

**From Yokohama to Manchuria:  
a photography-based investigation of nostalgia in  
the construction of Japanese landscape**

**Volume I**

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## **Abstract**

**This practice-based research examines, analyses and responds to the use of nostalgia as an ideological mechanism in the development of Japanese national identity and as an integral aspect of modernity.**

**In discussions of the construction of national identities, whether in terms of 'narrative' or material culture, 'image' and 'vision' have generally been used as metaphorical terms. This thesis investigates the use of nostalgia in photography as a *de facto* visual construction of national space. Three groups of archive photographic material are examined; landscapes of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century genre of *Yokohama shashin*, or tourist photo, pictorial photography of the Taishō-period (1912 – 1926), and propaganda photography produced in Japanese-occupied Manchuria from the 30s and 40s. Nostalgia is then investigated in contemporary sites of leisure and consumerism, where it is considered as elemental in attempts to redefine the identity of Japan as a post-industrial society.**

**In exploring the use of nostalgia in different historical periods and styles of photography, the primary objective of this research is not to provide a critique of the formal attributes of these images. It is rather to examine, both theoretically and visually, nostalgia's reoccurrence as a mechanism of historical erasure, in which each manifestation posits its own version of authenticity.**

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## Note

Japanese words and place names that appear in English language dictionaries e.g. Tokyo, are not italicised and do not have macrons. Japanese names are given in the Japanese order, with the family name first, though in discussing the writer Natsume Sōseki I have applied the convention of referring to him as Sōseki, by which he is commonly known. For the sake of clarity I also refer to the Fukuhara brothers by their first names Shinzō and Rosō. Chinese proper nouns are rendered in *pinyin* with the Japanese colonial transliteration given in brackets if clarification is necessary, or, in the case of direct quotes, given in the form used by the author. The term Manchuria, though slightly anachronistic in today's geography, is used as a brief way of referring to the provinces of north-east China that were inaugurated as the state of Manchukuo in 1932.

This thesis is in two volumes to enable viewing of reference images and documentation of practical work while reading the text. Page references for illustrations refer to volume two, however, the following illustrations can be found in volume one:

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**'My story will be faithful to reality,  
or at least to my personal recollection of reality, which is the same thing.'**

***Ulrikke*, Jorge Luis Borges**

## **Introduction**

The history of landscape photography in Japan, from its beginnings in the mid-nineteenth century right up to contemporary practice, contains within it a history of attempts to romanticise a pre-modern territory free of industry and technology. This thesis explores the ideological implications of this nostalgic gaze, and offers an aesthetic response to the stylistic conventions of landscape photography as it develops from the tourist photo of the 1870s to its proposal as fine art in the Taishō period (1912-1926) and finally its use as propaganda to support colonial expansion into Manchuria during the twenties and thirties.

Nostalgia is a sentiment that, because it surfaces as a personal sense of longing, can give us a sense of our own identity. At the same time nostalgia can effect that identity to be merged into a collective sense of belonging. The work of this thesis and the accompanying photographic practice has been to investigate this latter aspect of nostalgia, and its codification in words and pictures as a social phenomenon. The impetus for this comes from my interest in exploring the photograph 'not as a genre of art but a medium' (Mitchell, 1994. p.5). Correspondingly, nostalgia in my own photographic work is a subject of scrutiny, rather than something that I have wished to evoke. I have also concentrated on explicating my decisions on content, and how it relates to my research of archival sources, rather than describing the subjective history of how each image came into being or its formal aspects. Acknowledging that elements of style and content develop in response to changes in circumstances and technology, but that pictorial landscape photography can be consistently characterised by an aversion to the artefacts of modernity and a preference for rural subjects, this medium will be examined in the context of its utility to projects of modernity and national identity as opposed to a form of self-expression. By examining the lengthy period from its origins in the latter part of the nineteenth century to the 1940s I hope to show how Japanese photography has, at different times and in different ways, attempted to establish its own internal coherence, both as an art practice and as an ideological formulation.



The purpose of this investigation is to propose a thematic connectedness between discrete moments of cultural production. Not so much describing an historical or aesthetic development as noting the recurrence of nostalgia, where each manifestation, in creating its own dream of paradise, is posited on eliding memory and history in the construction of ideal spaces. My practical work has been an experimentation with simulating pictorial styles of photography of the Meiji, Taishō and early Shōwa eras and also creating new work in a critical response to the archive sources. This combined approach of theory and practice attempts to build upon the archival research of collectors, curators and art historians whose work has mainly focused on issues of biographical history, chronology, attribution and influence, and to add to the growing interest in assessing Japanese photography as visual culture<sup>1</sup>, with a concomitant application of social, political and economic analyses of cultural production. It is also, in part, a response to the problematic nature of extant nineteenth century photography, of which 'interpretive studies built solely on a foundation of authorship and attribution will ultimately be incomplete, if not altogether inaccurate' (Hockley, 2003, p.47)

The study of Japanese photography both within and outside Japan is, to date, a relatively under-researched field, with theoretical assessments only sporadically occurring in exhibition catalogues and conference papers and struggling to make a proportionate appearance in English language histories of photography. Illustrated volumes of pre-World War II Japanese photography published in English are mainly concerned with the tourist photo of the Meiji-period. This reflects the fact that tourist photos are still to be found in the countries to which they were originally exported; either amongst collectors, for whom there is an active market, or in museum and university collections. Examples of volumes that have arisen from these sources are *Souvenir's from Japan* (Winkel, 1991) based on the private Schelling collection, which was purchased in auction by Ukiyo-e Books in Leiden, *A Timely Encounter* (Banta and Taylor, 1998), based around the Bigelow and Knox collections at the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology and Wellesley College Museum, and *Early Japanese images* (Bennett, 1996) based on images that have passed through Bennett's business as an art dealer and collector. Short essays in these volumes

are primarily concerned with the historical context of the images, attribution, the relationship between photography and *ukiyo-e* (woodblock prints) and biographical detail of the photographers.

The two largest Japanese-published histories of photography, the 12 volume *Nihon shashin zenshū* (*Complete History of Japanese Photography*, Iizawa, 1986-1989) and the 40 volume *Nihon no shashinka* (*Japanese Photographers*), published in the 80s and 90s respectively, add to these topics issues of technique. However these volumes are primarily aimed at showcasing images and have limited text. The vast majority of Japanese books on archive photography tend towards this format, collecting together photos as local history or themed content such as *Furushashin de miru kaidō to shukubamachi* (*Highways and Townscapes as Seen Through Old Photographs*, Kōta, 2001), which comprehensively matches together early photographs with corresponding Ukiyo-e prints from the same vantage point, and *Ikokujin no mita bakumatsu meiji Japan* (*Bakumatsu and Meiji Japan as Seen by Foreigners*, Asuke, 2003). Lengthier and more focussed discussions of discrete historical periods can be found in *Bakumatsu meiji yokohama shashinkan monogatari* (*The story of Yokohama Photo Studios in the Bakumatsu and Meiji Periods*, Saitō, 2004), *Shashin-ga ron; shashin to kaiga no kekkon* (*Critique of Photography as Painting: the Marriage of Photography and Painting*, Kinoshita, 1996) and *Toshi no shisen: nihon no shashin 1920-30 nendai* (*The gaze of the City: Japanese photography 1920-30*, Iizawa, 1989). The English-language version of *A Century of Japanese Language Photography* (Japan Photographer's Association, 1981), using images from the wide-ranging collection of the Japan Photographer's Association that shows the huge variety and experimentation of Japanese photography. The thoughtful introduction by John Dower discusses the impact and significance of these images as products, artwork and documents and their relation to rise of modernism, also connecting movements in photography to political and social change. The most substantial critical discussions by Japanese writers in the English-language appear in *The History of Japanese Photography* (Wilkes Tucker, 2003), which collects together much of the expertise on genres of photography that can be found dispersed among Japanese exhibition catalogues.

