

# Ethnic Shows and Racial Hierarchies in Modern Japan \*

## 近代日本の族裔展示與種族階級

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## Abstract

In the years between 1851 and the outbreak of the Second World War, industrial and universal expositions provided states with opportunities to showcase the industrial might of national champions and their mastery of their colonies. The role of universal expositions in Western Europe and the United States is well known, but little attention has been paid to their role in Japan, which succeeded in joining the ranks of world powers at the end of nineteenth century. What was the nature of Japanese participation in international expositions, and to what extent did Japan exhibit indigenous people from its colonies? This paper examines the colonial pavilions erected during Japanese industrial expositions following its seizure of Taiwan in 1895. We will analyze the case of the fifth National Industrial Exposition, organised in Osaka in 1903, and explain who were the anthropologists responsible for organising this exhibition, as well as the nature of the resistance such exhibitions encountered. Finally, this paper will attempt to assess more general issues relating to this aspect of colonial history.

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*Keywords:* Anthropology, Colonialism, Exhibition, Japan, Nationalism

## 摘要

1851年至二次大戰期間，世界工業博覽會提供了一個舞台，讓當時的民族國家得以展示科技成就與殖民屬地，藉機宣揚自己的實力。在歐美各國，這些博覽會所扮演的角色早為人所熟知，但是對於十九世紀末才躋身世界列強的日本，同樣的議題卻鮮少有人關注。日本投入世界博覽會的參與性質為何？在其展示殖民地的原住民時，又曾進行到甚麼樣的程度？本文將探討日本於1895年取得臺灣之後，在工業博覽會裡所設立的殖民展館，並以1903年大阪舉辦的「第五回內國勸業博覽會」作為個案分析，交代當年籌畫展覽的人類學家，以及這類展示所引發的爭議。最後，我將嘗試從殖民史的角度來總結這方面的相關議題。

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關鍵字：人類學、殖民主義、展覽、日本、民族主義

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In the years between 1851 and the Second World War, industrial and universal expositions provided states with opportunities to showcase the industrial might of national champions, their colonies, and their influence in the non-European world. From the mid nineteenth century through to the end of WWII, the nation-state and imperialism—and all the powerful states had colonial empires—were political phenomena concerning the states of Western Europe, Russia, the United States and Japan. Japan itself barely avoided falling under Western colonial domination, but succeeded in joining the ranks of those countries considered world powers after crushing China in 1895, and consolidated its status by signing the 1902 Anglo-Japanese Alliance treaty and defeating Russia in 1905 (Myers and Peattie 1984; Nanta 2008).

In Western Europe and the United States, the role of exhibitions is well known: Western powers exhibited colonial “natives” as “racial specimens” in “ethnic shows”. These “ethnic menageries” have been the objects of several historical studies (Bancel et al. 2008), but question remain regarding specific patterns of imperialist activity, especially as regards anthropology and expositions. For example, little attention has been paid to the nature of Japanese participation in international expositions, and to the extent that Japan exhibited indigenous people from its colonies. By the end of nineteenth century, at the same time that Japan was trying to “leave Asia and enter Europe” (*datsu.a nyu.o* 脱亞入歐), it exercised a kind of “inner orientalism” concentrated upon China and Korea. This posited “Asia” as a semi-developed area in which world history had somehow stopped, in very much the same manner as European or American scholars essentialized “oriental cultures” (Said 1978; Liauzu 1992) or constructed “racial” categories (Gould 1996; Blanckaert 2001). While historians and philologists, with the help of archaeologists, concentrated themselves with ancient history (Tanaka 1993; Pai 2000, 2013; Nanta 2012b, 2015) in order to demonstrate the “stagnation” (*teitai* 停滯) of China and Korea, physical anthropologists from Tokyo and Kyoto imperial universities began to study the bodies of the indigenous people of Hokkaido and Okinawa; after 1895, they would go on to measure and classify the “natives” of Japan's newly acquired colonies. Anthropologists thus worked to establish “racial” categories inside which the Japanese people might sometimes be more or less closely associated with colonized peoples, but always be given precedence. Therein lies the fundamental ambiguity of modern Japan's racial discourse

