakka deulli bon geundae Joseon*, ed. Yi Han-jeong and Mizuno Taturō, Seoul: Somyeong 2009, 129–255; and Kusui Kiyofumi, 'Shokuminchi Chōsen ni tai suru "kankō no manazashi" no keisei: Ritsumeikan daigaku kokusai heiwa myu-jiamu shozō ehagaki to bunkajin no kikōbun o chūshin ni', *Art Research Journal*, 12 (2012), 31–43.
 52 – Hyung Il Pai, *Constructing 'Korean Origins': Archaeology, Historiography, and Racial Myth*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center 2000, 36–57.

such as the acclaimed novelist Tanizaki Junichirō (1886–1965), and pioneers of Japan's folk crafts movement (*mingei*) – the brothers Asakawa (Takume and Noritaka) and Yanagi Sōetsu – was that witnessing the 'sublime beauty' and 'timeless' nature of Korea's standing ruins transported them back to the Heian era (794–1185).⁵¹ Such visual and textual narratives demonstrate that the affection of collectors, writers and travellers for all things 'Korean' was inspired by the myth of a shared ancestral lineage and cultural patrimony (*Nissen dosōron*) of the Korean and Japanese races, which was central to the Japanese colonialist campaign not only to justify the annexation but also advocate racial assimilation projects throughout the colony.⁵² In the post-war period, such lingering feelings of 'imperialist nostalgia' continue to play a role in driving millions of Japanese tourists, armed with guides and cameras, to distant destinations in Tibet, Mongolia and Inner Asia in search of Japan's imagined ethnic, religious and cultural roots. Today, this mixed itinerary of archaeological, religious and war memorials remain the perennial favourite subjects and objects of postcard views of the 'other' appealing to one's sense of adventure, history and the romance of the unknown.