This substantial volume intentionally addresses the conspicuous absence of pre-war Japanese photography in supposed 'world' histories of photography, possibly a subject of interest to art historians or students of post-colonial theory. The issue is duly noted in the introduction, when Wilkes Tucker's asks, "Why are non-American or European image-makers represented only minimally in photographic histories? The reasons include language barriers and cultural and political affinities as well as the fact that countries outside the United States and Europe have been slower to assemble their own photographic histories." (Wilkes Tucker, 2003. p.2). Some of the difficulties in constructing a history of early Japanese photography are briefly discussed in my first chapter on the tourist photo, however, the 'cultural and political affinities' that have kept Japanese photography on the fringes of a Euro-American dominated art history would merit greater study than can be afforded by this thesis.

In order to answer the main research question, that of investigating the functions of nostalgia, a variety of textual sources have been used:

- English language sociological and politico-historical scholarship of the relevant period
- English language essays in Japanese catalogues
- English language scholarship of Japanese photography
- late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century English language travel journals, guide books and news publications
- translated Japanese scholarship on photography
- Japanese propaganda material of the 1930s and 40s originally published in English
- contemporary critical theory

With these resources I have attempted to connect historical and sociological research with photography, where previous scholarship on cultural production has dealt with issues of national identity and modernism in connection to painting, folk art and crafts (*mingei*), design and literature.

The first chapter examines the nostalgic gaze of the 19th century tourist photo, or *Yokohama shashin* as performing the dual functions of extending the Japanese tradition of famous places (*meisho*) in the new medium of photography and simultaneously providing

a visual representation of a recurring description in contemporaneous foreign travel writing of Japan as a fairy- or wonderland. The tourist photo, a genre initiated by western photographers and later pursued by Japanese practitioners, is thus considered both as a manifestation of a western desire to refuse Japan's growing status as a modernising nation and as an internal response to the issues of creating a national identity in the face of increasing westernisation. In the second part of this chapter I discuss the production of the practical work related to my analysis of the tourist photo. This is a simulacrum of a tourist album, in which the original form and content of the source material has been partially mimicked or replicated in an attempt to test the boundaries of the medium and investigate the workings of nostalgia. This work also plays on the possibility of the simulacrum challenging the original photography's status as 'authentic'.

The second chapter discusses Taishō pictorialism as the application of nostalgia to rural sites unrelated to the *meisho* tradition and places the new 'art' photography in the social and economic background of an increasingly urban industrial society. The romanticisation of the rural environment, popularised by Hidaka Chōtarō and the Nagoya-based Ai-Yū Photo Club, and attempts to define a unique Japanese sensibility in photography in the development of the Fukuhara style are considered as a crisis over identity. The practical work discussed in the subsequent section explores the contemporary possibilities of the soft-focus pictorial image.

The third chapter examines the use of rural landscape photography in promoting Manchuria as a colonial utopia, contrasting the work of South Manchuria Railway photographer Fuchikami Hakuyō with propaganda texts, travel journals of the 1920s and 30s and contemporary recollections. The colonial gaze is considered as a reapplication of the nostalgic gaze of the 19<sup>th</sup> century tourist photo, in which Japan has now become a modern centre relegating outlying colonial territories to a lower stage of social development. My photography in this section depicts sites in north-east China related to the Japanese occupation, particularly those with an overt history of utopian idealism, and

engages with the propaganda vision of Manchuria as a vast fertile space that could accommodate narratives of rural paradise alongside projections of technological modernity.

The fourth chapter deals with manifestations of nostalgia in contemporary Japan, and explores confluences of histories and cultures in commercial and public spaces. A section on theme parks examines the utility of nostalgia in the 1980s 'resort boom', in which sites of leisure were emblematic of a systematic attempt to create a post-industrial society. The historical theme park, where the past of both Japan and foreign cultures are reconstructed as sentimentalised risk-free playgrounds, is considered as a present-day variation of Japan's reduction to the diminutive status of a 'fairyland' by 19<sup>th</sup> early 20<sup>th</sup> century foreign travellers. A second section on shopping arcades takes its cue from Benjamin's *Arcades Project*, in which Benjamin considers 19<sup>th</sup> century Paris arcades as a dream space of modernism that is predicated on the conflation of nostalgic historical representations with modern technology and commodity fetishism. The contemporary shopping arcade, a common feature of the urban Japanese environment, is presented as a space thematically connected to the historical theme park as a 'world in miniature' (Benjamin, 2003, p.31) that employs nostalgic design features to legitimise shopping within a broader context of cultural experience.

The final section proposes a visual conclusion to the issues addressed in this thesis, which, as a photography-based project, aims to produce theoretically validated work that is an original contribution to contemporary practice.

## **Notes**

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<sup>1</sup> The Association of Asian Studies annual conference lists no papers on Japanese photography from 1995 to 2002, 1 in 2003 and 5 in 2004, with one panel entirely devoted to critical issues in Japanese photography.

## 1.1 *Yokohama shashin* and the visualisation of fairyland

### The field of early photography

The "good old times" have ever had their attractions for all races and kindreds of men; and however high the civilization a people has reached, it is a kind of instinct - it can hardly be reason - to regret that which has passed away ... In Yedo, nothing is so common as to hear the citizens lament the times that have only just come to an end.

*The Far East. Vol II No.24, p.1*

Among the huge range of possible uses for the magical ability to reproduce the world on a piece of paper, the most prolific photographic activity in Japan in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century resembled the anxious gaze of a man (it was an exclusively male gaze) about to go blind, and longingly capturing a last look at a world soon to disappear into memory. This chapter examines the nostalgic gaze of the landscape tourist photo, often hand-tinted by *ukiyo-e* (woodblock print) craftsmen and bound into elaborate lacquerware albums; a genre posited on the utility of the photograph as an historical document, but in which history is primarily used as a resource through which the present can be defined. These images are also considered in relation to foreign travel literature of the same period and how the genre also provided a new medium for an older native tradition of landscape viewing.