and colonial racial hierarchies which aimed to legitimize the colonial order (Oguma 1998; Nanta 2003, 2010, 2014; Sakano 2005), in part, by staging “ethnic menageries” at national or international expositions (Matsuda 2003; Sakano 2005; Nanta 2010; Lu 2011) which purported to confirm Japan’s status as a colonial power.

Here we concentrate on Japanese national exhibitions and examine the colonial pavilions erected during post-1895 Japanese industrial expositions, with a particular focus on the 1903 Osaka industrial exposition. We will introduce the anthropologists of Imperial University of Tokyo who organised this event, and the kind of resistance such shows encountered. The article concludes with an assessment of more general issues relating to this aspect of colonial history.

## Modern expositions in Meiji Japan

After the Meiji Restoration (1868), regional expositions, organised for educational or commercial purposes during the second half of the Edo period (1603-1867) and especially during the first part of the nineteenth century,<sup>1</sup> evolved along the lines of the industrial exhibitions staged by the great powers following the 1851 Great Exhibition in London (Olm and Aimone 1993). The first “National Industrial Exposition” (*Naikoku kangyo hakurankai* 内國觀業博覽會) in Meiji Japan took place in Tokyo’s Ueno Park in 1877, where the National Museum of Sciences (established in 1871) was located. The exposition lasted 120 days, hosting 16,000 exhibitors and 450,000 visitors. Afterward, industrial expositions were held regularly, and gradually producing a new view of Japan, and the world, in keeping with a configuration typical of modern nation-states. The 1877 industrial exposition was held despite the Second Japanese Civil War (*Seinan senso* 西南戰爭),<sup>2</sup> a fact that speaks to the importance of the exhibition to the state. The exposition was mainly economic, intended to further the industrial development of the country through the exchange of technical know-how among exhibitors and through the general

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1 This does not mean there were no expositions or exhibitions of this kind before 1877. There is documentation, for instance, relating to those held by Ishii Kendo 石井研堂 between 1872 and 1882 (Yoshimi 1992: 122; Ukigaya 2005).

2 The Seinan War (1877) was a conflict between the new government and part of its political staff, as people from the South-West, led by Saigo Takamori 西郷隆盛 (Takahashi 2005).

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propagation of knowledge. This exposition, and the two that followed (1881 and 1890, again in Tokyo), were strictly national events, closed to foreign participation; they aimed to support a robust, autonomous development of the Japanese economy at a time when the country was subjected to “unequal treaties” by the Western powers.<sup>3</sup>

This characteristic feature of the expositions underwent an important modification after the fourth session in 1895,<sup>4</sup> held in spite of the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895). Japan’s victory confirmed its among the great powers and resulted in Taiwan being ceded to become a Japanese colony—until then, the island had been on the frontiers of the Qing empire, inhabited by aboriginal tribes and Chinese from southern China. The 1895 exposition in Okazaki District, Kyoto included a pavilion of colonial “specimens” and, for the first time, a “Taiwan Pavilion”, i.e. a colonial pavilion introducing arts and objects assumed to be “traditional” among the island’s aboriginal population. In this way, Japanese industrial expositions, originally intended to boost industrial and economic *development*, became sites where power was devoted to the *demonstration* of national strength as Japanese pretensions on the international scene increased. By becoming exhibitions of colonial empire, these expositions satisfied the requirements of a “universal exposition” during the Golden Age of modern colonialism.<sup>5</sup> In the process, Japan created its own “Orient” by the means of “Asian” history and archaeology, as noted above, and through the construction of racial classifications and hierarchies, inside which colonized people were reduced to mere objects of modern Japanese science. The exhibition of living human beings resulted in their essentialization in terms of an unchangeable, inferior Otherness, a genuine counterpoint to the modern civilisation shared by powerful Western nations, and by Japan (Matsuda 1996: 61). This process reduced individuals to their “race” and “culture”, which were understood as the sole realities of their being (Said 1978; Affergan 1990; Tanaka 1993; Taguieff 2001) .

