

Taiwan and its Self-Images: The Case of Osaka Exhibition in 1903*

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ABSTRACT

In the 1903 Osaka Exhibition, imperial Japan established a Taiwan Pavilion to show off her accomplishments in colonial enterprise. Like those reports of Japanese colonial bureaucrats from Taiwan to the homeland, the primary goal of the exhibits in the Taiwan Pavilion was to boast of Japan's successful colonial rule. However, there were several bureaucrats of the Taiwan Government-general who felt marginalized by the metropolitan authorities. And such peculiar mentality was reflected in some of the exhibitions in the Taiwan Pavilion. For instance, the Japanese colonial officials took pains to minimize the display of opium-smoking and foot-binding because they were concerned that such uncivilized habits might cause the Japanese to misconstrue that Taiwan was a land of savages. Despite their well-intentioned efforts, the Taiwan Pavilion at the Osaka Exhibition generated little or no interests among the Japanese people at large. The exhibition failed to change Japanese negligence toward and contempt for Taiwan. It was due to such disappointment and malcontent that ironically led the Japanese who lived in Taiwan to identify with the Taiwanese people. This "common identity" later developed into what was known as the "Taiwan-oriented Regionalism" in the 1930s.

Keywords: 1903 Osaka Exhibition, the Taiwan Pavilion, Japanese colonial bureaucrats, image of Taiwan, Taiwan-oriented Regionalism

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