To start in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the persistence of this nostalgic gaze can be seen in the popularity of the 2004 Hollywood film *The Last Samurai*. Directed by Edward Zwick, from an original story by John Logan, the film follows the fortunes of a disillusioned alcoholic American army captain Nathan Algren, played by Tom Cruise, who is recruited to train the new Meiji emperor's conscript army in the use of modern firearms. In his first confrontation with his enemy Algren is captured by the leader of the anti-western samurai rebellion Katsumoto, a character loosely based on Saigō Takamori, the 19<sup>th</sup> century samurai leader of the Satsuma rebellion. Fascinated by his foreign foe, Katsumoto allows Algren to live and takes him to his mountain retreat. The greater part of the film is taken up by Algren's stay in the pastoral setting of Katsumoto's village in which he learns the practice of swordsmanship and the warrior's code of *bushidō*.

Life in Katsumoto's village is nothing short of arcadian; food and drink are plentiful, and life appears to be spent in spiritual contemplation and the perfection of martial prowess by the men. There is no discord amongst the villagers, who are bound by a strong sense of civility, and the portrayal of the village rhythmically passing through the four seasons gives us an impression of a place not only in harmony with itself, but also with its natural surroundings. Seeing the morally and spiritually superior lives of his adversaries, rather than returning to the side of the Meiji government forces, Algren chooses to fight by Katsumoto's side in a last stand that sees a charge of mounted samurai devastated by gatling guns.

Whilst *The Last Samurai* cannot be held to a standard of great historical accuracy, the fidelity of the film's socio-historical imagery to popular foreign travel writing and photography typical around the period that the film is set is quite notable<sup>1</sup>. The visualisation of feudal Japan as an arcadian paradise goes back to the origins of photographic film. However, the extent to which this narrative has remained unchanged since the 1860s is not necessarily testimony to its truthfulness, but rather its effective utility as an ideological tool which functions equally well in Japan as in the west, though with different objectives.

Reflective of the problematic adoption of western technology to repel the threat of the west, the field of Meiji-period photography is dominated by a western market for the 'tourist photo'. In these pictorial visions a traditional feudal Japan is populated by subjects organized by their social function, resulting in the so-called genres of 'views' and 'types'. Photography is embraced by the Japanese as an element of *bunmei kaika nanatsu dōgu*<sup>2</sup> – one of the seven symbolic accoutrements of a modern industrial state, at the same time, however, its primary product is a nostalgic voyeurism. This nostalgic gaze can be seen as a culturally colonialist intervention with the aim of identifying the orient as a quaint, backward and mysterious other. However, as Japanese photographers also produced tourist images in great quantities, the question arises as to whether this indigenous production was purely market-driven, or whether the visualisation of a pre-modern feudal landscape also served some ideological or aesthetic purpose within Japan.



*Yokohama shashin*, produced by both Japanese and foreign practitioners working within a limited physical and aesthetic territory, are considered in this chapter as representative of contentious cultural, ideological and economic activity. On the one hand the Japanese field of cultural production is empowered with the ability to construct its own representation using modern technology (legitimising the nation with appeals to recognition of traditional sights/sites). Yet, on the other hand, this ability is negated by the reception of these images in the West, as they are subsumed into a colonial inventory of the exotic and peripheral.

In the Japanese context the interaction between the field of power and the field of cultural production in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the huge stakes implied, are described in Michelle Marra's introduction in *Modern Japanese Aesthetics*:

The construction of a community based on the universal communicability of sensation, and ruled by notions of taste, had tremendous political consequences with regard to the burgeoning modern states, which the aesthetic program provided with internalized aesthetic imperatives. From the disinterested contemplation of beauty, a social bonding could be derived in which the unity, totality, and harmony of the work of art translated into the unity, totality, and harmony of an "ideal" society.

(Marra, 1999, p.4)

This chapter therefore investigates the nostalgic Japanese landscape as a visual icon that serves multiple functions. Particularly the nostalgic gaze can be read as two distinct, but simultaneous, expressions of anxiety; the manifestation of a western desire to refuse Japan's growing status as a modernising nation, and also of an internal response to the issues of creating and sustaining a national identity in the face of increasing westernisation.

## The imaginary gaze and the literature of fairyland

Here in Yamato there are hosts of mountains  
but when I ascend heavenly mount Kagu, so handsomely set  
and there behold my realm,  
from the outspread land rises smoke from hearth on hearth,  
from the open sea rise gull after white gull –  
o what a fair land is the dragonfly isle – this blessed land of Yamato

Emperor Jomei. *Man'yōshū* Vol I. #2 (Trans. Iwamoto, 1989, p.30)

Really you are happy because you have entered bodily into Fairyland ...

Lafcadio Hearn (Hearn, 2001, p.13)

Viewing the Japanese landscape as a way of conceptualizing a coherent community within a defined territory is a cultural practice that pre-dates the ideological constructions of 19<sup>th</sup> century modern nationalism by many centuries. The second poem of the *Man'yōshū* – the Anthology of Ten Thousand Leaves – is commonly attributed to the emperor Jomei. Engaged in the spring ceremony of *kunimi*, literally 'looking at the country', the emperor celebrates the land with an impossible gaze that locates his subjects within a unified, total and harmonious realm. However, the gaze is impossible because Mt Kagu, being only, and almost certainly never much more than, 167 metres high, and over 30 kilometres from the nearest coastline, cannot provide a view of the open sea.

As one of the oldest verses in Japanese literature – dating back to sometime between 629 and 642 AD – the discrepancy between the physical location cited by the poem and the proposed poetic vision can be discussed at great length. However, the tradition of *utamakura* – literally the pillow, or resting-place of the song - which binds the country together through a network of sites celebrated in verse, is replete with instances of actual locations being described by poets speculating on the notional or ideal qualities of a place without having first-hand knowledge of the site itself. This is an integral aspect of the culture of 'famous places' - *meisho* - in which:

Traditionally it was rather the accumulation of cultural references which was the important factor when ranking a particular scene. People would have shed tears in front of a boring landscape as long as its association with a poignant poem or a tragic history could be evoked.

(Watanabe, 1997, p.280)

The relevance of this imaginary gaze to *Yokohama shashin* is that although one might suppose that the arrival of the western scientific gaze should signal the demise of this tradition (not in the 'biased and frivolous' (Naruse, 2001, p.195) sense of a materialistic realism supplanting an Eastern spiritual view, but in the sense that views are photographed for an ever diverse variety of reasons), rather, the great number of Meiji-period photographs of culturally significant sites indicates a persistence, rather than supersedence, of the culture of *meisho*. The persistence of a indigenous tradition of representation is evident not only in the content of *Yokohama shashin*, which, along with the culturally determined landscape, inherited the genres of *bijinga* (images of beautiful women) and actors' portraits, from *ukiyo-e*, but also in the hand-tinting of photographs which drew upon the same pool of artisans engaged in woodblock printing. Winkel, in her introduction to a volume of photographs from the Schilling collection, also notes a shared stylistic convention between 19<sup>th</sup> century landscape photography and *ukiyo-e* in which 'an element in close-up was placed against a distant scenic background' (Winkel, 1991, p.36).