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3 These treaties limited national sovereignty by restricting Japanese customs rights and fixing extraterritoriality for Westerners. They were gradually abolished between 1894 and 1911, when the Western Powers, slightly modifying their racial prejudice, accepted the presence of an “occidentalized” Japan.

4 These expositions attracted growing numbers of people, with 1,137,000 visitors in 1895.

5 In Europe, too, after the first exhibition of indigenous people in the *Jardin d’acclimatation* in 1878, a similar shift was observed, with the 1889 Paris Universal Exposition presenting for the first time an exhibition of colonized people in “human tableaux” reconstituting their so-called natural daily life.

## The 1903 Exposition and the Anthropological Pavilion

This trend which saw the colonial empire exhibit itself at industrial gatherings was reinforced during the 5<sup>th</sup> National Industrial Exposition organised from 1 March to 31 July 1903, at which visitors could see many indigenous or “exotic” people for the first time in Japan.<sup>6</sup> All these people were shown in an “Anthropological Pavilion” (*Gakujutsu jinrui kan* 學術人類館), which was added to the Taiwan Pavilion and the Pavilion of Specimens (where the Dutch colonial exhibition attracted considerable attention). The Osaka exposition, which lasted for 153 days and drew about 4,350,000 visitors, is typical in that reveals the underlying tendencies of all great imperial powers at the beginning of the twentieth century: clearly showing that beyond the concrete socio-historical differences between Western European countries and Japan, all the great modern powers were governed by the same logic and worldview, which resulted in the adoption of similar sets of practices. Or was the Japanese program perhaps designed, like the “forced” Westernisation of Japan, to show the West that the Japanese were not barbarians?

The coordinators of the Anthropological Pavilion were anthropologists from the Imperial University of Tokyo,<sup>7</sup> most notably Tsuboi Shogoro 坪井正五郎 (1863-1913),<sup>8</sup> a charter member and president of the Tokyo Anthropological Society. This academic society, the first of its kind in Japan, was founded in 1884.<sup>9</sup> It had, since 1886, been the scene of an acrimonious controversy between two groups, one led by Tsuboi and the other by the physical anthropologist Koganei Yoshikiyo 小金井良精 (1858-1944) over the racial nature of the inhabitants of the archipelago in the prehistoric era. Koganei concluded that the Ainu, a northern indigenous people systematically subjected by Japan after the incorporation of Ezo Island (Hokkaido) in 1869, were the descendants of the “anthropophagous barbarians of the Stone Age”, judging them members of an “inferior

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6 A large amount of historical studies already exists in Japanese about this issue (Inoue 1968; Kaiho 1992; Sakamoto 1995; Matsuda 1996, 2003; Chikappu 2001; Sakano 2005; Engeki “Jinruikan” joen o jitsugen sasetai kai” 2005).

7 This university, established in 1877, was at the heart of the state university system, along with the Imperial University of Kyoto (established in 1897).

8 Following the custom in East Asia, the last name comes before the first name.

9 Its foundation occurred therefore only twenty-five years after that of its French equivalent in Paris by Paul Broca (1824-1880) in 1859 (Gould 1996; Blanckaert 2001; Oguma 1998; Nanta 2003; Sakano 2005).

