

“Always barbarians?": the legacy of imperialism in Japanese museums, 1977-2017.



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Image: the 19th-century depiction of an Ainu chief, hanging in the Tokyo National Museum.
Taken by the author in the summer of 2017.

Introduction

This thesis examines the interrelation between the Japanese museum system and the establishment of an imperial discourse at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. The aim is to show that the Japanese museum system inherited this history of imperialism and that a colonial legacy is present. However, that does not mean this is a static process but that in more recent years, we can see changes in the representation of former and current colonial subjects, providing opportunities to challenge the narrative of imperialism.

The relation between imperialism and Japanese museology goes back to the foundation of the first museum in Japan, currently known as the Tokyo National Museum (TNM). Opened by the national government in 1872 and placed under the supervision of the Imperial Household Agency, this museum was responsible for all issues related to the cultural policy of the Japanese government. This included the storage, preservation, and presentation of what was defined as cultural heritage by the government and curating “Japan’s most prestigious cache of national treasures.”¹ In 1895, director Okakura Kakuzo (1868-1913) supervised the opening of two other national museums, located in the former capitals of Kyoto and Nara. Until the Second World War, almost all museums were imperial, meaning they were under strict control of and funded by the Japanese government. In this sense, we can regard them as political tools, founded to aid in the construction of a national identity, to interpret history, and conceptualize heritage.²

¹ It has to be noted that in the first years since its establishment, the ministry in charge of the museum altered a few times. First, it was under the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce (1872-1877), then the Home Ministry (1875-1881), the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce again (1881-1888) and the Imperial Household Ministry (1888 onwards). See also Patricia Huang, “Early museological development within the Japanese Empire,” *Journal of the History of Collections* 28, no. 1 (2016), 130-131, Tokyo National Museum (TNM), “7. Ueno Museum” *Tokyo National Museum*, accessed May 28, 2017, http://www.tnm.jp/modules/r_free_page/index.php?id=150, Morris Low, “Promoting Scientific and Technological Change in Tokyo, 1870-1930: Museums, Industrial Exhibitions, and the City,” in *Urban Modernity: Cultural Innovation in the Second Industrial Revolution*, ed. Miriam R. Levin (Cambridge, Mass.: the MIT Press, 2010), 220, and Hyung Il Pai, *Heritage Management in Korea and Japan: The Politics of Antiquity & Identity* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2013), 59.

² Noriko Aso, *Public Properties: Museums in Imperial Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 51-84, Low, “Promoting Scientific and Technological Change in Tokyo,” 218-219, Pai, *Heritage Management*, 59, and Ryuuta Itagaki, Satoshi Muzitani and Hideaki Tobe, “Japanese Empire,” in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Modern Imperial Histories*, eds. Philippa Levine and John Marriot (London: Routledge, 2012), 273-302.

Around the same time the government established the first museums, it annexed the land of the Ainu and the Ryukyu kingdom, currently known as the provinces Hokkaido and Okinawa. One of the main reasons to incorporate these areas was out of fear that other countries such as Britain and Russia would control them. The original inhabitants had traditions and languages distinct from the Japanese, one of the reasons the Japanese had labeled these communities as barbarous for centuries. From 1869 onwards, however, these indigenous people needed to be part of the Japanese ethnicity.³ After the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), Japan colonized Taiwan, and with the Russian defeat in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), Korea became part of the Japanese empire.⁴ The colonial ruler needed to legitimize these annexations. The used rhetoric and arguments led to an imperial discourse, which I define in this thesis as an overarching narrative which legitimizes the rule over another area. Often, this used certain phrases which described the subjected communities as less than the ruler, thus justifying annexation and control.⁵ This discourse would then extend towards museums, as objects from these “new” places were transferred here and were described using the same terminology as used in the discourse.⁶

After Japan surrendered on August 15, 1945, the empire ended. The annexed areas, except Okinawa and Hokkaido, became abruptly independent. Japan as a nation needed to come to terms with these new world order and decolonize. However, almost all items collected during colonial times and the stories connected to them would remain in the museums and

³ David Howell, *Geographies of Identity in Nineteenth Century Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 172-174, Steve Rabson, “Meiji Assimilation Policy in Okinawa: Promotion, Resistance, and ‘Reconstruction’,” in *New Directions in the Study of Meiji Japan*, eds. Helen Hardacre and Adam L. Kern (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 635-636 and 647-651, and Richard Siddle, *Race, Resistance and the Ainu of Japan* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 2.

⁴ It has to be noted that officially, Korea became a colony in 1910 with the abolishment of the Joseon dynasty, but the influence and domination of Japan on the Korean peninsula started before the Russo-Japanese War. This issue will be discussed in more detail in the thesis.

⁵ This concept is based upon the notion as given by Foucault. See also Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, “Colonialism,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, last revised on April 10, 2012, accessed April 20, 2017, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/colonialism/>, C.G. Brown, *Postmodernism for Historians* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2005), 59-66, and Babette Hellemans, *Cultuur* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2014), 89-97.

⁶ Aso, *Public Properties*, 51-84, Pai, *Heritage Management*, 59, and Itagaki et al., “Japanese Empire,” 273-302.

continue to impact our views on these objects and the people and areas from which they originated. To what extent the institutions decolonized is therefore unknown.⁷

This interrelation between Japanese museums and an imperial discourse is a topic that has not yet raised much attention in the scholarly debate on either Japanese colonial history or Japanese institutions. Even less has been written about the process of decolonization. When looking at the discussion in the English-written historical literature, for example, one of the first authors to write on Japanese museums from a historical perspective was Kentario Tomio. In 1997, he wrote an article about the Tokyo National Museum from the perspective of public space, although mentioning nationalism is a dynamic within the discipline of museology historians need to take into regard.⁸ A similar example to Tomio is Noriko Aso, who analyzed museums from the perspective of *publicness* and neglects the aspect of imperialism altogether.⁹ One of the first authors to explicitly discuss the relationship between nationalism and these institutions was Morris Low in 2010, who limits his research to the early Meiji Period (1869-1912) and neglects the role of the Tokyo National Museum although focusing on nationalism within the capital.¹⁰ What these authors have in common is mentioning the aspect of nationalism and nation-building related to museums but further onwards neglecting it. This development is strange, given this topic has raised more attention in recent years by scholars of history and museology.

Given that in the discipline of history the interrelation of museums and nationalism is missing, this thesis hopes to contribute to the existing literature by focusing on the relation between Japanese museums and the imperial discourse. The research is threefold. First, I present a brief discussion on the study of history and museology and the interpretation of

⁷ This is not limited to Japan. As is visible from a debate in more recent years, post-colonial countries such as The Netherlands and the United Kingdom struggle with this colonial past and the impact it has on the understanding of collections, representation of former colonial inhabitants, and the institution itself. See for example introduction to Iaian Chambers et. al. (eds.), *The Postcolonial Museum: The Arts of Memory and the Pressures of History* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2014), 1-6, John M. MacKenzie, *Museums and Empire: Natural History, Human Cultures and Colonial Identities* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 1-17, and Cynthia Scott, “Renewing the ‘Special Relationship’ and Rethinking the Return of Cultural Property: The Netherlands and Indonesia, 1949-79,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 52, no. 3 (2017), 646-668, and

⁸ Kentaro Tomio, “Visions of modern space: expositions and museums in Meiji Japan,” in *New Directions in the Study of Meiji Japan*, eds. Hardacre and Kern (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 719-733.

⁹ Aso, *Public Properties*, 51-84.

¹⁰ Low, 229.

imperial discourses in museums. This section presents a more detailed description of the state of the field. Also, it provides more general details of how museums developed in Japan.

Secondly, this thesis discusses, through a survey of the historical literature, the characteristics of the imperial discourse in the case of Japan. This focuses specifically on the representation of the indigenous people of Hokkaido, namely the Ainu, and Koreans.¹¹ Also, it presents a short discussion on the interpretation of the Japanese empire in the period 1945 to 2017 by focusing on post-war developments of the Ainu-Japanese coexistence and the international relations between the Japanese and Koreans.

Finally, this thesis takes a qualitative case study approach, focusing on the representation of the two groups mentioned above in the Tokyo National Museum and the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka (also known as *Minpaku*), opened in 1872 and 1977 respectively. Although the latter opened its doors during a time Korea already gained independence, it serves here as an interesting case study for examining whether or not an imperial legacy is present with the foundation of museums in the post-war age and to what extent this discourse is derived irrespective of a direct historical link to the colonial past. Also, both institutions are among the few in Japan which have a permanent exhibition on the Ainu and Koreans.¹² As this is a comparison, both case studies will focus on the period 1977 to 2017, based upon the published catalogs that accompanied the temporary and permanent exhibitions. Although there are exhibitions that are not followed by publication, primary research in June and July 2017 in the respective research centers of both museums yielded for the TNM a total of ten works, of which two focused on the Ainu and eight related to Korea.¹³ For *Minpaku*, I identified a total of fourteen: four focus specifically on the Ainu, one temporary exhibition held

¹¹ At first, there was an interest in focusing on the Taiwanese, as this group is often neglected within the discussion. However, after doing primary research in the Tokyo National Museum, it was discovered that there were no catalogues published between the period of 1977 and 2017 of exhibitions held on the subject of Taiwan or Taiwanese, therefore unable to take them into account.

¹² First, this thesis wished to discuss the representation of the Taiwanese, but preliminary research in the TNM pointed out they have never held a temporary exhibition or provide room for a permanent display focusing solely on Taiwanese artefacts. The reasons for this are unknown.

¹³ Although the TNM has a high frequency of temporary exhibitions, of which the average duration is two months, many of these are not accompanied by a catalogue. Therefore, it needs to be stated that the discussed exhibitions later onwards are only a part of exhibitions in the past, although be it the only ones available now through the publication of catalogues.

on Korea, one focusing in general on Asia, and eight focusing on the permanent display, which in this thesis the research limits itself to the texts discussing the Ainu and Koreans.¹⁴

¹⁴ Naohiro Nakamura. "The Representation of Ainu Culture in the Japanese Museum System," *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 17, no. 2 (2007), 331-350.

1. Museums and research: The state of the field

This section focuses on interpretations of museums related to imperial discourse. It discusses the debate in the museological and historical literature regarding museums and interpretations of these institutions, as well as expands on the state of the field as shortly sketched in the introduction. This is necessary because, as shown by Randolph Starn, a gap exists between the study of museology and history, strange considering both disciplines focus on the interpretation of materials from the past.¹⁵ Also, this section tries to contribute to the literature by introducing and positioning museums in Japan between the nineteenth-century and present, based upon historical and museological literature.

The museological literature focuses foremost on the establishment of European museums. The reason for this focus is because the modern definition of museums derives from this continent. The field tends to focus often on two specific museums: the British Museum in London and the Louvre in Paris. Both were established in the second half of the eighteenth century and represented a relatively new discourse: erecting these places to represent and increase the knowledge of the public, the objects on display were to represent the narrative of the European countries connected to them. This was not limited to displaying objects found within the national borders, but as the purchase of the Elgin Marbles in 1816 show, also artifacts that narrated to a broader European context and show the greatness of the home country were incorporated.¹⁶ In case of the Louvre, the display of objects from occupied territories by Napoleon exemplifies this narrative.¹⁷

Especially in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century, these institutions had the function to demonstrate colonial power, linked to progress and rationality, and help to establish a national identity.¹⁸ The dynamics between these narratives and museums have been conceptualized in the literature by among others Benedict Anderson, whose work *Imagined*

¹⁵ For an extension discussion and the literature he bases his claims on, see Randolph Starn, "A Historian's Brief Guide to New Museum Studies," *The American Historical Review* 110, no. 1 (2005), 68-80.