However, the impact of the camera as a mechanical apparatus, with its 'scientific' ability to capture detail, seems to have heralded the birth of a totally new way of perceiving the land, both to writers at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and in more recent theory. In Karatani Kōjin's 1993 analysis of literature of the 1890s the movement away from the *meisho* tradition is posited as nothing less than the 'discovery of landscape' with a corresponding development of interiority that is the inevitable consequence of an object/subject dichotomy. For Karatani this is a 'fundamental break with the past' (Karatani, 1993, p.23). The considerable contemporary popularity of Shiga Shigetaka's 1894 work on Japanese landscape *Nihon fūkeiron*<sup>3</sup>, advocating a new, scientific, basis for appreciating the beauty of Japan, seems to bear this out. However, in the culture of strictly visual images the discovery of the objective view could be said to have occurred the moment the term *shashinkyō* (true copy mirror) was invented as a translation of the Dutch term for camera obscura (*donkuru kamuru* in the Japanese transliteration) i.e.1788<sup>4</sup>.

The struggle that primarily interests Karatani, which perhaps is the cause for him to locate the moment of the discovery of landscape in the third decade of the Meiji period, is not so much

between aesthetic cosmologies. Rather it is that of politico-philosophical systems, in which the birth of interiority signals the encroaching effect of modernity as a totalizing system, and a corresponding demise, in literature, of the People's Rights movement and the political novel. Shiga purposefully entered this totalizing system, in his application of the western scientific gaze to the Japanese landscape, as a means of engaging the west on their own epistemological territory, so to speak. Where Karatani might describe this strategy as a radical 'inversion' (*tentō*)<sup>5</sup>, we might as well describe it as a *submersion*, in that Shiga, while using the language of physical description, nevertheless refers to a traditional iconography of seasonality, blossom, pine trees and Mt Fuji. Inevitably, though the material has been reframed, this would have resonated with his Japanese readership, and in this subtle overlaying of visual cultures we can see the reliance of modernity on preserving traditional culture to which it must compare itself in order to confirm its difference.

The tendency for Meiji landscape photography is still largely towards named locations which have some historical background, rather than compositions that emphasise nature untouched by human interaction, as we can expect to see, for example, in wilderness photography produced in the United States in the same period. Some of the more recurrent locations are Enoshima (within easy reach of studios in Yokohama), Mt Fuji (unavoidable) and Nikkō (regularly arranged tours for foreigners). The huge market for photography has effectively *subsumed* the *meisho* tradition into a global field of production and consumption in which local practice becomes miscellany or case studies. As Crary puts it:

Photography and money become homologous forms of social power in the nineteenth century. They are totalizing systems for binding and unifying all subjects within a single global network of valuation and desire.

(Crary, 1992, p.13)

In Figure 1.1, a view of Mt Fuji from Tago Bay (Tago no ura) from an album by Kusakabe Kimbei (1841-1934), a number of compositional factors can be considered in assessing the image as being somewhere between instructional and interpretative. The poles in the left foreground, reminiscent of foreground detail used to increase a sense of depth in *ukiyo-e*, emphasise the crouched figure, which mimics our own gaze towards the centrally-placed Mount Fuji. The pose and placement of the figures on the bridge tell us that Kimbei has most probably used models in

this image. They are rendered too sharply for figures in movement, and too well-placed in the composition to have been caught by accident (carefully choreographed figures are a feature of a number of Kimbei's images, where their posing is made evident through their stillness in the midst of an activity and in some cases a returned gaze). Mount Fuji itself has been retouched, to increase the contrast between the sky and the snowy peak. Although Kimbei took many other views of Mount Fuji, this particular composition conforms to the *utamakura* from the *Man'yō* period, in which the snow-capped extinct volcano is viewed from Tago no ura. In the early *utamakura* tradition the permanently snow-covered peak, ostensibly free from the vagaries of the four seasons, invoked the image of a sanctity inviolate to the corruption of time<sup>6</sup>, and this symbolism, already representative in the 8<sup>th</sup> century of a nostalgic longing<sup>7</sup>, is appropriated by western viewers to represent what is being lost, as Japan becomes a modern industrial state.

Where the expression of this loss in *Yokohama shashin* is implied through the choice of subject matter and its picturesque treatment, the nostalgia is explicit in travel literature by foreign visitors to and residents of 19<sup>th</sup> century Japan. In the 1904 illustrated volume, *Japan: The Eastern Wonderland* by D.C. Angus, the author, taking on the narrative voice of a fictitious character of the son of a Kanagawa rice-farmer, sets the tone of the book by introducing Japan to an incredulous English host family:

When I was in London some years ago, studying English Law at University College, a kind professor and his wife took me in ... The children were much given to talking about "Alice in Wonderland," and one day I rashly said, "I don't believe your Alice saw things a bit more wonderful than you would see if I could take you to *my* country. *That* is a wonderland if you like!"

(Angus, 1904, p.1)

The first feature of this wonderland that is described is Mount Fuji:

Clothed with forest, and crowned with glittering snow, beautiful as a dream is Fuji in its lonely grandeur. Not we Japanese only, but foreigners who come from seeing many wonders of beauty, think that Fuji is what our poets have called it, "The Matchless Mountain." And we, who have lived in its presence from childhood, feel as if it were some venerable yet dear and familiar friend; and, when absent, we long for a sight of it, just as the Swiss pine for their dearly loved mountain peaks.

(Angus, 1904, p.6)

Mt Fuji is portrayed not only as synonymous with home, but with a sense of longing for home, but as D.C Angus is a pseudonym there is an interesting ambiguity over whether this longing is

actually by a westerner posing as Japanese or by a Japanese writer posing as a westerner posing as Japanese. This ambiguity becomes much more ideologically charged when the book turns to a discussion of Japan's recent military triumphs over China and Russia, which are considered incontrovertible evidence of Japan's modernity. This modernity is given moral legitimacy with the justification,

'You have read about the good and brave King Arthur and his knights ... Bushido is very much like the spirit of chivalry that existed in those early days ...'

(Angus, 1904, p.217)

Another transposition of Japan's landscape into a foreign mythology, with a Baudriallard-like excursion into hyperreality, can be found in Pierre Loti's 1887 diary *Madame Chrysanthème*, when he writes of his entry into Nagasaki bay,

We entered a shady channel between two high ranges of mountains, oddly symmetrical – like stage scenery, very pretty, though unlike nature. It seemed as if Japan were opened to our view through an enchanted fissure, allowing us to penetrate into her very heart....We passed among myriads of Japanese junks, gliding softly, wafted by imperceptible breezes on the smooth water...their strangely contorted poops, rising castle-like in the air, reminding one of the towering ships of the Middle Ages... What a country of verdure and shade is Japan; what an unlooked-for Eden!