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race” and who would die out in the near future (Oguma 1998; Nanta 2003, 2006; Sakano 2005). He also assumed the Ainu people could never be assimilated into the nation, in opposition to the pro-assimilation stance of Tsuboi, who defended the value of an open, racially-mixed Japan based on a historical vision of the nation. This position would lead him to support imperialism during the Russian-Japanese War (1904-05), combining a pro-assimilationist attitude with a condescending view of the Otherness he sought to protect — a stance very similar to that many adopted toward the indigenous people of Northern America. In any event, despite the greater differences between individual researchers, as a discipline, Japanese anthropology played a major role in shaping a reifying view of the populations of the colonial empire and national minorities, despite its criticism of the hierarchical categories of European anthropology.

The 1903 exposition served as an occasion to exhibit Otherness from an anthropological perspective. There were “many different races gathered close to the city, in reconstitutions showing their concrete practices, their daily tools and their customs”, noted the newspaper *Osaka Asahi Shinbun* 大阪朝日新聞 at the time (1 March 1903, Matsuda 1996: 47, 2003). The following people were exhibited: seven Ainu from Hokkaido, one “raw barbarian”, two “cooked barbarians”,<sup>10</sup> two “indigenous” people from Taiwan, two Okinawans,<sup>11</sup> two Koreans, two Malaysians, three Chinese, seven Indians (from India), one Javanese, one Ottoman and one “insular” from Zanzibar— in all thirty-one people.<sup>12</sup> Photographs of all these “races” were displayed along with scientific notes on the wall of the entrance to the pavilion. After receiving this initial information, visitors could observe real-life examples of each of them inside a fixed space that included a house “reconstituted as their everyday habitation”. The whole pavilion was designed with pedagogy in mind, which satisfied the curiosity of visitors for whom it was a unique occasion to see “specimens” of all these populations—though in a manner in keeping with how anthropologists imagined them.

10 The Chinese terminology, which distinguished between “raw barbarians” (*shengfan* 生番) and “cooked barbarians” (*shufan* 熟番) according to the degree of assimilation to Chinese culture, was adopted by the Japanese to refer to populations formerly subject to China.

11 The kingdom of Ryukyu had been annexed by Japan in 1879, and the archipelago’s name was changed to Okinawa.

12 There is a lack of precise information on the people who were exhibited, as the documents were not all based on the same “categories”.



In order to satisfy the expectations of the anthropologists and the audience, the individuals on exhibit had to perform specific assigned roles. For example, the aborigines from Taiwan's mountains, described as "raw barbarians" and subjected to horrible "cleansing operations" by colonial troops (Oe 1993), had to stand in the midst of a replica of the forest and mime a religious rite involving the use of human heads. One can imagine the astonishment of the public, but we must also remember that, at that time, the island of Taiwan was no more a "peripheral" space than perhaps regions of sub-Saharan Africa. However, the depiction of daily life in Taiwan as consisting of primitive head-hunters in the midst of the jungle propagated the desired imagery — which was precisely the point of the exposition. Thus was a reified image of Taiwan's "cultures" invented by anthropologists and diffused throughout imperial Japan.

The distance and the effect of Otherness were reinforced between exhibitors and visitors, on the one hand, and the exhibited "specimens", on the other — mirroring a dynamic Tsuboi, who was in charge of the exposition and a professor of the Faculty of Sciences at the Imperial University of Tokyo, had observed at the 1889 Universal Exposition in Paris while he was completing his academic training in Europe. Tsuboi assumed colonial pavilions to be "of great value from the point of view of anthropological research", especially the reconstitutions of "villages where one could observe the life of barbarians and undeveloped races".<sup>13</sup> Similarly, he assumed (Tsuboi 1903: 164) that the Osaka exposition "enabled anthropologists to learn many things about physical and morphological differences" among the exhibited races. The exposition was thus legitimated by the intellectual framework offered by scientific anthropology, with racial hierarchies and essentializing identifications of culture and race. Anthropological knowledge — albeit manufactured to purpose — was at the heart of the exposition, lending legitimacy to discourses on "inferior people"; in return, the exhibition testified to the utility of anthropology as a form of colonial knowledge at the highpoint of modern imperialism (Matsuda 1996: 52; Oguma 1998; Nanta 2003; Sakano 2005). Finally, the discourses surrounding the exposition was supplemented by ethnological objects from the Laboratory of Anthropology. Artifacts considered daily tools of the Ainu and the "raw

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13 Tsuboi reported his impressions in a special column ("News from Paris") of the *Tokyo jinrui gakkai hokoku* 東京人類學會報告 (Bulletin of the Tokyo Anthropological Society).