¹⁶ For a more extension review of literature focusing on the Elgin Marbles see Jennifer Ivens, "Living Heritage Rights: Attitudes Towards Cultural Property in the Hellenic Diaspora" (PhD diss., Concordia University, 2010), 1-11.

¹⁷ Ibid., 10-11, Tony Bennet, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995), 19-24 and 89-98, D.M. Wilson, *The British Museum – A History* (London: British Museum Press, 2002), 8-34, and Germain Bazin, *The Museum Age* (Brussel: Desoer, 1967), 168-191.

¹⁸ Aso, *Public Properties*, 16-20.

Communities had a fundamental impact on our current understanding of nations and nationalism. In his work, he defines the role of museums as “the legitimacy of its ancestry.”¹⁹ This political dimension has been carried forward by other researchers in museology but also sparked reactions. An example Tony Bennet, who criticizes Anderson for merely presenting a static image of museums, neglecting the development of museums in specifically the nineteenth century. However, by discussing the example of the Australian National Estate, in which the museum places the Aboriginals as a missing link between the far past and current Australian State, Bennet shows how the narrative of national history and the idea of development, as proposed by Anderson, is displayed in museums.²⁰ The case study by Barbra Saunders on the representation of Potlaching, an outlawed Native tradition in British Columbia, at the Canadian Natural History Museum shows that in case of Canada, connotations of primitiveness linger on in the representation of indigenous people.²¹

More recently, due to the works of among others James Clifford, the literature focused more strongly on the interrelation of the colonizer and colonized in museums. According to Clifford, researchers need to regard museums as places not merely representing a static image of colonial superiority but rather as a contact zone, in which the different cultures meet, even though the relationship is unequal. However, in his works, Clifford derives his notions from the a pure theoretical discussion, not explaining how this relates to specific case studies, nor discusses how this relates to the unequal relations present within museums. Therefore, it seems that his ideas specifically influenced the modern perception of post-colonial museums instead of the relationship between museums and colonial representation. We need to question to what extent this applies to the imperial institutions in historical perspective.²²

The reason why the discussion of European museums is vital for the understanding of the Japanese institution is directly related to the fact that the Japanese government embraced the concept of what a museum entailed. The Japanese definition of this concept is ascribed to Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835-1901), written down in his work *Things Western (Seiyō Jijō)*, published in 1866. Based on his experiences traveling through several European countries,

¹⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, revised edition (London: Verso Books, 2006), 163-164 and 178-186.

²⁰ Bennet, *Birth of the Museum*, 148-153.

²¹ Barbara Saunders, “Kwakwaka’wakw Museology,” *Cultural Dynamics* 7, no. 1 (1995), 38-52.

²² James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 188-219, Robin Boast, “Neocolonial Collaboration: Museum as Contact Zone Revisited,” *Museum Anthropology* 34, no. 1 (2011), 56-70, and Bennett, 173.

Fukuzawa explains unknown Western phenomena to a Japanese public. Here, he defines a museum as a place where the world's material goods, ancient artifacts, and rare objects are gathered and exhibited for the sake of propagating knowledge.²³ A year later, this term was officially adopted by the Meiji government. This embracing was because of Japanese officials who visited Europe and often had visited these museums and were impressed by the ways of representation present here.²⁴ The most well-known example of a museum that was highly appreciated is the South Kensington Museum, which Sano Tsunetami (1822-1902), who organized the Japanese participation of the Vienna World Exposition in 1873 and created the basis for the current Tokyo National Museum, described as the leading example for Japanese museology.²⁵ Authors such as Wan Chen and Shu-Li Wang even characterize it as taking European museums as prototypes for Japanese museums.²⁶ In their perception, the influence of the discussion as laid down by Anderson is visible, connecting, in particular, the imperial museums in Tokyo, Kyoto, and Nara as evidence of the national narrative and imperial discourse.

After 1945, we can see an evident change in the structure of the Japanese museological world. This is partly because of the increase in museums quantitatively, especially from the 1970s onwards. Examples are *Minpaku*, the National Museum of Japanese History (*Reihaku*),

²³ Aso, *Public Properties*, 12-15, Alice Y. Tseng, *The Imperial Museums of Meiji Japan: Architecture and the Art of the Nation* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), 23, Carmen Blacker, *The Japanese Enlightenment: A study of the writings of Fukuzawa Yukichi* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 98-100, and Chang-Wan Chen, "A cross-cultural perspective on musealization: the museum's reception by China and Japan in the second half of the nineteenth century," *Museum and Society* 10, no. 1 (2012), 16-19.

²⁴ This idea does not only apply to museums. As the work of W.G. Beasley shows, this is applicable to many different institutions. See W.G. Beasley, *Japan encounters the Barbarian: Japanese travelers in America and Europe* (London: Yale University Press, 1995), i-xii.

²⁵ This impression of the greatness of this particular museum was also expressed by Kume Kunitake, whose account of the official ambassador journey through the United States and Europe would become the basis for international policy in Japan. See Kume Kunitake, *The Iwakura Embassy, 1871-1873: A True Account of the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary's Journey of Observation through the United States of America and Europa*, eds. Chushichi Tsuzuku and R. Jules Young, vol. II (London: Routledge, 2003), 54-61, Tseng, *Imperial Museums*, 27, and Huang, Early museological development, 125-130.

²⁶ Chen, A cross-cultural perspective on musealization, 19-25 and Shu-Li Wang, "Exhibiting the Nation: cultural flows, transnational exchanges and the development of museums in Japan and China, 1900-1950," in *Eurasian Encounters: Museums, Missions, Modernities*, eds. Carolien Stolte and Yoshiyuki Kikuchi (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017), 49-57.

established in 1983, but also private and company museums.²⁷ The literature on post-war museums tends to focus on the period after 1980, partly because of developments in the respective disciplines themselves and as the study of collective memory became to take form.²⁸ An example is the work of Hong Kal, who wrote an extensive dissertation on the intertwining of colonial and post-colonial exhibitions in Korea and Japan discussing in case of the latter only case studies of war memorial museums.²⁹ As the specific cases of the TNM and *Minpaku*, as discussed in the respective sections, show, we can see a focus on increasing the number of exhibitions and a stronger tendency towards research, especially on objects regarded as Japanese heritage.

The current research on Japanese museums embodies these different aspects, but at the same time, an apparent gap is visible between the discipline of history and other fields. In the historical literature, the research tends to focus almost solely on the representation of the Second World War, due to the reinterpretation of empire in post-war Japan, as is discussed in the second section. Other fields, such as psychology or museum studies, focus directly on the present, neglecting the historical development of these institutions. The case study of Shōwa memorial museums taken by several authors emphasizes this difference and reveals the gap between the different fields. Using a clear historical perspective, Kerry Smith shows the interrelation between the development of the Japanese economy and society and the way this reflects in memorializing the Shōwa period (1926-1989).³⁰ The case study of nostalgia in Shōwa Era Museums by museologists and educators David Anderson, Hiroyuki Shimizu, and Chris Campbell, however, show an entirely different picture by using the perspective of psychology, neglecting the historical development of the institute or the changing interpretations of museums and within Japanese society.³¹ The discussion of war memorial

²⁷ Tadao Umesao, "The Comparative Study of Collection and Representation," in *Japanese Civilization in the Modern World XVII: Collection and Representation*, eds. Tadao Umesao, Angus Lockyer and Kenji Yoshida (Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology, 2001), 10-11.

²⁸ The study of collective memory particularly arose in the historical literature during the linguistic turn, of which Hayden White and Pierre Nora the best examples are. See also Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," *Representations* 26 (1989), 7-24 and Hellemans, *Cultuur*, 71-72 and 165-171.

²⁹ Hong Kal, "The Presence of the Past: Exhibitions, Memories and National Identities in Colonial and Postcolonial Korea and Japan" (PhD diss., Binghamton University, 2003), 192-252.

³⁰ Kerry Smith, "The Shōwa Hall: Memorializing Japan's War at Home," *The Public Historian* 24, no. 4 (2002), 35-64.

³¹ David Anderson, Hiroyuki Shimizu, and Chris Campbell, "Insights on How Museum Objects Mediate Recall of Nostalgic Life Episodes at a Shōwa Era Museum in Japan," *The Museum Journal* 59, no. 1 (2016), 5-26.

museums by Matthew Allen and Rumi Sakamoto also includes Shōwa museums and uses insights from the study of public and collective memory but in turn, only provide a quantitatively summary of literature and museums instead of showing how these institutions developed.³² One of the few exceptions of focusing on memorial or war museums is the work of Masaaki Morishita, who shows the importance of the concept of universality in post-war art museums and the position of the curator as mediators between the heritage scene and artistic field.³³

Concluding, we can see a development in the historical and museological literature regarding museums and (post)colonialism. In particular, the works of Anderson and Clifford have had a significant impact on our understanding of studying these aspects. In case of the Japanese museological development, we still see a gap in research on especially the post-war museums in relation with imperialism, as the focus is mostly on war and war memory. In other fields, this aspect is in need of more attention.

³² Matthew Allen and Rumi Sakamoto, “War and Peace: War Memories and Museums in Japan,” *History Compass* 11 (2013), 1047-1058.

³³ Masaaki Morishita, *The Empty Museum* (Farnham: Routledge, 2010), 64-78.

2. “The separation”: Japanese colonialism regarding the Ainu and Koreans

This section presents a brief discussion on the characteristics of the imperial discourse towards the Ainu and Koreans based upon historical literature. As the literature points out, the Japanese government treated both communities differently, corresponding with different laws and placing them on a distinct level within an overall imperial hierarchy. Therefore, the practices of the Japanese government towards the Ainu and Koreans are discussed separately, first focusing on the Ainu.

When looking at the history of the Ainu before the annexation of 1869, one has to take the difficulties regarding sources into regard. The indigenous people were hunters and gatherers. Hence, the Ainu never developed a distinct writing system. In turn, the perspective of the Ainu is not recorded, leading to a loss of knowledge from their side. Therefore, sources on this period rely solely on documents and paintings produced by ethnic Japanese (*wajin*).³⁴ These authors based their information on either visiting the Ainu communities, particularly in the southern domain ruled by the Matsumae-clan or through imagery provided by other *wajin*. This clan was active on this island, named *Ainu Moshir* by the Ainu, from the sixteenth century onwards but confined themselves to a small area in the utmost south. *Wajin* would not visit most parts on the island until the annexation in 1869.³⁵ The relations of these *wajin* with the Ainu were based on trade relations, already established before the sixteenth century.