(Loti, 2001, p.4)

The visual content of Angus's book consists of four reproductions of colour illustrations and forty-nine black and white photographs, predominantly posed or candid documentary scenes with titles such as *Geisha Writing a Letter*, *Traders on the Street* and *Hair-Dressing*. One of only two landscape views, and by landscape what is meant in this case is that human activity in the composition is rendered small enough to be considered a graphic element, is 'Fuji and Kashiwabara Lake' by Kashima Seibei (1866 -1924). As with Kimbei's view from Tago no ura, the peak of Mt Fuji has been retouched to create a striking whiteness. In the fore- and middle-ground are two boats, with full white sails, in the boat nearest the camera we can make out that the pilot looking back at us. The scene has been arranged to allow the viewer to construct a reverie of a timeless pre-modern landscape, and in this sense performs the same nostalgic function as the Kimbei image, where the wooden bridge and rickshaw promotes a sense of a society untouched by industrial civilization. We can also see this work being done in fig.1.2 from Brinkley's *Japan: Described and illustrated by the Japanese*, in which Arashiyama, another

renowned *utamakura*, and depicted by Hiroshige in his 'Famous Places in Kyoto' series, is populated by figures at leisure; an essential element of the arcadian landscape.

## Fear and longing

Japanese policy should, I think, be that of *keeping Americans and Europeans as much as possible at arm's length.*

Herbert Spencer

Letter to Baron Kaneko Kentarō in *The Times* Jan 18<sup>th</sup> 1904 (italics in the original)

The period of *Yokohama shashin* - from the 1860s to the first decade of the twentieth century - is topped and tailed by violence; going from the xenophobic assassinations by the anti-modernist samurai 'men of spirit', to the full-blown modern warfare of the Russo-Japanese conflict.

The situation for foreigners in Japan throughout the decade after Perry's gunboat diplomacy forced Japan to open its ports to foreign trade in 1864 was extremely hazardous, with a history of often murderous antipathy directed particularly at westerners. This was documented by the erstwhile war-photographer Felice Beato, when he revisited murder sites and also recorded the executions of assassins of foreign residents<sup>8</sup> (fig.1.3) and described retrospectively in the illustrated expatriate newspaper *The Far East*:

In 1864 it would have not only been most unsafe but quite impossible for any foreigners except the privileged Ministers and their *suites*, to penetrate the regions beyond the Hakone Pass, upon the Tōkaidō. At that time the road was always crowded with the two-sworded class. Daimios [sic] were going backwards and forwards, to and from Yedo, with large bands of retainers, every one of whom would have been only too glad to avail of the slightest excuse to cut a foreigner down.

(*The Far East*, vol.2. no.21, p.1)

The first two volumes of *The Far East*, running from 1870 to 1876, contain various reports of attacks, however it is notable that besides relating the basic facts of these incidents, with very little exception, these reports have no direct bearing on the tone of the other regular features of the newspaper, namely the front page editorial comment or the background information of the pasted-in albumen prints. The contrast between reports of sometimes fatal attacks and tourist images of Yokohama bay, Daibutsu at Kamakura or the Tōkaidō road is striking. The landscapes are generally overviews in which little human activity is visible, and the overall effect, in conjunction with the historical and geographical notes supplied with each image, is one of a completely passive territory.



In Thomas Clark Westfield's *The Japanese: Their Manners and Customs* of 1862, originally delivered as a lecture at the Marylebone Library and Scientific Institution, the violence that foreigners encountered in Japan is described from the outset of this work, quickly followed by an assessment of the landscape, which is aided by the inclusion of stereoscopic images by Negretti and Zambra (fig.1.4):

The scenery is beautiful in the extreme, and which might be easily imagined, from the hilly nature of the country; long lines of terraced hills, covered with stately cedars - green slopes and verdant valleys, which, added to the extraordinary brightness of the atmosphere, form scenes of beauty unsurpassed, if indeed they are equalled, by any other country.

(Westfield, 1862, p.10)

After an account of Japan's resources, history and customs, Westfield returns to the subject of violence near the end of his account with a graphic description of *seppuku* (a favourite subject of later studio portraiture) and a gory tale of Japanese fisherman forcibly drowning survivors of a shipwreck during a storm, pushing them back into the waves with long poles. In his closing lines Westfield reveals a Spencerian positivism when he hopes 'that by continued intercourse with ourselves, they may not only improve, but share alike with us in all the blessings of moral and religious civilization.' (Westfield, 1862, p.10).

By the beginning of the twentieth century, when Lafcadio Hearn, the Greek-born journalist who made Japan his home until he died there in 1904, describes his enchantment with a country where 'you discover no harshness, no rudeness, no dishonesty, no breaking of laws, and learn that this social condition has been the same for centuries' (Hearn, 1904, p.12) Japan was to embark on war with Russia, having already proved its military competency in its 1894-95 war with China.

The disjuncture between Japan's visual and literary representation as a static pre-modern wonderland and the volatility of its contemporary situation is to be expected if we consider the basis of utopian idealism:

'Wishful thinking has always figured in human affairs. When the imagination finds no satisfaction in existing reality, it seeks refuge in wishfully constructed places and periods. Myths, fairy tales, other-worldly promises of religion, humanistic fantasies,

travel romances, have been continually changing expressions of that which was lacking in actual life.'

(Mannheim, 1936, p.205)

However, though it is not necessary to look much beyond the high cost of photographic equipment and consumables in the nineteenth century to explain why Japanese photography had limited power to develop an aesthetic independent of the western market for souvenir photography, the dominance of this market does not mean that indigenous and foreign photographers were working from homologous ideological positions. The nostalgic longing of western photographers and writers for a landscape devoid of political and economic conflict essentially acts a denial of Japan's enforced entry into the totalizing culture of modernity, which their own presence in Japan represents. The same nostalgia is also a denial of real cultural and ethnographic distinction in its appeal to a mythic utopia which is accessible to all; Japan as a specific location is *erased*<sup>9</sup>.

Furthermore, where the western nostalgic view is fundamentally an act of inclusion or possession - exercising the long reach of a modernist commodifying gaze – this largely inherited photographic convention, when adopted by the Japanese photographer, is ideologically, if not practically, an act of exclusion and evasion. The split personality of this nostalgia can be read as a visual expression of some of the same issues that are present in the paradoxical adoption of Spencer's social theories by Japanese intellectuals, while at the same time, they are used by 'conservative Americans to justify exploitation and sometimes political corruption in the name of free competition and social evolution' (Nagai, 1954, p.55). In the west, Spencer's social Darwinism is used as a 'scientific' justification for exploitation and confirmation of a racial hierarchy. As such his work may seem a curious choice for 'the West's greatest intellectual export to Japan in the late nineteenth century' (Thomas, 2001 p.117), and yet Spencer appealed strongly to Japanese liberal and conservative reformers alike, who saw in his work principles for social development and traditional hierarchies, respectively.