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barbarians” of Taiwan were exhibited alongside a world map, drawn by Tsuboi, showing the distribution of races (Matsumura 1903b; Tsuboi 1903).<sup>14</sup> Fifty pairs of figurines, representing men and women of the various “races”, accompanied the map. While most of the figurines were of non-European peoples, one notes the presence among them of representations of English, American and Japanese people (Tsuboi 1903: 165)—who would have never agreed to being exhibited live.

The exposition also provided the opportunity to conduct an anthropological study. Matsumura Akira 松村瞭 (1875-1936),<sup>15</sup> who was then preparing his Ph.D. at the Imperial University of Tokyo, wrote a report for the *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Tokyo* presenting his observations (Matsumura 1903a). Prefiguring the attitude of French physical anthropologist Henri Vallois (1889-1981), who would criticize the authenticity of the indigenous “specimens” during the Exposition coloniale in Paris in 1931 (de L’Estoile 2001), Matsumura expressed doubts about the quality of the reconstitutions. He was convinced, nevertheless, that the exhibited people were, in fact, representative of their races. Through an essentialization of the idea of race, typical of the early twentieth century, the anthropologist considered, above all, that a person was a representative of his race and only a representative of his race. This concept determined all the cultural patterns and behaviors of individuals (Affergan 1990; Taguieff 2001). For example, Matsumura described questioning a person from Zanzibar who defined himself as “Arab”:

This person from the African island of Zanzibar appeared to me to be a rare type. When I asked him where he came from, he answered he was an Arab. However, his frizzy hair, his chocolate-coloured skin, his flat nose, his big lips and his flat, wide face, all these features were unquestionable evidence that he was of a type similar to the Negro<sup>16</sup>. When I told him the names of a few tribes living near Zanzibar, he recognised the Swahili. Therefore, I assumed he must be a mixed-type of Arab and Swahili. Moreover, due to his morphology close to that of Negroes (in the broad

14 That is, a map of the same kind as those drawn up by Joseph Deniker (1852-1918) at the very same time (Tsuboi 1903: 163).

15 Matsumura was to be in charge of the Laboratory of Anthropology in the 1920s and 1930s

16 Matsumura uses here the scientific term *niguro* ニグロ for “Negro”.

sense), one can assume his ancestors must have been Arabs a few generations earlier.  
(Matsumura 1903a: 290)

Convinced that the population of Zanzibar was composed of a mixed “Negro-Arab” race, the scientist confirmed his impression by “measuring the widest and longest dimensions of the skull, then establishing a cephalic index of 76.5”. He finally concluded (Matsumura 1903a: 291) that the man was “in fact not a pure-race Negro but, rather, a pseudo-Negro”. Here we can observe the discourse of modern anthropology in action: complacent in its self-congratulatory vision, and asserting that “it is possible to know with precision” the origin of people through the shape of their skulls. As the historian Inoue Kiyoshi explained in 1968, in his famous study about Japanese imperialism: “No one criticised the fate of these exhibited people. There is certainly no system that shows more extreme contempt for the humanity of nations than imperialism” (1968: 296).