In recent historical literature, there is an agreement that during the 16th to late 19th century, there was a clear separation between ethnically Japanese and the Ainu, of which the former had little control over the island.³⁶ According to Brett Walker, there was even a distinct

³⁴ Howell, “Is Ainu History Japanese History?”, in *Beyond Ainu Studies: Changing Academic and Public Perspectives*, eds. 101-104 and Christopher Loy, “Cultivating Ezo: Indigenous Innovation and Ecological Changes During Japan’s Bakumatsu Era,” *Asian Ethnology* 74, no. 1 (2015), 67.

³⁵ The exact reasons for this is unknown.

³⁶ This topic is relatively recent due to the lack of interest in Ainu culture and history until the early 2000s. This changed as the Ainu became more politically active from the 1970s onwards, leading to the revocation of discriminatory laws, but also due to developments within the discipline of history. See also Brett Walker, *The Conquest of Ainu Lands: Ecology and Culture in Japanese Expansion, 1590-1800* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 39-46, Howell, *Geographies of Identity*, 110-119, and C.H. Heung, “Rethinking Ainu Heritage: A Case Study of an Ainu settlement in Hokkaido, Japan,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 11, no. 3 (2005), 202.

imaginary border, which he defines as the “Wajin-Ezo line.”³⁷ Here, trading relations existed but cultural and political influences were neglectable. According to Walker, this impact is minimal as the *wajin* kept themselves distant and made sure that the Ainu did not learn the Japanese language or had access to Japanese traditions. Walker's research resonates with other authors who wrote extensively on this topic, such as David Howell who shows that the Japanese confined themselves to the Matsumae-domain and were not interested in expanding this area. From the Japanese perspective, there was no interest in governing the Ainu but merely keep trading relations for goods such as salmon caught in the northern part of the island. Therefore, we can state that the relationship between the Ainu and Japanese was, until the annexation, mainly economic.³⁸

This relationship changed from 1869 onwards, leading to the paradox of how the Japanese regarded the Ainu as subjects of the new Japanese empire. After emperor Meiji came to power, the land of the Ainu was annexed. The Japanese justified this takeover by describing the area as being the “northern gate of the empire” for hundreds of years, but the reason for incorporating the area was geopolitical: the government wanted to prevent that the Russian empire controlled a region extremely close to the Japanese mainland.³⁹ Regarding the Ainu, the Japanese government decided they have to be Japanese subjects and cultured. They introduced several policies, in which a new office named the *Kaitakushi* founded in 1869 was responsible for carrying out these policies. First, the government illegalized several traditions of the Ainu communities. Examples include burning houses after the passing of the owner or the facial tattooing of Ainu women upon the reaching of marriageable age.⁴⁰

Secondly, schools were opened to force the acquisition of Japanese language and traditions upon the indigenous communities. Ainu-languages were forbidden, and a focus was

³⁷ The name *Ezo* is a term used for the Ainu by the Japanese, which holds a negative connotation similar to the English word barbarian. The area in which the Ainu lived was also known as *Ezochi*. See also Walker, *Conquest of Ainu Lands*, 39-46.

³⁸ Howell, *Geographies of Identity*, 104-107. An example of other authors who agree with Walker and Howell are Loy, *Cultivating Ezo*, 63-85,

This as the line is also interpreted by scholars as a cultural line. See Howell, *Ainu History*, 104-107, Loy, 63-85, and Walker, 39-44.

³⁹ Komori Yoichi, “Rule in the Name of ‘Protection’: The Vocabulary of Colonialism,” in *Reading Colonial Japan: Text, Context and Critique*, eds. Michelle Mason and Helen J.S. Lee (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 64.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 64-66, Richard Siddle, *Race, Resistance and the Ainu of Japan* (New York: Routledge, 1996) 1-11, and Howell, *Geographies of Identity*, 172-174.

on converting them to Shintoism. The Ainu as a distinct category were no longer allowed to exist. This is exemplified in the work of Howell, who shows that in Japanese legal records Ainu as a category for people was no longer used and the Ainu were forced to change names.⁴¹ Other experts on Ainu culture and history support his claims, such as Ann-Elise Lewallen, and the Ainu Association of Hokkaido, one of the main organizations to fight for the rights of the indigenous communities. They acknowledge that, nowadays, it is sometimes impossible to know if someone descends from one of these Ainu communities, due to among others lost ancestry records.⁴²

However, there are also historians who question the complete disappearing of the Ainu as a category. In 1899, de facto thirty years after the annexation of Hokkaido, the Japanese government introduced a law to reinforce the assimilation of “former natives,” targeting specifically at the Ainu. Authors such as Richard Siddle and Komori Yoichi see this law, together with the definition of the Ainu as a dying race to justify it, as evidence that the Ainu as a distinct category still existed and continued to exist.⁴³ However, as Lewallen also shows, this is a little bit more ambiguous because after introducing this law, the Japanese government had to define what “former natives” meant, construing it as “those whom anyone would recognize as an aborigine.”⁴⁴

Lastly, another factor complicated the assimilation of the Ainu: the domestication and reinterpretation of the land of Hokkaido. Two factors played a prominent role here: the abolishment of the samurai class and their relocation to Hokkaido to cultivate the land. With the abolition of the class system in 1872, the samurai and local elite lost many of their property, which the Japanese government tried to compensate with offering them parcels of land in Hokkaido. By the law of 1899, the Ainu were also allowed to own farmland, although this was

⁴¹ Howell, Making “Making ‘Useful Citizens’ of Ainu Subjects in Early Twentieth-Century Japan,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 63, no. 1 (2004), 11.

⁴² An example Lewallen mentions is last names, which can hold references towards Ainu ancestry. However, how this exactly works is not mentioned. See also Ann-Elise Lewallen, “‘Clamoring Blood: The Materiality of Belonging in Modern Ainu Identity,” *Critical Asian Studies* 48, no. 1 (2016), 60-62, and Ainu Association of Hokkaido, “Actual Living Conditions on the Hokkaido Ainu,” accessed October 29, 2017, <https://www.ainu-assn.or.jp/ainupeople/index.html>.

⁴³ Introduction to Mark J. Hudson, Ann-Elise Lewallen, and Mark K. Watson (eds.), *Beyond Ainu Studies: Changing Academic and Public Perspectives* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’I Press, 2014), 2-7, Komori, Rule in the Name, 67-69, Siddle, *Race, Resistance and the Ainu*, 123-127, and Howell, Making ‘Useful Citizens’, 15.

⁴⁴ Lewallen, Clamoring Blood, 61 and Howell, Making ‘Useful Citizens,’ 12.

much smaller and under the supervision of the Japanese government. In case the parcels were not used for cultivation within 15 years after receiving it, the state held the right to retrieve the land.⁴⁵ According to Michele Mason, this created an image of Hokkaido as a “limitless source of hitherto untapped natural resources awaiting Japanese ingenuity and civilization.”⁴⁶ Other authors such as Komori agree with this conclusion of Mason.⁴⁷ That this image of Hokkaido lingers on is exemplified in 2015, when a banner of the Nippon Ham Fighter hung at the New Chitose Airport was taken down after a protest of Ainu communities as it contained the slogan: “Hokkaido is the land of pioneers” (*Hokkaido ha, Kaitakusha no Taichi da*).⁴⁸

In 1945, when the Japanese empire crumbled but Hokkaido stayed a part of the Japanese empire, the situation changed as Ainu communities became more active by publicly protesting and trying to counteract discriminatory policies.⁴⁹ Examples of this include the several organizations founded by members of these communities, either focusing on indigenous rights such as the Ainu Association of Hokkaido established in 1946 or focusing on protecting cultural traditions, such as the traditional dance.⁵⁰ Historians such as Siddle and Mark J. Hudson view these organizations as a reaction to what they describe as the traumatizing pre-war situation for Ainu communities. The 1960s and 1970s, periods in which also violent

⁴⁵ Siddle, 70-75, Komori, *Rule in the Name*, 67-69, Howell, *Ainu History*, 101-104, and Hiroshi Maruyama, “Japan’s Policies Towards the Ainu Language and Culture with Special Reference to North Fennoscandian Sami Policies,” *Acta Borealia* 31, no. 2 (2014), 152-158.

⁴⁶ Michele Mason, “Writing Ainu Out/Writing Japanese In: The ‘Nature’ of Japanese Colonialism in Hokkaido,” in *Reading Colonial Japan*, eds. Mason and Lee, 34.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 33-51, Komori, 67-69 and Elise K. Tipton, *Modern Japan: A social and political history*, Second Edition (New York: Routledge, 2005), 67-68.

⁴⁸ Kyodo, “Fighters to take down banners offensive to Ainu,” *Japan Times* (November 9, 2015), accessed on October 25, 2017, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/11/09/national/social-issues/ainu-group-unhappy-baseball-teams-banner-chitose-airport>.

⁴⁹ It has to be noted that I am not trying to portray an image of no resistance by Ainu communities before 1945. In the historiography, there is a strong debate about this. However, due to the scarcity of sources from the perspective of the Ainu in this period, historians can only rely on official government sources here, which are few in total. See also Siddle, 2, 70-75, Komori, 67-69, Howell, *Geographies of Identity*, 110-130, and Maruyama, *Japan’s Policies Towards the Ainu*, 152-158.

⁵⁰ This case is in particular interesting due to the enlisting as national heritage in 1974 and as World Intangible Heritage on the UNESCO list. See also UNESCO, “Nomination for inscription on the Representative List in 2009 (Reference No. 00278)” (presented on the convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage intergovernmental committee for the safeguarding of the intangible heritage, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, September 28-October 2, 2009), 2-6.

protests from these groups took place, are also examples of this resistance.⁵¹ However, both authors seem to imply that before the 1960s, the Ainu silently did not protest against the above-mentioned discriminatory laws, which is a too rigid view contradicted by other authors such as Howell and Loy.⁵²

What is visible from the 1980s onwards, however, is a small change in policies towards the Ainu. In this era, international communities recognized the Ainu, which led to the participation of several Ainu representatives in the World Council of Indigenous People and working groups of the United Nations. Their participation seems to have created more political momentum for the Ainu within Japan, which is exemplified by among others the revoking of the law of 1899 and the legal recognition as indigenous people of Hokkaido in 2008. However, these changes, in turn, have also been criticized by several authors, stating that these laws only protect Ainu communities and their heritage in name and lack concrete action.⁵³ An example of authors who criticize this is Justin Hunter, who shows with the case of the protection of the Ainu dance by the Japanese government and UNESCO that the national government put the effort in enlisting this dance to respond to the pressure of the international community.⁵⁴

We can conclude that in the historical literature two different images on the Ainu arise: in the pre-war age, the view dominates of the Japanese government as victimizing the Ainu communities. This as the state illegalized their language and traditions. In turn, the Ainu had to become Japanese, but due to specific policies focusing on the Ainu, the historical literature questions whether or not they could ever become Japanese. The perspective of Ainu members and the way they resisted or consented to the policies is, due to the lack of sources, unknown. In particular, this applies to our understanding of the situation before the nineteenth century. It seems that this image is less visible in the literature regarding the discussion on the post-war

⁵¹ Siddle, 70-75 and introduction to Hudson, Lewallen, and Watson, *Beyond Ainu Studies*, 7.

⁵² Howell, Making 'Useful Citizens', 5-29 and Loy, "The Ainu of Northern Japan: Indigeneity, Post-National Politics, Territoriality" (PhD diss., Binghamton University, 2010), 184-187, 192-205.

