Playing the Race Card in Japanese Governed Taiwan, or: Anthropometric Photographs as 'Shape-Shifting Jokers'

Paul D. Barclay   Lafayette College

14th European Association of Japanese Studies International Conference
August 27-30th, 2014
Paazeh Naheh (ca. 1880-ca. 1910)

Formosan Head Hunter

Barbaric Woman

Savage Type

Taroko Tribe woman of Taidong

Formosan Belle

Shenkeng, Wulai Woman, Taiyal Tribe
Atayal Facial Tattoo Culture

Ear Ornaments

An Introduction to the Weaving Culture of the Atayal Tribe
Race Cards
A Strict Construction

Race Cards (and anthropometric photographs)

- Were part of an international scientific project to collect data on races of the world in metropolitan “centers of calculation” for analysis, ranking, sorting, etc.
- Emphasize somatic, bodily contours for the purpose of racial classification
- “Race”=“Scientific Racism”=“Biological Racism” (different from using culture, folkways, or other criteria for registering difference/community)
Mori Ushinosuke (1877-1926)
Carleton Coon, *The Races of Europe* (1939)
Colonial Anthropology

James R. Ryan, *Picturing Empire* p. 150.

Objectified “Specimens”

Elizabeth Edwards, *Anthropology and Photography* p. 101

James R. Ryan, *Picturing Empire* p. 152
Torii Ryūzō, May 1912
Main Point

• The proliferation, durability, and long-term effects of Paazeh Naheh’s portrait cannot be explained by a formal approach to anthropometric photography as an instrument of colonial domination and biological typification. Such an approach cannot explain:
  – Why Paazeh’s image, and not others, was so prevalent.
  – Why this portrait is still reproduced by anthropologists themselves, even though race science itself is discredited.
Argument

• Non-photographic evidence is required to explain the singularity, efficacy, and nature of the photograph. This includes:
  – Specific conditions under which the photograph was produced, displayed, circulated, and consumed
  – An examination of its predecessor, successor, and adjacent photographs (genealogy and excavation)
  – An analysis of its afterlife
WJT Mitchell, *Seeing Through Race*

• "race is the ambiguous medicine/poison, the pharmakon, for inflicting or alleviating the pain caused by racism."

• “race” is not *only* a pseudo-scientific, top-down intellectual construct; it is also a folk category, and a lived experience—

• Race is a *medium* that encompasses a number of related, and not always distinct, means of establishing boundaries between groups, and homogeneity within groups
"The cold north pole" of race: species

"sociologically speaking, [Taiwan Aborigines] are indeed human beings (*jinrui*), but looked at from the viewpoint of international law, they resemble animals (*dōbutsu no gotoki mono*).” — Mochiji Rokusaburo (1902)
Studio Portraits, Ethnically Indeterminate 'savages' and 'headhunters'
Before Postcards: Studio Portraits of Male "Kusshaku Warrior" 1896-1900
Ino Kanori’s “Atayalization” of the “屈尺 Head-hunter"

1898 Bulletin for Study of Taiwan Aborigines

1900 Paris Universal Expo
Another Example

1907 Tokyo Industrial Exposition
Mori Ushinosuke
1902-1903
Quchi/Kusshaku "tribes"
屈尺蕃

Wulai

Rimogan

Map showing the location of the Quchi/Kusshaku "tribes" in Taiwan.
Atayalization of Paazeh Naheh

1915/1918 *Taiwan banzokufu* (Mori Ushinosuke)
plate 23 (cropped magnified), plate 35 (frontal only)
Atayalization of Yūgai Watan
April, 1903
Osaka Industrial Exhibition 1903

- Draws over 5 million visitors from March-August 1903
- Japan’s first International Exhibition
- Goto Shinpei wants to “advertise” Taiwan—obtains funds for a large “Taiwan Pavilion/Hall” on the grounds
- Photographs of Taiwan Indigenous Peoples prominently displayed, and moved to St. Louis in 1904 (over 20 million visitors)
Russo-Japanese War Postcard Boom

1904-1905

~ 1000 sets produced

~ 4500 different postcards

Print runs up to 700,000
Effects: Geobody within a Geobody

1905 Census of Taiwan

1900 “Conditions among Taiwan Aborigines
Conclusions

• The ethnic cartography to which anthropometric postcards contributed were commercially viable, but went against some Japanese visions of Taiwan’s future

• Their success advanced a vision of Taiwan bifurcated into “individuals” (Han Chinese) and collectives (Indigenous Tribes).

• The administrative expression of this bifurcation has continued down to the present day, both for better and for worse