## Criticism of the exposition

The exposition had unexpected effects and was subject to external criticism. Alongside its purely scientific aims, there was it also possessed an aspect of entertainment that could, at any moment, divert attention from the exposition’s primary objective. In addition to attempting to grasp Otherness through the “specimens” arranged in well-defined, fixed spaces, within the scientific framework provided by anthropology, the Pavilion provided a stage on which each race was to perform dances and songs assumed to be “typical” of their race. This dimension of the spectacle presented Otherness not as an object of knowledge, but rather as an entity belonging to funfairs, which were greatly enjoyed by the Japanese public as far back as the Edo period (Ukigaya 2005).

No doubt the exhibitors did not foresee the risks attendant on this dimension, not least because it provided opportunities for some of the exhibited people to speak with spectators. For example, from the stage, the headman of the Tokachi Ainu village made “a speech about the religion and education [of the Ainu people] in the language of the Metropolis” (i.e. in Japanese), thereby arousing considerable interest among visitors. This problem raises two points. First, if the Ainu headman and other Ainu agreed to

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participate in the Osaka Industrial Exposition, it was in exchange for a subsidy promised by the Hokkaido authorities to invest in the creation of schools for “former indigenous people of Hokkaido”.<sup>17</sup> Secondly, one observes that the metropolitan public judged the mental faculties of these indigenous people according to their ability to speak a civilized language, in this case Japanese. During the 1903 exposition, the case of the Ainu, rather than the Chinese or Koreans, is exemplary because they were the only group declared to be (formerly) “indigenous people” (*dojin* 土人), and because they were the preferred objects of Japanese anthropological study at the end of the nineteenth century, before attention turned to Taiwan’s aborigines after 1895 (Oguma 1998; Nanta 2003, 2010; Sakano 2005; Lu 2011).

The exposition was far from conflict-free. Matsumura reported in April: “aside from this list [of exhibited people], there were also two Korean women, but for some reason they left the exposition today” (1903a: 290). The fact is that these people, especially when they had a state capable of representing them, by no means accepted being exhibited as curiosities. An incident broke out a month before the exposition, when the Ambassador of the Qing in Tokyo learned that Chinese were to be exhibited and aired a grievance with the Japan Foreign Affairs Ministry, resulting in the withdrawal of the Chinese from the exposition. The problem arose again after the exposition opened, when Korean visitors were astonished to discover some of their countrymen on exhibit. They complained to the Osaka Police Department and three weeks later the Koreans were withdrawn.

The inhabitants of Okinawa — annexed by Japan in 1879 — began levelling harsh criticism in the newspaper *Ryukyu Shinpo* (琉球新報) in April, which was repeated on 7 May in the Japanese newspaper *Osaka Mainichi Shinbun* (大阪毎日新聞). The exhibition of Okinawans was stopped the same day, bringing an end to the criticism. Although it is difficult to assess Japanese public opinion at the time, from the very beginning of the practice, there was clearly hostility to the exhibition of indigenous people in Japan. Nevertheless, can we conclude this was a “victory for anti-colonialism”? The situation was not straightforward, for those exhibited shared many of the racial prejudices of the

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17 The 1899 Law of protection of former natives of Hokkaido was similar to the 1887 Dawes Law in the United States of America concerning Native Americans. According to the law, the state could dispose of “yielded” lands at will (Nanta 2006).

exhibitors, and it is impossible to analyze this affair in “First-World”/“Third-World” terms. Moreover, those who succeeded in having their voices heard and fellow nationals withdrawn from the exhibition belonged to states capable of speaking on their behalf (China, Korea), or to politically organised groups (Okinawa) — all others were exhibited till the end.

In reality, the exhibited people were not all drawn from colonies, but belonged rather to populations that modern nation-states looked upon with contempt. The prejudice of race and civilisation, far from being an exclusive monopoly of Europe or Japan, was in fact widely shared (Dikötter 1992; Liauzu 1992; Gould 1996). Indeed the content of the complaints about the 1903 exposition shows that the racism of those exhibited was sometimes even more virulent than that of the organizers, who often hid behind the objectifying scientific discourse of anthropology.