⁵³ Annette Skovsted Hansen, "Re-vitalizing an indigenous language: Dictionaries of Ainu languages in Japan, 1625-2013," *Lexicographica* 30, no. 1 (2014), 547-578, Lewallen, 72-73, Maruyama, "Japan's post-war Ainu policy. Why the Japanese Government has not recognized Ainu indigenous rights?" *Polar Record* 49 (2013), 204-207, and Sumiko Oshima, "New law fails to preserve Ainu people's rights: U.N.," *Japan Times* (August 11, 1998), accessed October 27, 2017, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/1998/08/11/national/new-law-fails-to-preserve-ainu-peoples-rights-u-n>.

⁵⁴ Justin R. Hunter, "Vitalizing Traditions: Ainu Music and Dance and the Discourse of Indigeneity" (PhD diss., University of Hawai'i, 2015), 47-57.

age, because of Ainu communities protesting, either on the national or international level. However, critique exists to what extent this revocation of colonial policies from the latter half of the 1990s and 2000s onwards is due to honest reflection by the Japanese government or to meet the pressures of the Ainu and the international community.

There are similarities between how Japan wished to benefit from Hokkaido and Korea, mainly as “colonies of settlement” in the words of Jun Uchida, one of the first authors to name Hokkaido and Korea in one breath.⁵⁵ However, the differences in which the imperial government regarded the people living in these areas seems to be more significant. The historical literature points out this is related to the way Japanese looked at Korean history. After the official incorporation into the empire in 1910, the question arose to what extent it was possible if Korea and Japan had the same ancestors. If this was the case, then the issue followed how it was possible that Japan could have become so much stronger and dominate Korea. According to several historians, these questions were particularly crucial to journalist and government officials. Authors such as Uchida and Taylor Atkins illustrate the importance of these questions with the establishment of the Korea Research Association and the increase of Japanese anthropologists focusing on Korean history.⁵⁶ As shown by Hyung Il Pai, this also resonates in the research and definition of Korean heritage, exemplified by the registration of items. Japanese officials defined these items, and by 1923, over 90 percent of all listed artifacts categorized as heritage originated from the ancient period.⁵⁷

The answer the research and public opinions provided was that after the disconnection between the Japanese and Koreans in ancient times, Koreans no longer pursued to develop the country economically and culturally, leading to a decline of their society. Todd Henry describes some of these examples Japanese used to prove this narrative. In particular, the Korean custom of a pee bowl located in the main room of a house proved to be an effective example, as this was considered unclean by the Japanese. According to Henry, for the Japanese, this also

⁵⁵ Jun Uchida, *Brokers of Empire: Japanese Settler Colonialism in Korea, 1876-1945* (Boston: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011), 9.

⁵⁶ The work of Atkins argues that the development of anthropology with the focus on Korea even held a paradox, focusing on maximizing as well as minimizing differences between Korea and Japan. See E. Taylor Atkins, *Primitive Selves: Koreana in the Japanese Colonial Gaze, 1910-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 52-63, Uchida, *Brokers of Empire*, 146-153, and Peter Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword: the Japanese Penetration of Korea, 1895-1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 413-423.

⁵⁷ Pai, “The Creation of National Treasures and Monuments: The 1916 Japanese laws on the Preservation of Korean Remains and Relics and Their Colonial Legacies,” *Korean Studies* 25, no. 1 (2001), 80-87.

showed Koreans were immoral.⁵⁸ All authors seem to agree that this conclusion, in the words of Uchida, created tension in the domination of the Japanese over Korea. The Japanese saw the Korean people as related to themselves, but at the same time, this was in a far past, during which the decline of Korean culture differentiated them, making the Japanese and Koreans alien from each other.⁵⁹

In the eyes of the Japanese, this course of history meant they had a task to fulfill. Similar to the European narrative of colonialism, many Japanese officials such as Nitobe Inazo (1862-1933) believed this duty was “the spread of civilization.”⁶⁰ Kal shows, by citing the opening of the international exposition held in Seoul in 1915, that this idea resonated in the Japanese colonial government. Here, they stated that the Japanese had the moral obligation to “awake the [Korean] people from a hundred years of slumber.”⁶¹ As several authors emphasize, the Japanese government implemented this narrative in their cultural policy, which they described with the word *dōka*. This concept translates to assimilation and focuses on convincing the Korean people of the narrative mentioned above, namely the connection with Japan and the need to adopt the manners and customs which were deemed appropriate by the imperial power.⁶² However, as several authors like Uchida and Kal pointed out, at the same time a message was conveyed that the Japanese and Koreans were different.⁶³

These efforts of the Japanese colonial government to assimilate the Koreans changed because of the March First Movement of 1919, till today an event celebrated by Koreans and known as one of the most prominent protests against Japanese annexation. Before this, there were only small acts of resistance on the peninsula, which the Japanese colonial power viewed as an agreement to the occupation and followed policies. The March First Movement was supported by around two million Koreans and led to seven thousand dead Japanese soldiers

⁵⁸ For a more detailed discussion on the way customs regarded as unclean by the Japanese played a role, see Todd A. Henry, “Sanitizing Empire: Japanese Articulations of Korean Otherness and the Construction of Early Colonial Seoul, 1905-1919,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 64, no. 3 (2005), 645-650, 667.

⁵⁹ Uchida, 197-200.

⁶⁰ Alexis Dudden, *Japan's Colonization of Korea: Discourse and Power* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 134-138.

⁶¹ Report on the international exposition, cited in Kal, “Modeling the West, Returning to Asia: Shifting Policies of Representation in Japanese Colonial Expositions in Korea,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 47, no. 3 (2005), 508.

⁶² Henry, *Sanitizing Empire*, 668-669 and Mark R. Peattie, “The Japanese colonial empire, 1895-1945,” in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, ed. Peter Duus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 240-242.

⁶³ Uchida, 195-201, Kal, *Modeling the West, Returning to Asia*, 520-522, and Atkins, *Primitive Selves*, 102-106.

and officials, which showed for the Japanese government that the assumptions mentioned above were wrong.⁶⁴ The imperial government took counter-measures by installing Saitō Makoto (1858-1936) as the new Governor-General. According to authors such as Uchida and Pai, this proved to be a considerable change, as Makoto introduced a new policy named “cultural rule” (*Bunka Seiji*). Different to the previous policy of *dōka* was that assimilation would no longer be the primary objective, but the focus needed to be on the alignment of the Korean people to the Japanese rule and goals, keeping their national identity.⁶⁵ Here, we can see a change in narrative, namely through the use of terminology such as harmony instead of “awoke” as mentioned earlier.

Between 1919 to 1945, we can see to a certain extent a continuation of this new policy, which is defined in the historical literature as an “imperialization” of Korea, with a particular intensification of these policies in the period of 1937 to 1945. This is related to a strong definition of nationhood of imperial subjects, as Barbara Brooks shows by the example of protecting Koreans working in Manchuria in the 1920s and 1930s.⁶⁶ Other examples are given by Fujitani, who discusses the shortage of labor because of the war efforts after 1937 and a recognition of the rights of Koreans, giving voting rights to Korean male, adult citizens on April First, 1945.⁶⁷ However, the act of imperialization was not only legally but also culturally: this is exemplified by the decret of the colonial government in 1938 to make Japanese the language of instruction in the Korean school system by 1938 and the closing of all Korean-language newspapers in 1940.⁶⁸

Even though Japan surrendered on August 15, 1945, this does not mean that the colonial impact on Korea stopped. Examples, especially regarding the study of heritage, include the

⁶⁴ Encyclopedia Britannica, “March First Movement: Korean History,” accessed December 6, 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/event/March-First-Movement>.

⁶⁵ Uchida 144-153 and Pai, *Heritage Management*, 114-117, 142-149.

⁶⁶ The example of Brooks focuses mostly on Koreans living in Northern China. See Barbara J. Brooks, *Japan’s Competing Modernities: Issues in Culture and Democracy, 1900-1930* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’I Press, 1998), 25-35.

⁶⁷ Takashi Fujitani, “Right to Kill, Right to Make Live: Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans During WWII,” *Representations* 99, no. 1 (2007), 16-19.

⁶⁸ That the government issued these decrees does not imply that they were effective. However, as this thesis is limited, the focus is solely on the Japanese view on Koreans and not on the effectiveness of the integration of Koreans into the Japanese imperial discourse. See Atkins, 45, Chong-Sik Lee, *Japan and Korea: The Political Dimension* (Stanford: Hoover University Press, 1985), 10, and Hildi Kang, *Under the Black Umbrella: Voices from Colonial Korea, 1910-1945* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 2005), 115.

construction of South-Korean cultural institutions following Japanese models and the definition of Korean heritage, continuing on the infrastructure laid down during the colonial rule.⁶⁹ Based on this, Atkins calls this impact a “projection of Japanese colonial hegemony,” but in his narrative merely presenting a static image of Korea, neglecting the development of the heritage industry after the Korean War (1950-1953).⁷⁰ His discussion shows, however, that we need to take this impact into regard, especially regarding the cooperation of Korean institutions with Japanese museums nowadays, such as the TNM.

Our current understanding of the relationship between Japan and Korea, as well as the interpretation of the colonial period and the legacy of the imperial discourse, is related to the post-war reinterpretation of the Japanese empire in Japan. In the historical literature, there is a questioning whether or not Japan has decolonized.⁷¹ Mitani Taichirō states for instance that Japan never decolonized, which is due to the view of decolonization as demilitarization, of which Japan underwent only the latter.⁷² Ian Nish emphasizes this and shows this relates specifically to merging of the memory of the Japanese defeat in the war and simultaneously losing the colonies. One of the underlying causes for this is, according to Nish, the legacy of colonial institutions and the continuation of politicians active during colonial times in post-war Japanese politics.⁷³ Agreeing with Mitani and Nish, Kawashima Shin states this leads to the current unwillingness of Japanese to recognize the dark legacies of colonization, e.g., the war atrocities committed by Japanese soldiers, which till today cast a shadow over the relationships

⁶⁹ See for specific examples and a broader discussion Pai, *National Treasures and Monuments*, 73-89 and Janet Poole, “The Remains of Colonial History,” in *Spaces of Possibility: In, Between, and Beyond Korea and Japan*, eds. Clark Sorensen and Andrea Arai (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2016), 13-44. In addition, it has to be mentioned that as the museums in the case studies worked together with South-Korean institutions and not with North-Korean, the discussed period of 1950 to the present focuses only on the relations with South-Korea.

⁷⁰ Atkins, 52.

⁷¹ A problem in the vast amounts of literature present on this topic is the different focuses, also due to the change of the historiography. In addition, the debate in English tends to focus on other aspects than the Japanese discussion. See also the discussion in introduction to Barak Kushner and Sherzod Muminov (eds.), *The Dismantling of Japan’s Empire in East Asia: Deimperialization, postwar legitimation and imperial afterlife* (London: Routledge, 2017), 4-7.

⁷² Mitani Taichirō, cited in Kawashima Shin, trans. Takashima Asako, “ ‘Deimperialization’ in early postwar Japan: Adjusting and transforming the institutions of empire,” in *ibid.*, 30-31.