The intersection of the nostalgic landscape and the use of Spencerian theory is that while the tourist photo at its point of consumption (i.e. in the west) can represent an affirmation of the

evolutionary backwardness of its subject, the production of the tourist photo by Japanese photographers effectively keeps its foreign consumers at arm's length ethnologically, while technologically and politically the difference is being erased. This is a strategy identified by Bhabha, in which,

...the political unity of the nation consists in a continual displacement of its irredeemably plural modern space, bounded by different, even hostile nations, into a signifying space that is archaic and mythical, paradoxically representing the nation's modern territoriality, in the patriotic, avatistic temporality of Traditionalism.

(Bhabha, 1990, p.300)

The content and composition of Meiji landscape photography, in providing a new visual medium for the *meisho* tradition, was pre-eminently suitable as a vehicle that could at once affirm a mythic past and at the same time advance Japan's identity as a modern nation by contributing to its ability to develop its own narrative. The fact that the origins of this visual narrative have mixed parentage and contested meaning only serve to obviate the constructedness of the nostalgic gaze of *Yokohama shashin*. Despite Japan's present-day status as a first-world economic superpower, this nostalgic narrative of fairyland continues to hold sway, as we have seen in the example of contemporary Hollywood film. Further manifestations of nostalgia in various present-day media will be explored in later chapters.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> This connection is made explicit in the film by the inclusion of a British photographer character who, in appearance, closely resembles the real personage of writer/cartoonist Charles Wirgman, and in function resembles photographer Felice Beato. The two worked closely together as contributors to publications such as *Japan Punch* and *London Illustrated News*.

<sup>2</sup> Along with photography Dower (1980) cites newspapers, a postal system, gaslights, steam engines, exhibitions and dirigibles as popular conceptions of the modern in 1872.

<sup>3</sup> The popularity of *Nihon fūkeiron* is described by Gavin (2001, p.33): 'A survey conducted during the Meiji period by *Jiji shimpō* (Current News) among selected prominent people disclosed that the most favoured works were those of Fukuzawa Yukichi, followed by *Nihon fūkeiron*.'

<sup>4</sup> Yokoe (1997, p.163) cites the first use of this term in the work *Ransetsu Benwaku* by Ōtsuki Gentaku.

<sup>5</sup> Brett de Bary discusses Karatani's use of this term at length in his essay *Karatani Kōjin's Origins of Modern Japanese Literature* in Miyoshi & Harootunian (1989, p. 237)

<sup>6</sup> This contrasts with later symbolism of Mount Fuji as a representative of human passion, due to the renewal of occasional volcanic activity, where smoke, haze or cloud became a resonating trope.

<sup>7</sup> Yamabe no Akahito's seminal poem in the *Man'yōshū* (verse 320) starts:

Since that ancient time  
when heaven and earth were sundered,  
like a god soaring  
in high-towering majesty  
over Suruga  
has stood Fuji's lofty peak (Trans. Carter, 1991)

<sup>8</sup> In *The Last Samurai* this denial is at the centre of the film's narrative as the Kastumoto character, representing a *shishi* or 'man of spirit' bent on rejecting foreign intervention in Japan, rather than providing a tranquil location for a foreigner's spiritual education would have been, in reality, more inclined to seek their expulsion or death.

<sup>9</sup> This has been illustrated with recent research by Luke Gartlan of the University of Melbourne. His study of photo albums by Felice Beato and Baron Von Stillfried shows a reduction from detailed descriptive captioning giving historical and ethnographic information to merely generic descriptive titles and in some cases an eventual effacement of any text. (Yoshimi, 2003, pp.28-29)

## 1.2 Reflecting nostalgia; a simulated album

Many of the sites used in extant tourist photography are readily identifiable, mostly through captions and titles which are part of the image or are added to the mounting or facing page. In the majority of cases this textual information is geographical, and, as already discussed, indicates a tendency towards using traditional *meisho* sites, a number of which have been preserved close to their original condition.

The practical work I have produced in response to the theoretical assessment of the tourist photo is a series of photographs whose content has been dictated by the use of sites from tourist photos, and are presented in a simulated album. The sites vary from being virtually unchanged to being barely recognisable, but whenever possible the same framing has been used as that in an original archive image. The selection of locations reflect the contents of a typical tourist photo album which would have often included scenes from the treaty ports of Nagasaki, Kobe and Yokohama (Hakodate, in the far north, was open to foreigners, but much less visited by tourists), Nikko, Kamakura and the area around Mt Fuji.

Photographing *meisho* is, in part, a development of a previous series of work that I produced from 1995 to 1999, entitled *Utamakura Sites*, which was based on documenting sites related to classical poetry, most of which are also *meisho*. This project juxtaposed the contemporary landscape with literature from the 8<sup>th</sup> century collection of court poetry the *Man'yōshū* (*Anthology of a Thousand Leaves*) to 19<sup>th</sup> century travelogue by Matsuo Bashō, *Oku no hosomichi* (*Narrow Road to the North*). Exhibition prints were black and white with a text panel under the image showing the poem associated with the location portrayed (fig.1.5). The *Utamakura Sites* project and the images for the simulated album follow a similar methodology, in which the locations were predetermined by archival research, and the composition, with the aid of text references, scrutinises the site's historical associations.

Where the images in the *Utamakura Sites* series attempted to reflect the aesthetics of the literature they referenced, the simulated album mimics the form and content of the original archive material, and is presented with lacquered covers from an original tourist photo album. The prints are enlarged to the same proportions as a 10 x 8 contact print and have a black title bar with white lettering, characteristic of *Yokohama shashin*. The images have generally been taken in overcast conditions on either 5x4 Fuji NPS 160 negative with an overexposure of 2 stops or Fuji Provia 400F slide film, with an overexposure of 1 stop. The negative has then been scanned, and the image further manipulated digitally to give a muted colour palette and low contrast reminiscent of hand-tinted black and white print. The prints are produced digitally (vol 2, ch 1.3a).

The purpose of this mimicry is to reference but then frustrate the nostalgic gaze. The simulation of the form and content of the tourist image is partial, and the success of this body of work as an analytical tool relies on the introduction of dissonance to the picturesque composition characteristic of the nostalgic image. Insofar as the tourist photo is a representation of a harmonious fairyland, like any utopian system, it is a totalizing schema in which inhabitants share absolute coherence with the world they occupy. This is made evident when we come across the rare instances of an archive image that conforms to the format of the tourist photo but whose content does not.

One such example is the Great Nōbi Earthquake album<sup>1</sup> attributed to Kusakabe Kimbei (1841-1934), which in terms of production values (decorative lacquer covers, hand-tinting, English captioning, posed anonymous human subjects, wide-angle views), is to all intents and purposes a tourist photo album. However these stylistic conventions are highly incongruent with the scenes of destruction that are the subject of this series of work (figs.1.6 – 1.10). Apart from the literal disturbance of the damaged structures and grotesque malformations of the landscape, the photos also disturb the generally pacific quality of the tourist landscape photo by introducing time into the composition. The idyll of nostalgia is ruptured by the depiction of change and an uncontrollable opposition between man and nature, hence, by implication, the frame does not contain a complete and integral

ahistorical social universe. The creation of the simulated album, with its temporal transgressions (a modern, but unchanged Daibutsu being photographed by tourists, fishermen by their motor boat in front of Mt Fuji...) attempts to add time to a reading of the original tourists photos, whose nostalgia is predicated on the idea that 'this timeless utopia would exist were it not for...'