Chinese students—of whom there were many in Japan after the victory against China in 1895, with the country offering a model of development which fascinated the region—seized upon the exposition in two of their magazines.<sup>18</sup> They expressed hostile criticism of the exhibitors’ desire “deliberately to show old Chinese customs in order to [make the Chinese] look like barbarians”. However, neither the epistemological framework nor the explicit hierarchy underpinning the exposition were criticized. The problem, for them, was the fact of being exhibited. Not only did they fail to question the system or its logic, but legitimated the exhibition of the other people. Thus, the Chinese critics explained:

“India and Ryukyu [Okinawa] are two countries that have already disappeared, to become mere slaves of England and Japan; today Korea is a protectorate of Russia and Japan, and incidentally formerly subject to our Country [China]. The people from Java and Ezo [the Ainu of Hokkaido] as well as the raw barbarians from Taiwan are among the lowest races of the world, barely different from pigs or deer. It is true we are in an inferior position today, but do we really have to be exhibited with

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18 *Xinmin congbao* 新民叢報 was constitutionalist, and *Zhejiang chao* 浙江潮 was revolutionist, as Chinese modernists were divided about the way to alter China (Dikötter 1992; Sakamoto 1995: 77-78).

these six races?”

Lastly, the Chinese countrymen asserted, “from the standpoint of race or degree of civilisation, we are not different from the Japanese or the Aryans” (Sakamoto 1995: 78).

Similar contempt shows through in the complaints of the Koreans and the inhabitants of Okinawa. The editorial of the Ryukyu *Shinpo* asserted once again that the population of Okinawa was certainly “of the Japanese race”, while expressing their anger at being exhibited alongside “savages” like the “raw barbarians from Taiwan and Ainu from Hokkaido” or Koreans (Kaiho 1992: 158-59). Iha Fuyu 伊波普猷 (1876-1947), an Okinawan intellectual supporting the incorporation of the former kingdom of Ryukyu into Japan, would explain, in 1907, using the European hierarchical and evolutionist categories, that the Okinawan archipelago had always been a “nation” while the Ainu could not develop beyond the stage of a pre-political “people” nor be assimilated into the Japanese nation (Kaiho 1992: 160). In reality, the aborigines of Taiwan and the Ainu from Hokkaido were the “real indigenous people” and victims of the exposition, systematically isolated and veritable foils for modernity, an image used by everyone to reaffirm the superior degree of their “race” or “civilization”. Thus, it should be pointed out that, contrary to the case of Okinawans, the exhibition of the Ainu did not create an incident among the populations of Hokkaido, who, despite the 1899 “Law of protection of former natives of Hokkaido”, were forgotten in the modernisation movement. The fact is they were not in a position to refuse an opportunity to improve their living conditions through bargaining for some benefit for their participation, nor to complain.

In every case, the focus of criticism was not on the explicit hierarchy asserted by the exposition, but rather the rank assigned to each group. The fact that Chinese, Koreans and Okinawans visited the exposition is certainly the best proof they fully agreed with its underlying principles and with the imperialist *Weltanschauung* it presupposed — so long as they were not exhibited to their disadvantage.

## Attitudes towards Otherness and modern identity

Like the other great colonial powers, Japan was to stage multiple, supposedly edifying exhibitions of indigenous people. At the 1895 Chicago Exposition, Japan was given the same amount of floor space as France, Great Britain, Belgium, Austria, and the United States, seemingly recognizing that Japan was on a par with the other great powers. At the 1904 St. Louis Exposition, the Japanese Pavilion contained an anthropological section showing an “Ainu village” to exhibit the “internal otherness” of Japan. These exhibitions and world fairs made the case, not only internationally but also to the Japanese themselves, that Japan was indeed a colonial power. However, this movement worked both ways, for news of the Russo-Japanese War also intensified Western racism against “Asiatic” Japan. Following Japan’s victory over Russia, the 1907 Japanese-British Exposition again presented reconstitutions focusing on the Ainu of northern Japan and the aborigines of Taiwan.