⁷³ Ian Nish, “Regaining Confidence – Japan after the Loss of Empire,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 15 (1980), 185-191.

of Japan with neighboring countries.⁷⁴ However, according to Fujitani, this is not only because of Japanese unwillingness to recognize colonial and war atrocities but also due to the transnational collaboration of Japan with the United States. Here, the latter rehabilitated Japan relatively fast for among others Japanese help during the Korean War, but more so to the refusal of allied forces to avoid more significant questions of colonialism and imperialism which could reflect on themselves. In turn, the Japanese never cooperated with de-imperialization, meaning that Japanese neo-nationalist groups and authors can relatively easily spread their ideas, which Fujitani exemplifies with a discussion on the popularity of the manga artist Kobayashi Yoshinori (1953-).⁷⁵ Other authors conceptualize the Japanese de-colonization in the words of Pai: a “self-induced ‘selective amnesia’ concerning its imperial past.”⁷⁶

Efforts to improve international relations took place during the early 1960s, leading to an official restoration at the end of 1965. Cultural examples include the return of several Korean artifacts in the TNM’s collection and once taken by Japanese during the colonial occupation to the government of Korea in the early 1960s and the joint hosting of the 2002 FIFA World Cup in Tokyo and Seoul.⁷⁷ However, the current relations are heavily tormented by the reluctance of Japan to recognize war atrocities, related to this “amnesia.” In particular, the issues of comfort women and territorial disputes continue to damage these relations even today.⁷⁸

As above is demonstrated, the historical literature agrees that there was an apparent difference in how the Japanese viewed the Ainu and Korean people and integrated them into

⁷⁴ Kawashima, ‘Deimperialization’ in early postwar Japan, 32-37.

⁷⁵ See for a more detailed discussion Fujitani, “Post-imperial Japan in Transnational Perspective,” in *Memories of Post-Imperial Nations: The Aftermath of Decolonization, 1945-2013*, ed. Dietmar Rothermund (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 151-166.

⁷⁶ Pai, *Heritage Management*, 170. Describing the post-war decolonization as amnesia is a statement not only ascribed to Pai but is a more general term in the historical literature. This becomes visible from the literature review as done by Kal. See Kal, *Presence of the Past*, 11-15.

⁷⁷ The TNM held an exhibition at the same time to commemorate this event. This will be discussed in more detail in the discussion of the TNM as a case study.

⁷⁸ One of the most recent examples that illustrates that this impact of this refusal of acknowledgement affects the relationship of Japan with other nations is the statement of the mayor of Osaka to cut ties with its sister city San Francisco because of the installment of a statue in the city, representing comfort women. See Jacey Fortin, “‘Comfort Women’ Statue in San Francisco Leads a Japanese City to Cut Ties,” *The New York Times* (November 25, 2017), accessed December 7, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/25/world/asia/comfort-women-statue.html>.

the Japanese imperial discourse. For the Japanese, the Ainu were a group that, at the same time, fell inside and outside the framework of being Japanese, a situation which arguably impacts the relationship even today. Part of this framework in a legal and cultural sense was to define them as Japanese, but at the same time, the imperial government placed the Ainu outside this framework with discriminatory policies and through the vocabulary of the Ainu as a dying race. These policies were related to the narrative surrounding the land of the Ainu, namely as waiting to be civilized by the Japanese.

In a sense, the latter also applies to the way Korea was integrated into the colonial discourse but here the comparison stops. The Koreans were categorized as different to the Japanese, unable to evolve for hundreds of years and in need of help. Maybe they would become Japanese or not, but in the early years of annexation, this was a question under discussion and something that in the end proved to be unimportant. Especially after 1919, we see a discourse focusing on coexisting together and an imperialization of Korea, slowly enhancing this discourse through the used language and imposed policies. The concepts that circulated at the time, of which *dōka* is perhaps the best representative, emphasize this. Regarding the word *dōka*, we can see it as a concept limited to the imperialization of Korea, as the Ainu were not regarded as solely different or undermining the annexation, it was never used to describe the discriminatory policies and devastating assimilation of the Ainu.

We can conclude, following the historical literature, that the Japanese discourse was multi-layered, placing two groups of subjects with their respective cultures in a different hierarchy and position within the Japanese imperial scheme. This narrative, in turn, lingers on in the relations of the Japanese with the Ainu and Koreans. Furthermore, this view continues in the post-war self-reflection of Japan, leading to the difficulties of recognizing and protecting indigenous rights of the Ainu, as well as the struggles to accept the atrocities Japanese committed during the colonial times and Pacific War.

3. Ancient crafts: the exhibitions at the Tokyo National Museum

This section discusses the first case study, the Tokyo National Museum. The reason for choosing this institution is because it was the first national or imperial museum, established by the Meiji government in 1872. From its start, it held a vital role in defining heritage and preserving the items nowadays regarded as vital for the Japanese identity. In particular, this section argues that in the history, collection, and representation of the Ainu and Koreans between 1977 and 2017 in the Tokyo National Museum imperial discourses resonate.

To fully understand the relationship between the museum and the imperial discourses, the history before 1977 needs to be discussed. The foundations of the TNM lie in the Meiji period (1868-1912), during which the museum received the prominent role in defining what heritage means for Japan. As Pai shows, in the year 1880, the then responsible Imperial Household Ministry ordered that all items with a historical or cultural value needed to be classified by the Tokyo Imperial University. If researchers qualified these objects as holding a significant value to Japan or, in other words, were regarded as Japanese heritage, the TNM had the first right to buy the item or compensate the owners.⁷⁹ In the historical literature, the well-known example of such an item would be *Hōryūji* treasures. These objects of Buddhist origin include sculptures from the sixth-century c.e. were bought by the Meiji government in 1882 for the amount of 10,000 yen. The justification for purchasing these items was that they were essential cultural heritage of Japan. Transferred to the museum in the same year, nowadays they reside in a hall constructed for the display of these objects.⁸⁰

In 1895, under the supervision of the director Okakura Kakuzo, two more imperial museums were founded in the former capitals of Kyoto and Nara, in which the two new institutions ranked below the TNM. As Alice Tseng shows, this was due to the different role they fulfilled in the museum system of the twentieth century. While the TNM showed the Japanese cultural identity and history, the display in the other two museums portrayed the local history and its prominence to the Japanese identity. In the historical literature, there is a debate

⁷⁹ Pai, *Heritage Management*, 61-69.

⁸⁰ For an extensive portrayal of the treasures, see Hiroko T. McDermott, "The Hōryūji Treasures and Early Meiji Cultural Policy," *Monumenta Nipponica* 61, no. 3 (2006), 339-367, Aso, "New Illusions: The Emergence of a Discourse on Traditional Japanese Arts and Crafts, 1868-1945" (Ph.D. diss, University of Chicago, 1997), 57-88, and Yui Suzuki, "Temple as Museum, Buddha as Art: Hōryūji's 'Kudara Kannon' and Its Great Treasure Repository," *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, no. 52 (2007), 130-133. See also Pai, *Heritage Management*, 61-69.

why the museums in the former capitals held this different role. According to authors such as Fujitani and Dougill, this could relate to the feeling of loss after Kyoto retired as a capital. Another explanation could be that many of the items in the new museums originated from the collection of the TNM and were under the supervision of the same direction. However, the lack of discussion and information on the Nara National Museum in the historical literature shows that the literature does not provide an answer and more research on all three museums is necessary.⁸¹

For the TNM, the period until the end of the Second World War, this focus on national identity and heritage intensified. Due to the disruption that was the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 and the destruction of several objects and most of the buildings, the museum closed in 1923 and reopened in 1938.⁸² However, as the literature points out, this also provided opportunities to reform the display of objects and how to utilize the space. After the completion of the central hall, which still holds the same function today, the museum staff launched a new permanent exhibition constructed around the narrative of a unique Japanese culture. Another example of changes was the classification system and reorganization of the museum's structure, merging the art section and history department and abolishing the latter section.⁸³

After Japan surrendered in 1945 and the United States occupied the country, the Ministry of Education became responsible for overseeing the former imperial museums. This led, paradoxically, to a stronger position of the TNM in the Japanese heritage and culture sector. Instead of reducing its hegemonic position, the ministry requested the institution to supervise the Nara National Museum and the Art Research Institute. Also, the TNM received responsibilities for conducting art and historical research of several objects designated as National Treasures, earlier a responsibility of the Tokyo Imperial University.⁸⁴ In 1968, the

⁸¹ Tseng, *Imperial Museums*, 93-96 and 124-135. Historical research on this period in relation to the museums tends to focus on the position of Kyoto, as the claim exists that the museum glorified the past of the former capital. This is one of the reasons Fujitani described Kyoto in this period as a “memoryscape”. However, much more research is needed on these local national museums. See also Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 18, Tseng, “The Retirement of Kyoto as Imperial Capital,” *The Court Historian* 17, no. 2 (2012), 214-223, and John Dougill, *Kyoto: A Cultural History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 197-205.

⁸² TNM, “8. Royal Gallery: The opening of the Hyokeikan,” accessed September 22, 2017, http://www.tnm.jp/modules/r_free_page/index.php?id=151.

⁸³ Huang, 131-132, Aso, *Public Properties*, 52-53 and TNM,

⁸⁴ TNM, “11. Tokyo National Museum: The post-war era,” accessed September 23, 2017, http://www.tnm.jp/modules/r_free_page/index.php?id=154.

newly established Agency for Cultural Affairs took over some of these tasks.⁸⁵ The museum, in turn, focused on more temporary exhibitions and educating the public by promoting publications of collection catalogs and organizing lectures.⁸⁶

We can see that two characteristics mark the history of the Tokyo National Museum from 1872 until 1977. First, the institution held a monopolistic role in the definition and controlling of heritage, not limited to the Meiji period but also visible after the Second World War. Second, as the leading museum, it held the critical role of portraying the Japanese national identity following the constructed narrative by the Japanese government of what this identity and heritage entailed.

When we look at the period after 1977, we can see to a certain extent a continuation of these characteristics and a stronger focus on research. In 1984, the TNM established a research center (*Shiryōkan*). Furthermore, the Department of Oriental Antiquities expanded between 1980 and 1988, creating sections focusing solely on Chinese Art, Chinese Archeology, and Northeast Asia. Located in the *Tōyōkan*, this building became the permanent exhibition hall for the display of objects of Asian origin, excluding the Japanese artifacts. Here, Taiwanese objects are noticeably absent.

After 2001, with the separation of the three national museums from the Agency for Cultural Affairs and the formation of the Independent Administrative Institution National Museum, the TNM returned to the status it held in the late Meiji-period: hegemonic in an alliance. This administration was a merge of the TNM with the museums in Kyoto and Nara, similar to the situation in 1895. In 2007, the Kyushu National Museum joined. The difference in size and amount of objects, namely that the TNM possessed 112,397 of the 120,788 objects of all four museums, showcases the relative weight the museum has in comparison to the other institutions.⁸⁷ In 2007, this organization merged with the Research Institute of Cultural

⁸⁵ It has to be mentioned that the agency plays a role as it oversaw the museums. For this, it was criticized for being a massive hierarchical organization, ignoring the colonial past and promoting an image of Japan as homogenic. Due to limited space, this section cannot expand on this but the discussion shows more research on the hegemonic position of this institution, in particular in regard to the TNM, is needed. See also Pai, *Heritage Management*, 169-171.