In *Simulacra and Simulation* Baudrillard posits four progressive stages of the image:

it is the reflection of a profound reality  
it masks and denatures a profound reality  
it masks the *absence* of a profound reality [italics in the original]  
it has no relation to any reality whatsoever: it is its own pure simulacrum

(Baudrillard, 2002, p.6)

In this progression the movement is away from the 'principle of the equivalence of the sign and of the real' (*ibid.*) to the position where 'simulation envelops the whole edifice of representation itself as a simulacrum' and consequently 'When the real is no longer what it was, nostalgia assumes its full meaning. There is a plethora of myths of origin and of signs of reality - a plethora of truth, of secondary objectivity, and authenticity.' (*ibid.*). In this schema the nostalgia of the tourist photo, in terms of its original function of supposed documentation, acts as a vehicle for reflecting a *singular* profound reality tailored to the desires of its particular audiences. However our contemporary reception of these images, which the simulated album aims to reiterate, is to recognise the provisional nature of 'authenticity' and 'myths of origin'.

The simulation of a tourist album obviates the constructedness of the fairyland narrative and counter the supposition of 'the reflection of a profound reality'; the album refers to the archive and bypasses the signified, thereby positioning itself in Baudrillard's final stages of representation. This is not meant to invoke Barthes when he writes 'The author has never, in any sense, photographed Japan' (Barthes, 1982, p.4) and his dismissal of the country so that he can replace it with his own system of signs. The simulated album is rather more related to Oscar Wilde's tongue-in-cheek assessment of the triumph of representation over reality:

Now do you really imagine that the Japanese people, as they are presented to us in art, have any existence? If you do you have never understood Japanese art at all. The Japanese people are the deliberate self-conscious creation of certain individual artists ... In fact, the whole of Japan is a pure invention. There is no such country, there are no such people.

(Wilde, 1990, p.988)

The simulacrum is an attempt to destabilise this invention, though where post-colonial/modern theorists have concentrated on dismantling the Orientalist gaze of the West, this work recognises the successful appropriation and application of this gaze within Japan in creating its own national narrative.

In some instances direct visual clues are given in the simulated album to highlight the continuing employment of this narrative; the inclusion of reconstruction work, for example, on heritage sites such as that on the Shinkyō<sup>2</sup> and Megane bridges (vol 2, ch. 1.3a, pp. 6 & 8). This is also inferred in the photographs of the *aka ranga* (red brick warehouse) dockside developments of Yokohama and Hakodate, in which two Meiji-period warehouse complexes have been refurbished as tourist shopping and entertainment areas (vol 2, ch. 1.3a, pp. 11 & 12). Titles have been used to create a further disjuncture between the location and the image, sometimes by interspersing the identity of the original photographer, or in other cases by using original titles with their anachronistic spelling. This was particularly important to images which closely resemble the original photographs on which they are based, such as *Tōshōgū Shrine after Stillfried* and *Cedar Avenue after Farsari* (vol 2, ch. 1.3a, pp. 9 & 10).

Finally, in contrast to an original album, in which the arrangement of images varies from being random to reflecting the geographical progression of a tour, the images in the simulated album are ordered to draw attention to similarities in visual composition, rather than geographical or thematic relatedness. This has been done in order to further highlight its function as re-presentation in which its primary relation is to other representations.

The 1995 book of archive images entitled *Boring Postcards*, edited by British photographer Martin Parr seems to exemplify the view that 'Landscape is an exhausted medium, no longer



viable as a mode of artistic expression. Like life, landscape is boring...' (Mitchell, p.5 1994). In a collection of re-photographed British postcards from the 60s and 70s showing banal contemporary structures and spaces Parr eschews the production of new work in favour of re-presenting images whose original context is far removed from the usual curated exhibition space of 'fine art'.

Mitchell's proclamation of the end of landscape is founded on the denouement of its function as 'the "dreamwork" of imperialism' (Mitchell, p.10 1994), and Parr's collection makes us laugh because it mocks the Ozymandias-like dreamwork of post-war British modernism. But at the same time that Parr's collection posits the death of landscape by denying its offspring - the cityscape - any profound or noble function, it is also predicated on three strategies that enable landscape's rehabilitation. Firstly, the found images of *Boring Postcards* are treated as a typology, in which the importance of the individual composition is subsumed into establishing connections between images; in this way the medium of landscape itself becomes an object of scrutiny. Secondly, *Boring Postcards* invokes nostalgia but does not evoke it (a strategy he has employed in his examination of the English in *Think of England*, and his critique of global tourism in *Small World*) with the result that any essentialist identification with region is treated with scepticism and in which it is understood that landscapes are culturally loaded spaces. Thirdly the boredom of life/landscape, which extinguishes 'natural' beauty, the sublime, the spiritual etc., has become an aesthetic in itself.

These issues are, of course, not exclusive to *Boring Postcards*; they are, rather, some of the general aesthetic conditions within which critically responsive contemporary landscape photography is operating. Two particular issues relevant to the simulated album raised by Parr's book are, firstly, what responses to archive material are possible under these conditions, and secondly, what happens to the historical narrative in post-modern representation. In Frederic Jameson's assessment of the 'incompatibility of a post-modern "nostalgia" art language with genuine historicity' (Jameson, 1991, p.19) *Boring Postcards* and the simulated album may seem to be merely a 'heap of fragments' (Jameson, 1991, p.25), and the challenge in dealing with archive material is to avoid mere pastiche - 'blank parody, a

statue with blind eyeballs' (Jameson, 1991, p.17). Furthermore the simulated album is intended to highlight precisely the issue that the conflict between nostalgia and genuine historicity is not particular to post-modernism.

*Boring Postcards* is neither exactly nostalgia, nor historicity. With its assumption of its audience's lived experience of modern architectural spaces undermining the postcard's utopian representation it utilises a backward facing gaze primarily for amusement, but taken in the context of Parr's scepticism of globalisation that is characteristic of other works such as *Small World*, in which he ridicules the practice of tourism, its humour is an uneasy one. Parr both identifies post-modernity's lack of 'genuine historicity', while at the same time he works within the medium of a very post-modern irony in order to expose this.

In my re-presentation of pictorial landscapes in the simulated album, my intention has been to identify and expose the incompatibility of *modernity's* covert nostalgia with genuine historicity. The reflection of nostalgia in the simulacra is here employed as an indicator that just as in a contemporary aesthetic of cognitive mapping we cannot 'return to some older kind of machinery, some older and more transparent national space, or some more traditional and reassuring perspectival or mimetic enclave' (Jameson, 1991, p.54), the reification of tradition and national space are also implicit in the roots of modernism. The simulated album is not however intended as a mournful expression of this inability to return to an authentic space and moment of truth. Rather it is a statement that we were never there, and that in opposing the cultural logic of late capitalism, the nostalgia for the possibilities of the master narrative bear an unhealthy resemblance to proto-modernism's nostalgia for a coherent, and therefore highly discriminatory, narrative of cultural tradition.