Only after 1914, did colonial pavilions systematically appear in Japanese expositions (Yoshimi 1992: 213-14, 2005). During the 1914 “Tokyo-Taisho Exposition”, in addition to the Taiwan Pavilion, there was a Karafuto Pavilion,<sup>19</sup> a Manchurian Pavilion, a “Development” Pavilion, and a Korean Pavilion, representing all the regions of the colonial empire. These pavilions “aimed at introducing the new territories to Metropolitans” (Yoshimi 1992), in terms of culture, geography and travel facilities, as well as presenting the inhabitants of these areas. At the 1921 “Tokyo Exposition in commemoration of Peace” (*Heiwa kinen Tokyo hakurankai* 平和紀念東京博覽), the new Nanyo 南洋 (South Seas) and Siberian pavilions contained ethnographical presentations of the inhabitants of Micronesia, over which Japan would obtain official dominion in 1921 with a mandate from the League of Nations, and of Siberia. The “Korean Exhibition” held in Keijo 京城 (Seoul) in 1929 aimed to legitimate the colonial presence in the peninsula (Nanta 2012a). Thus, the content of these expositions always reflected the advance of the armies and the expansion of the empire with colonial and metropolitan minorities being systematically exhibited.

By emphasizing the dichotomy between “civilization” and “savagery” in the early

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19 Karafuto 樺太 is the Japanese name for Sakhalin, the southern half of which was inhabited by Japan from 1905 to 1945.

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twentieth century, these expositions served to confirm Japan's position as an imperial power of the first rank alongside with the Western powers.<sup>20</sup> However, this cannot be seen as a “project” specific to the organizers' ambitions, for this view of racial and civilizational hierarchies was widely attested at the time. The best proof of this is that, at the time, the view was almost universal, being shared by Europeans, Japanese, the organizers, and those on display, and it is thus impossible to “victimize” all those exhibited in terms of a dichotomous writing of History that would divide the world into imperialists and colonised people. While Japan was dominant in Asia after 1895, it should be remembered that the purpose of the 1894-95 Sino-Japanese War was to gain control of the Korean peninsula, control over which was contested by these two powers, and that China harboured imperialistic aims similar to those of Japan.

The reifying view of anthropology is clearly visible in the work of Tsuboi, the organiser of the 1903 exposition. His discourse continually emphasizes the exoticism and Otherness of recently incorporated minorities—the inhabitants of Okinawa and Ainu—as well as that of neighbouring populations. He saw Japan as ideally situated in the middle of a “vast anthropological museum” awaiting study. The Japanese anthropologist thus made use of his privileged position in East Asia: there would be no locking “specimens” into zoos, but rather edifying reconstitutions of ethnic categories for pedagogical purposes to accompany the scientific fieldwork. Furthermore, it might be advantageous for some of those on display, such as the Ainu, to be exhibited, for even spectacle was a means of introducing them to the public. In any event, the exhibited Asians (including the Ainu) and Arabs were not viewed in the same ways as the peoples of sub-Saharan Africa as they were seen as too “civilized” to be animalized. In the end, in both Europe and Japan, orientalism and anthropological discourse constructed the “modern” identity of the observer through an altero-referential process that constantly directed attention to the colonized Other, as defined by P.-A. Taguieff (2001). Ultimately, the problem lay not in the act of exhibiting people, but rather in the image thereby created — an image which was presupposed by expositions. According to the circular logic of anthropology, of which

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20 Expositions would also become a means of legitimating aggression against China in the 1930s when the Fifteen Years War (1931-1945) began. After 1932, expositions focused on Japan and its army would be organised which would offer occasions for demonstrations of Japan's vast military power.



these expositions were an early high point, modern nations asserted themselves as the producers of discourse on the “barbarian”, who, in the process, was reduced merely to an object of scientific interest.

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