⁸⁶ TNM, “11. Tokyo National Museum: The post-war era.”

⁸⁷ See also Independent Administrative Cultural Heritage, *Kokuritsu Bunkazai Kikō: Dokuritsu Kōsei Hōjin (Outline of the National Institutes for Cultural Heritage)* (2007), online file, http://www.tnm.jp/jp/organization/pdf/NICH_gaiyou_jpn_eng_2007.pdf.

Properties to form the Independent Administrative Institution National Institute for Cultural Heritage, thus emphasizing the role of heritage for the several museums.

This history, in combination with the earlier described colonial discourse, is represented in our understanding and information of the items on display and the collection of the TNM – or, to rather say, the lack of the latter. The Ainu and Korean objects exemplify this. In case of artifacts from Hokkaido, the museum received its first collection in 1875. The *Kaitakushi*, the office responsible for cultivating Hokkaido after its annexation and upholding the governmental policies described earlier, was the primary organization to collect them. At first, the institution gathered them to represent Japan at international events, of which the Vienna World Exhibition in 1873 is a well-known example.⁸⁸ The second transfer of Ainu related items took place in 1881, which were also collected by the *Kaitakushi*. Some of these items, later on, returned to Hokkaido. In 1927, Tokugawa Yorisada (1892-1954) donated his private collection of an estimated 10.000 items to the museum, acquired in the Japanese colonies including Hokkaido. His collection consisted of archeological findings. The last person who donated his collection was Heiko Hatsu (unknown date), which consisted of items designed for children.⁸⁹ The lack of provenance characterizes all donations: it is unknown of almost all items when Ainu communities produced them, how they used these objects, and how they came into the possession of the institutions or persons mentioned above. Based on the biography of the collectors and the era they lived, except for Heiko Hatsu, we can assume that they acquired these items in a colonial setting, under the unequal power relations between the Ainu and the Japanese as described earlier.

In case of Korea, a similar legacy is present, namely the colonial mark which extends towards items bequeath after 1945. The imperial office in Korea and persons connected to the Japanese rule secured many of the artifacts currently in possession of the TNM. An example of such a person is Tokugawa Yorisada, mentioned above. In 1912, 1925, and 1927, the museum acquired most of the Korean items currently in possession. These donations consisted of mostly archeological items, corresponding with the focus on the ancient Korean past as described above. Similar to the Ainu items, the provenance of most objects is unknown.⁹⁰ In

⁸⁸ This World Exposition was the first in which Japan participated after the installment of emperor Meiji.

⁸⁹ TNM, *Tokyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan Zuhan Mokuroku: Ainu Minzoku Shiryōhen* (Tokyo: Tokyo National Museum, 1992), XIII.

⁹⁰ Idem., *Tokyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan Zuhan Mokuroku: Chōsen Tōjihen (dōki/Ryōyūtōki)* (Tokyo: Tokyo National Museum, 2004), 169-174.

the 1960s, in light of restoring international relations between Japan and Korea, the museum transferred several items acquired by the imperial office in the early twentieth century.

The collection of Okura Takenosuke (1870-1964) illustrates the colonial legacy of post-war donations. He was active in the electricity business in Korea till the end of the Second World War. Immediately after the war, he returned to Japan with his Korean artifacts, consisting mostly of archeological objects. In 1981, a committee erected to protect his legacy (*Hozonkai*) decided to bestow the collection to the museum, placed later onwards in the archeological section of the *Tōyōkan*.⁹¹

When looking at the representation of Ainu communities in the TNM, it is visible that the Ainu, as part of the Japanese empire, are marginalized and even regularly disappear within the museum. The permanent exhibition on the Ainu showcases this. In the museum, one relatively small room located in the back of the ground floor is reserved for displaying items from Hokkaido, together with Okinawan artifacts. A text hangs at the entrance, which describes these two areas as examples of diverse cultures on the Japanese islands. Nothing is mentioned, however, about the history of how they became part of the Japanese empire. When I visited the museum on the 9th of June, 2017, a small exhibition was being held on the Ainu, maintaining the text mentioned above but only portraying items related to the Ainu. Upon visiting the same room a month later, all items related to the Ainu had disappeared, displaying only Okinawan objects. The sign mentioned above still hung here. This indicates that the permanent exhibition focusing on the Ainu is not permanent at all. Regarding published material on this “permanent” exhibition, only one catalog from 1992 exists. This illustrative guide tells little to nothing about the history of the Ainu but only provides information on the artifacts. As we know little of the provenance of the objects as mentioned above, the guide provides only basic information, such as the year the museum acquired it, the era in which the museum suspects Ainu communities used it, and the made materials. Besides these descriptions, it specifies the collection history of Ainu artifacts. Here, it tells us that all items belong to the Prehistoric section of the museum, conveying a message of the Ainu as a prehistoric people, living in a far past.⁹²

The temporary exhibitions are another example of this marginalization, as the museum organized only one between 1977 and the summer of 2017. Held in 1993, the International

⁹¹ Idem., *Tokyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan Zuhan Mokuroku: Chōsen Tōjihen (dōki/Ryōyūtōki)* (Tokyo: Tokyo National Museum, 2004), 172-174.

⁹² TNM, *Ainu no Kōgei: Tokyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan* (Tokyo: Tokyo National Museum, 1993), XI. This idea resonates in literature on the subject, as discussed in the second section.

Year of Minorities, it focused on Ainu crafts. The showcased artifacts were, interestingly, not from the collection of the TNM but were loans from two ethnographical museums, located in Berlin and Leipzig, Germany. Therefore, it focused on the acquisition of Ainu artifacts by European collectors and these two museums. Although it was mentioned indirectly that the sources of information were ethnically Japanese or *wajin* and that these collectors held misconceptions regarding the culture of the Ainu, the exhibition neglected the impact of the Japanese on this perception.⁹³ Regarding terminology to describe the Ainu, specific terms and adjectives were adopted. An example of this is the regular use of the adjective rare (*Mezurashii*). Interestingly, The word for fine art (*bijutsu*) was not used: instead, the word *Kougei* or variations are used, translatable as crafts. To what extent the Ainu have art or beauty within their produced items is unknown, which is strange given the focus and goals of the museum.⁹⁴

The depiction of Korea in the TNM differs from the description of the Ainu. Prominently present in the permanent and temporary display, it conveys the image of Korea as changeless. Except for the temporary exhibition held in 1992, the eight temporary exhibitions on Korea held between 1977 and 2017 were all in cooperation with Korean institutions.⁹⁵ Overall, all these exhibitions discuss either one of three subjects: Joseon ceramics (1392-1897), Buddhist bronze statues, or Korean history. The justification for choosing these topics is, regarding the ceramics and bronze statues, the perceived beauty of the objects or styles. Discussing Korean history is often related to archeological discoveries. There are two exceptions. In 1985, an exhibition discussed Korean envoys to Japan in the Edo-period (1603-1867), focusing on the reception of Koreans by the Japanese. The museum displayed Japanese objects, which followed Korean descriptions. This exhibition described Korea as a country seeking regular contact with Japan for military support, among others to overcome the Chinese tribute system. However, it also makes clear that Korea was no match for Japan and thus needed to obey the wishes of the Tokugawa military regime.⁹⁶

The other exception is the exhibition held in 2002, which has been till present the only exhibition which mentioned the occupation of Korea by Japan, using the word colony (*Shokuminchi*). Also, it mentioned that Japan influenced Korea culturally, although neglecting

⁹³ Ibid., 25-30, 93.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 94, 101, and 107.

⁹⁵ This is the exhibition *Kaya: Ancient Kingdoms of Korea*, held in 1992. Cooperation was also present in publishing catalogues of the permanent collection. See TNM., *Zuhan Mokuroku Chōsen Tōjihen*, 13, 169-174.

⁹⁶ Idem., *Chōsen Tsūshinshi: Kinsei 200 Nen no Nikkan Bunka Kōryū* (Tokyo: Japan Foundation, 1985), 63-85.

the extent and dynamics of this impact, leaving the audience uninformed about what its effects were. Moreover, it focused on the cultural influence of other countries on Korea, thereby downplaying on the Japanese impact.⁹⁷ This exhibition described Korean culture using words such as *dynamic* and *beauty*, particularly in its ancient past with the discussion of Chinese influences and by mentioning that Korean culture, from 1231 onwards, was formed by war and destruction.⁹⁸ Also, all 176 artifacts showcased date back to the pre-1910s, the official date of Japanese occupation.⁹⁹

The narrative constructed around Bronze Buddhist statues is similar as the TNM emphasizes here the unique culture Korea held in the ancient period and the influence from other regions during and after the Silla period (57 BCE – 935 CE). Often, this is in comparison with similar objects from China and Japan. An example is the exhibition of 1985, which describes these items as examples of the great creativity the Korean people held in this period. However, after the Silla kingdom fell apart, it was stated that the Korean people were not able to develop as well as before in terms of creative production.¹⁰⁰ Another example is the exhibition held in 2016, which exhibited two Buddhist statues, one from Japan and the other from Korea. The exhibition emphasized that visitors should regard both artifacts as the most exquisite Buddhist objects from their times, but strangely enough, the Korean statue was not compared to other Korean objects but instead discussed seventh-century Japanese objects. It does not mention anything regarding other Korean artifacts or cultural production at that time. Indirectly, the discussion of the object implies that this object does not fit the production and creativity that was and is present in Korean society.¹⁰¹

The exhibitions that focus on Korean ceramics show a somewhat different image, namely that the timeframe of cultural development in Korea is broader than merely the ancient past. Particularly the discussion of the permanent collection shows the appreciation of the items as old and rare objects and highlights a distinct Korean style, separate from Chinese

⁹⁷ Ibid., 10-13, 17, 20.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 9-16.

⁹⁹ Idem, *Kankoku no Meihō: 2002 Fifa World Cup Kaii Kinen Nikkan Bunka Kōryō Tokubetsuten* (Tokyo: NHK, 2002), 7-21.

¹⁰⁰ Idem., *Kindōhotoke: Chūgoku / Chōsen / Nihon: Tokubetsuten Zuroku* (Tokyo: Tokyo National Museum, 1988), 3, 295-296.

¹⁰¹ TNM, *Hohoemi no Mihou: futatsu no hank hiyuzō: nikkān kokkō seijūka 50shūnen kinen: tokubetsuten* (Tokyo: Tokyo National Museum and NHK, 2016), 18-19.

influences.¹⁰² In 2014, an exhibition compared Chinese, Korean, and Japanese ceramics, in which presented a timeframe for cultural production in Korea. Through the incorporation of symbols referring to love and the usage of jade blue in the ancient period, the exhibition describes this ancient period as the height of Korean cultural production. However, this peak in cultural production ended by 1274 through the Mongolic invasions of Korea. According to the exhibition, this was visible as the Koreans abolished the use of symbols and jade blue, changed the production method of ceramics, which became thicker and changed in shape. The exhibition described this with a feeling of loss of creativity and culture.¹⁰³

Concluding, we can state that this section showed that an imperial discourse is present in the Tokyo National Museum, one that changed relatively little between 1997 and 2017. The establishment of such a narrative in the museum is partly due to its history, in which it became a vital instrument for the Japanese government for defining Japanese history and heritage. This role continues to today. Furthermore, the history of the many objects in the museum's collections tells that the persons and institutions that acquired these artifacts were strongly tied to the colonial rule and influenced by the imperial narrative. This history and the connected objects have not yet been thoroughly researched yet on this topic, still influencing the way we look at these particular objects. We can see this discourse reflected in the representation of the Ainu and Koreans in the permanent display and temporary exhibitions between 1977 and 2017. Disappearing and often marginalized, the museum describes the Ainu communities as people belonging to a prehistoric past, holding no beauty. In case of the Koreans, the narrative of people stuck in an ancient past, unable to develop from the 13th century onwards, prevails.

¹⁰² In the catalogue of 2007, it references to the one in 2004, as the former continues on the one in 2004. See idem., *Zuhan Mokuroku Chōsen Tōjihen (dōki / Ryōyūtōki)* (Tokyo: Tokyo National Museum, 2004), 9-11, and idem., *Zuhan Mokuroku Chōsen Tōjihen (seiji / funsei / hakuji)* (Tokyo: Tokyo National Museum, 2007), 1.

¹⁰³ Idem, *Higashi Ajia no Hana Tōji Meihinten: 2014Nen Nichūkan Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan Gōdō Kikaku Tokubetsukan* (Tokyo: Tokyo National Museum, 2014), 20-23.

4. A new museum with old items and representation: the National Museum of Ethnology

This section discusses the National Ethnography Museum (*Minpaku*) and argues that this museum has a colonial legacy, visible in its history, collections, and exhibitions held between 1977 and 2017. Therefore, it demonstrates that the imperial discourse is a part of the Japanese museum system in general. Similar to the section on the TNM, the discussion of the collection and exhibitions is limited to the case studies of display of the Ainu and Koreans.

The imperial legacy and *Minpaku* connect because of the founders of the museum: in 1974, Japanese anthropological organizations and scholars who used or were influenced by the colonial regime and powers to conduct their research established the museum. Examples are the Anthropological Society of Nippon (established in 1884) and Japanese Society of Ethnology (established in 1934). Even today, these two are the most significant anthropological organizations in Japan and active in the publication of anthropological research. Both organizations expressed a wish from 1964 onwards to create a museum.¹⁰⁴ Examples of scholars include Umesao Tadao (1920-2010), who taught anthropology at Kyoto University and was director of the museum from 1974 to 1993. His anthropological notion of tree geographical and cultural spaces – the West, East, and Middle – had a significant impact on the study of anthropology in Japan. However, other scholars have also criticized his works by maintaining a colonial hierarchy in his work, in which Umesao views Japan as culturally Western and the West as implicitly superior.¹⁰⁵ From the 1960s onwards, Umesao was active in propagating an anthropological museum, and due to his involvement in the World Exposition held in 1970, the national government granted the construction of a museum on the former space of the same event, currently known as the Expo World Park in Suita, Osaka.¹⁰⁶

The constructions started in 1972 and finished in 1996. The museum hosted its first permanent exhibition in 1977 and slowly expanded from this point onwards. The display of

¹⁰⁴ Minpaku, “Enkaku,” accessed October 3, 2017, <http://www.minpaku.ac.jp/aboutus/history>, and Katsumi Naoko, “The Imperial Past of Anthropology in Japan,” in *A Companion to the Anthropology of Japan*, ed. Jennifer Robertson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 19-24.

¹⁰⁵ See for a more extensive discussion of his ideas and critique Sonia Ryang, *Japan and National Anthropology: A Critique* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 217.

¹⁰⁶ Minpaku, “Enkaku”, and Yoshida Kenji, “ ‘Tōhaku’ and ‘Minpaku’: Within the History of Modern Japanese Civilization: Museum Collections in Modern Japan,” in *Japanese Civilization in the Modern World*, eds. Umesao, Lockyer and Yoshida, 93-96.

Ainu artifacts started in 1981 and Korean objects in 1983. In 1989, the museum organized its first temporary exhibition after the construction of a hall for this purpose. Between 2009 and 2015, the museum renovated all rooms.¹⁰⁷

Since the opening of *Minpaku*, the museum focused strongly on education and research. This was partly due to the joint efforts of the anthropological societies but more so to the works of Umesao. Examples of this focus on researching include the five research departments located in the museum since its foundation and the Graduate School of Advanced Studies the museum started in 1989. The latter, in turn, allowed the institution to play a role in educating future anthropologists. Other examples include the presence of the Japanese Center for Advanced Studies from 1994 to 2005 and a collaborative agreement with the Japanese Society for Cultural Anthropology in 2008. This latter case is related to the wish of *Minpaku* to become more international, creating opportunities for foreign scholars to do research at the museum and hold lectures.

Strangely enough, this focus on education and research mentioned above has not yet had a strong reflective role in the museum, which the lack of knowledge on the museum's collection exemplifies. Although the institution often acquires new objects for display, the basis of the museum's repository originates from other institutions.¹⁰⁸ In 1975, over 21,000 items were transferred from the Tokyo Anthropological Laboratory and Tokyo University, consisting of several collections. One example named in the literature is the collection of Torii Ryūzō (1870-1953), which consisted of over 6,000 objects. Ryūzō executed ethnographic surveys in the Japanese colonies and used his political influence to acquire these objects, made possible due to the colonial setting.¹⁰⁹ As shown by the purchase of the George Brown Collection in 1985-1986, the impact of colonialism is also visible in the purchases by the museum. Consisting of over 3000 artifacts from Oceania, this British collector took advantage of the presence of British colonial power in the Pacific to acquire these artifacts. The purchase by *Minpaku* raised questions regarding this colonial legacy, as communities in the Pacific criticized the plundering of Brown. In turn, the raised worries were addressed in a special temporary exhibition on this collection and later on in the permanent exhibition, incorporating

¹⁰⁷ To what extent this impacts the display of Ainu and Korea will be discussed later onwards, as it changed the exhibition space within the museum.

¹⁰⁸ *Minpaku*, Enkaku.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, and Pai, *Heritage Management*, 164. For other examples, I refer to Yoshida Kenji, “‘Tōhaku’ and ‘Minpaku’”, 88-93 and 95-101.

this discussion and making visitors aware of the debate surrounding this purchase.¹¹⁰ This reflection, however, is missing in the display of other artifacts.

Taking the case study of the Ainu, we can see a development in the ways they are represented, giving room to the agency of these communities, nowadays as well as discussing the Ainu in historical perspective. The display of Ainu artifacts in the permanent exhibition between 1977 and 2017 highlights this. First included in the museum in 1981, the museum described Ainu communities using two narratives: as ancient, exemplified by their forms of religion, as well as suppressed people, which happened in the Meiji-period. Here, an image arose of the Ainu as a culture stuck in an ancient past and being solely victims. These comments on the permanent exhibition have also been raised by authors such as Pai and Sandra Niessen, albeit relatively short or based on relatively little sources.¹¹¹ The permanent exhibition received an update in 1986, in which the description mentioned above focused more strongly on the traditional cultures and differences between the several Ainu communities.¹¹²

A second revision took place in 2000. Here, a different focus was noticeable, namely focusing on the active resistance of Ainu members in protecting their culture. Furthermore, the museum conveyed the wish to focus on the dynamics and particularities of the Ainu cultures and therefore wished to increase cooperation with Ainu community members.¹¹³ However, a paradox is visible here. Between 2009 and 2015, the museum was completely renovated, which was a perfect opportunity to revise the permanent exhibition once more and incorporate these wishes. Sadly, this has not happened. Therefore, the permanent exhibition does not mention

¹¹⁰ Minpaku, "The George Brown Collection," accessed October 4, 2017,

<http://www.r.minpaku.ac.jp/GBC/index.html> and Helen Gardner, "Controversial Collection: The George Brown Exhibition, 10 March-31 May 1999," *Minpaku Anthropology Newsletter*, no. 9 (1999), 7-8.

¹¹¹ Sandra Niessen, "The Ainu in Minpaku: A Representation of Japan's Indigenous People at the National Museum of Ethnology," *Museum Anthropology* 18, no. 3 (1994), 23-25, idem, "Representing the Ainu Reconsidered," *Museum Anthropology* 20, no. 3 (1996), 132-144, in particular 132-135, and Pai, *Heritage Management*, 165. In turn, the discussion of Niessen received critique from several staff members of the museum. See Kazuyoshi Ohtsuka, "Exhibiting Ainu Culture at Minpaku: A Reply to Sandra A. Niessen," *Museum Anthropology* 20, no. 3 (1996), 108-119 and Akitoshi Shimizu, "Cooperation, not Domination: A Rejoinder to Niessen on the Ainu Exhibition at Minpaku," *Museum Anthropology* 20, no. 3 (1996), 120-131.

¹¹² Minpaku, *Kokuritsu Minzokugaku Hakubutsukan Tenji Annai* (Suita: Senri Foundation, 1986), 1 and 161-165.

¹¹³ Idem, *Kokuritsu Minzokugaku Hakubutsukan Tenji gaido* (Suita: Senri Foundation, 2000), 93-100.

the developments that took place after 2000, in which substantial changes took place such as the recognition of the Ainu as indigenous people in 2008.¹¹⁴

The five temporary exhibitions held between 1993 and 2017, however, tell us a somewhat different story, in which they focus stronger on the agency of the Ainu. An example is an exhibition held in 1993, which states that the public needs to regard Ainu communities as groups of people who have a unique culture, of which the motifs in clothing is an example, and enjoy an active economic life, of which trade is most prominent. As such, the Ainu should not be viewed as mere victims or former indigenous people (*senjūmin*) but as a community that holds a distinct identity and who can take care of themselves (*yūben*).¹¹⁵ This view set the tone for all temporary exhibitions focusing on the Ainu onwards, except one. In 2007, a temporary exhibition focused on several Ainu-themed books from the 17th century onwards, written and drawn by ethnically Japanese or *wajin*, and several foreigners. These works, all from *Minpaku's* collection, are still regarded as indispensable to our understanding of pre-modern Ainu culture, as they are one of the few sources discussing Ainu culture between the 17th to 19th century. However, instead of describing merely the content of these books, the exhibition focused on the bias the authors held when they tried to translate the lifestyle of these communities and how this resonates in the works.¹¹⁶ This exhibition shows a self-reflection on the historical view of the Ainu and questions their usability as historical sources.

The latest example, an exhibition held in 2016, seems to be similar in this regard. Here, a focus is on the image Europeans and Japanese held on the Ainu from the Meiji period onwards but also explicitly discusses the agency of Ainu communities in the late Tokugawa period (1603-1854). For instance, it discusses revolts against the Japanese in the late 18th century but also describes the loyalty several Ainu chiefs felt towards the *wajin*. This latter comment sketches a complex but diverse picture of the Ainu community in which different persons exist

¹¹⁴ Idem, *Kokuritsu Minzokugaku Hakubutsukan: Tenji gaido* (Suita: National Museum of Ethnology, 2016), 79-84.

¹¹⁵ Idem., *Ainu Moshiri: Minzoku Bunsama kara Mita Ainu no Sekai* (Suita: National Museum of Ethnology, 1993), in particular 3 and 10-31.

¹¹⁶ Idem, *Kichōsho ni Miru Ainu no Bunka: Dainikai Minpaku Toshoshitsuzō kichō toshō Tenji: Kaikan 30 Shūnenkinen Kigakuten* (Suita: National Museum of Ethnology, 2007), 3-8.

with various interests and choices, instead of implying a prototype or stereotype of what an Ainu is.¹¹⁷ The focus on the agency of the members of these Ainu communities highlights this.

Concluding, the permanent and temporary exhibitions on the Ainu show a development in the representation of these communities between 1981 and 2017. Although in the permanent display, an image of the Ainu as nothing but victims stuck in the far past was present, from 2000 onwards, the focus on the agency of Ainu groups allowed for a more balanced view. However, it still neglects current developments of the last twenty years, which is odd considering the renovation of the hall and display in the period 2009 to 2015. The past temporary exhibitions strengthen the latter image, specifically from 1993 onwards. Instead of focusing on victimhood, a discussion on uniqueness and dynamics is visible. This view is strengthened by the most recent exhibition, in which not only attention is given to resistance and revolt against the Japanese in pre-Meiji times but also to cooperation and in particular the agency of the Ainu community members.

The display of Korean artifacts, however, shows an entirely different image: although the ways *Minpaku* represents the Koreans changes, the exhibitions tend to stay static. Within the display, the image arises of the Koreans as a people of an ancient past and, although influenced in modern times by other countries, still stuck in this history. In particular, the permanent exhibition emphasizes this narrative. First displayed in 1983, the museum emphasized the view on the Korean people as traditional, defined by the influence of the ancient Silla culture. Ancient religions, especially Shamanism, were therefore highly respected. As such, the Korean people became protective of their culture, only allowing influence by China in ancient times and Western countries in most recent times.¹¹⁸ This focus on the ancient past is relatively strange for an ethnological museum, as the exhibition neglects the period after the fall of the Silla Kingdom till now. The museum staff seems to have acknowledged this, as in 2000 the permanent exhibition was revised, emphasizing the concepts of religion and contemporary Korean society, allowing for a discussion on other religions present in Korea, especially Buddhism and Catholicism. Moreover, within the catalog, the museum expressed a wish to discuss Japanese culture in Korea and ethnically Koreans in Japan (*Zainichi*).¹¹⁹ By

¹¹⁷ This exhibition was not only held in *Minpaku* but also in the Hokkaido Museum and the National Historical and Ethnological Museum (*Reihaku*). See also Hokkaido Museum, *Isyū Rezzō: Ezochi Imēji wo Meguru Hito, Mono, Sekai* (Sapporo: Hokkaido Shinbunsha, 2015), in particular 4, 6, 10-15, 72-75, 98, and 142.

¹¹⁸ Idem., *Kokuritsu Minzokugaku Hakubutsukan Tenji Annai* (Suita: Senri Foundation, 1986), 135-143.

¹¹⁹ Idem., *Kokuritsu Minzokugaku Hakubutsukan Tenji Gaido* (Suita: Senri Foundation, 2000), 69-74.

2012, the permanent exhibition was changed and started to emphasize that the Korean society needs to be viewed as a multilayered community, meaning we need to take into regard the different languages and cultural expressions present in Korea. From the same year onwards, the exhibition included information on the production, usage, and collection history of the displayed objects. Interestingly, this change also started to change the used vocabulary, reflected in the expression by the museum's wish to discuss the colonial culture (*Shokuminchiki No Bunka*) and stating that Japan has had an impact on Korean society. However, what this influence entailed was not mentioned.¹²⁰ Curiously, as the museum renovated the Ainu exhibition hall in 2014, this wish could have been incorporated with the reinstatement of the display of the Ainu artifacts, something which the museum failed to do so.¹²¹

The image that prevails in the temporary exhibitions on Korea differs entirely from this development. This contrast is partly due to scarcity: the museum organized just two exhibitions focusing on Korean culture, held only recently, namely in 2010 and 2015. The first temporary exhibition only discussed Korea shortly, as it focused on cross-cultural dynamics within Asia. Here, it emphasized two aspects: the ancient Silla Kingdom and the political situation around 2010. The exhibition ignored over 1200 years of history. Even further, it discussed these developments in Korean history without taking the impact of other countries into regard. Neglecting this is a paradox to the earlier stated goal of the exhibition, which was to discuss cross-border relationships.¹²²

The other temporary exhibition, held in 2015, focused on the origin and development of Japanese and Korean cuisine. Here, it discussed the cooking cultures, focusing on their shared history due to Buddhist influences. The comparison, however, stops here. We can see that the exhibition mentioned the cross-cultural impact of both cuisines and that it neglected the influence of colonial culture on the development of Korean cooking culture. Ignoring this is strange, given that more and more research is pursued on this topic.¹²³ The only Japanese

¹²⁰ Idem., *Kokuritsu Minzokugaku Hakubutsukan: Tenji gaido* (Suita: National Museum of Ethnology, 2012), 66.

¹²¹ This as the permanent exhibition guide has not changed at all. See also idem, *Kokuritsu Minzokugaku Hakubutsukan Tenji Gaido* (Suita: National Museum of Ethnology, 2016).

¹²² The theme was crossing borders and focused on dynamics within Asia. See also National Museum of Japanese History, *Ajia no Kyōkai wo Koete: Ningen Bunka Kenkyū Kikō Rentai Tenji: Kikakuten* (Sakura: National Museum of Japanese History, 2010), 20-37.

¹²³ Examples include Katarzyna Cwiertka, *Cuisine, Colonialism, and Cold War: Food in Twentieth-Century Korea* (London: Reaktion Books, 2012), 33-47 and Keun-sik Jung, "Colonial Modernity and the Social History of Chemical Seasoning in Korea," *Korea Journal* 45, no. 2 (2005), p. 22-26.

influence on Korean food culture mentioned in this exhibition was convenience stores, which the exhibition compared to the American influences on post-war Korea. Similar to the exhibition in 2010, a noticeable gap is present in the discussion of Korean history, ignoring among others the late nineteenth and early twentieth century or Japanese colonial regime.¹²⁴

Considering the above, we can conclude that *Minpaku* represented the Ainu and Koreans between 1977 and 2017 entirely different. In case of the representation of the Ainu, the display changed prominently in these forty years, from propagating the image of the Ainu as people stuck in the far past and victims of the Japanese government to the recent description of a community that is dynamic and in which its members possess strong agency. In case of the representations of Koreans, however, the image portrayed from the 1980s onwards of a community stuck in a far past, still prevails. Although there is a wish to change this image and focus on dynamics within Korean society, this has not yielded results. The exhibitions recognize the impact of other cultures on the Korean, but at the same time ignores the role and impact Japan has had. The representation contains a paradox with the mentioning of the colonial period in recent times but its impact and effects marginalized. Contrary to the Ainu, the exhibition does not provide room for the agency of Korean people.

¹²⁴ Minpaku, *Kankoku Shoku Bunka Dokuhon* (Suita: National Museum of Ethnology, 2015), 3-25.

Conclusion

This thesis sought to provide answers to the question to what extent an imperial discourse still lingers on in Japanese museums nowadays. In particular, it wanted to show that this is the case and that it goes beyond the institutions created during the colonial period and includes museums established after the Second World War and the imploding of the Japanese imperial empire. Therefore, it examined two museums as case studies: the Tokyo National Museum and the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka.

First, it discussed the state of historiographical and museological research on our current understanding of museums, focusing on European and Japanese examples. Here, we saw the differences between the focus of study within both disciplines: the historical literature tends to focus on the representation of war and war memory, while the study of museology discusses the insights from different disciplines but, at the same time, presents a more a-historical view. Both disciplines, though, have been influenced by among others the theoretical approaches laid down by Benedict Anderson and James Clifford.

Second, through the discussion of historical literature, this thesis discussed the imperial discourse of Japan towards the Ainu and Koreans. As the literature showed, there was no uniform system of one imperial discourse of Japan, but a plurality of discourses existed, creating a hierarchy in the colonial system. While the Japanese viewed the Ainu as a community that was at the same time included and excluded from the framework of “Japanese,” this differed for Koreans. Although there was a discussion to what extent Koreans were related to the Japanese, this was all seen as something belonging to a far past. The Koreans needed to become Japanese, meaning they were different from the start. Also with the discussion of the post-war situation between the Japanese and Ainu, as well as Japanese and Koreans, the literature questions to what extent the Japanese society has decolonized. The provided examples demonstrate this, such as the reluctance of the Japanese government to acknowledge the Ainu as late as 2008, as well as denying to recognize war atrocities.

Third, this thesis focused on two case studies: the Tokyo National Museum and the National Museum of Ethnology. As was visible from the discussion of the TNM, colonial discourses are present in this museum. The ways the Ainu are and are not represented, often marginalized in the institution, as well as the display on Korean artifacts, narrating the Korean people as being stuck in an ancient past and unable to develop, demonstrate this. The museum neglects the development both groups experienced before, during and, in case of Korea, after

the colonization by Japan. Some of the reasons that strengthen these narratives are the history of the TNM, particularly its role as a political tool in defining heritage and Japanese history, as well as the problems surrounding the decolonization of Japan, questioned by several historians to what extent this process has even begun. Another reason is the unknown provenance of many items and the story they tell as artifacts collected through the structures of the Japanese empire.

As shown by the case study of the National Museum of Ethnology, there is a difference in how this museum regards the Ainu and Koreans, a contrast which emphasizes the hierarchal structure constructed during imperial times but also allows for a revision. As visible from the case study, from the 2000s onwards, the museum integrated the concept of agency in the representation of Ainu communities, allowing for a more diverse display and alternated the view on the Ainu. To what extent cooperation with members of Ainu communities influences this is unknown. In case of the exhibitions focusing on the Koreans, the narrative of people stuck in an ancient past prevails. Here, it used the same rhetoric as found in the TNM. Although the museum expressed a wish to discuss the Japanese occupation and its legacy, recent exhibitions have shown that this wish has not yet been realized. Based on the discussion of the history of the museum, this thesis suggests that is because of the lack of self-reflection by the museum on the ways it displays the Korean artifacts, as well as the lack of knowledge on its collections. The exhibition on the reflection of the Ainu books in 2007 shows self-reflection is possible. Although the museum has addressed the colonial connotation of newly acquired items, this still needs to be extended towards the colonial legacy of the objects already in possession of the museum and on permanent display, not only of Ainu artifacts but broader.

Given all above, this thesis concludes that Japanese museums inherited the imperial discourses, even the museums established after the eras Japan occupied Korea and Taiwan. However, as the exhibitions on the Ainu in *Minpaku* shows, challenging these colonial narratives is possible. The museums can question the used vocabulary and the imperial discourses present, and at the same time portray a more balanced narrative. Focusing on the concept of agency could aid this. The case study of the representation of the Ainu in *Minpaku* can thus provide an example for tackling the issues regarding the display of the Koreans in the same museum, hopefully fulfilling the wish of including a discussion on the colonial period, as well as the problems in the exhibitions in the Tokyo National Museum.

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