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<sup>1</sup> Album viewed at Nagasaki University library on 26 April 2004 is catalogued under Kusakabe Kimbei but includes images which differ in technique and captioning style and therefore may include images from other photographers.

<sup>2</sup> Concurrent to my working on sites in Nikko – a Unesco world heritage site – the area was being advertised by Japan Rail with the tag line ‘Nikko is Nippon’. In Marilyn Ivy’s analysis of the 1970 ‘Discover Japan’ ad campaign by Japan Rail she states ‘Discover Japan stressed the interaction of the traveler with nature (*shizen*) and tradition; by touching (*fureau*) nature and tradition, Japanese would discover themselves as Japanese’ (Ivy, 1995, p.43). She further gives the specific example of a photograph of Nikko, discussing it as representative of the campaign’s central premise that, ‘Natural beauty in and of itself was not the issue; what was important was the encounter, the contact (*fureai*) between the quotidian and the nonordinary’ (Ivy, 1995, p.43).

## 2.1 Taishō pictorialism and the escape from the everyday

During the Meiji period the dominance of the pictorial landscape as a format was so complete that it did not have to be distinguished from any other genre; landscape photography was, almost by definition, pictorial. The 20<sup>th</sup> century brought technical, aesthetic and social changes such that the pictorial landscape photograph became identifiable as an intentional and constructed way of viewing nature. In this chapter I will discuss 'Taishō pictorialism' through contrasting the work of members of the Ai-Yū Photo Club and that of the Fukuhara brothers Shinzō (1883-1948) and Rosō (1892-1946) and through this comparative analysis I aim to show how the nostalgic gaze continued to be an ambivalent form of resistance to modernity, but wholly a product of it.

Histories of the Taishō era can describe either a trajectory of hope or of failure. The sparks of protest expressed in the rice riots of 1918 and rural and consumer riots of 1924 and the growth of labour movements were considered by contemporary social commentators, and in subsequent histories, as evidence of a 'mass awakening', i.e. 'the notion that the common people of the country, who for years had deferred silently to the demands placed upon them by the state and by their social betters, were beginning to experience a newly quickened awareness of their rights as citizens and human beings' (Duus, 1968, p 110). This socio-political awareness had a cultural equivalence in an artistic move towards individual self-expression for which Takamura Kōtarō's (1883-1956) 1910 essay "Green Sun" (Midori iro no taiyō) is often considered the opening salvo, and for which the avant-garde MAVO movement (1923 - 1926) can be considered a positive enactment.

The notion of self-expression being the primary goal of artistic production coincided with a number of changes in photography, which allowed a proliferation of various kinds of activity. On the technical side, with the introduction of cameras like the Japanese Minimum Idea of 1911 and the Kodak Vest Pocket, introduced to Japan in 1915, cameras had become small and cheap enough to be used by amateurs. The accessibility of photographic equipment encouraged the founding of increasing numbers of clubs, among

them the Minimum Photo Club of 1913 for users of the Minimum Idea, whilst the popularity of the Vest Pocket gave rise to the Besu-tan style of photography which utilised the cheap single lens optics of the camera as a soft focus effect, enhanced by the removal of the lens hood.

Kaneko Ryūichi describes in the introduction to the catalogue *Hidaka Chōtarō to Ai-Yū Shashinkenkyūkai: Pictorial Photography, Nagoya* how the Ai-Yū Photo Club came into being when Hidaka Chōtarō (1883-1926), from a wealthy rural family in Aichi-ken, went on a photographic trek with Yamamoto Gorō and other fellow enthusiasts to photograph the mountains around Nagoya in January 1912. The group specialised in landscape photography and were known for their pigmented images produced on heavyweight textured paper giving the feeling of painted canvas. After initially working with bromide and carbon printing they embraced the complex gum bichromate and bromoil processes, both of which involve a high level of manual skill at the printing stage and which allows the photographer/printer greater latitude in manipulating tone and contrast.

Unlike the commercial photographers of *Yokohama shashin*, the Nagoya pictorialists favoured non-specific locations and titles which often conveyed only general physical information. In this respect their work, despite being absent from global histories of photography, was part of an international pictorial movement, fully adhering to 'a number of characteristic traits, including muted focus, a limited tonal range, and the use of printmaking techniques other than the common gelatine silver process' (Davis, 1999, p.55). Insofar as this style was applied almost exclusively to rural scenes it also conformed to the tone of pictorial work being produced in Europe and the United States as an 'antimodernist reaction against the mechanistic and materialistic nature of contemporary life' (Davis, 1999, p.55). Whilst the Ai-Yū Photo Club's portrayal of rural Japan eulogised life without western science and technology, in contrast to the *meisho*-based imagery of *Yokohama shashin* their vision had a greater conceptual allegiance to the Western scientific gaze, implicit in their move away from named sites. Kaneko also notes that Hidaka Chōtarō had an explicit interest in science, and that the reverse of his

contact prints show extensive technical notes indicating 'his intention of making an objective recording of nature' (Kaneko, 1990, p.7). Kaneko, accordingly allies the Nagoya pictorialists with Shiga Shigetaka's philosophy of landscape posited in *Nihon Fūkeiron (On Japanese Landscape)*.

The Ai-Yū Photo Club, however, did not focus on nature to the exclusion of evidence of human activity. Nature is often rather a backdrop for the recurring motif of the farmhouse or village. In this sense the intellectual whose work can usefully contextualise the Nagoya pictorialists' work is the ethnologist Yanagita Kunio (1875-1962), to whom the erstwhile propaganda photographer Hamaya Hiroshi (1915-1999) would later turn to for inspiration, and his contemporary attempts to formulate a narrative of authenticity located in rural Japan. Yanagita's folkloric study *Tōno Monogatari (Tales of Tōno)* was published in 1910, two years before the formation of the Ai-Yū Photo Club, in response to the Shrine Merger Act of 1908. In this seminal work Yanagita opposed the creation of the "administrative village" (*gyōseimura*) reforms of the Meiji state bureaucracy with the idea of the "natural village"; the location of a harmonious and dignified people (*jōmin* or abiding folk) who could be upheld as a bulwark against the disruption and anxiety of modern urban life.

In an analysis of Yanagita's construction of a Japanese identity Hashimoto Mitsuru summarises the ethnologist's position as that 'Despite living in the center, Yanagita thought he could see this invisible world (of the *Jōmin*) because he, unlike other people, identified with the periphery' (Hashimoto, 1998, p.138). Before criticism that his work was pseudo-scientific, by anthropologist Minakata Kumagusu (1867-1941) in 1916, Yanagita located the periphery in the mountains, where the '*sanka* (mountain people) had been erased from 'history' by a 'modernity' that privileged written records. Yanagita believed that modernity had destroyed the true spirit of the common Japanese people, and that only those who had taken refuge deep in the mountains could keep this spirit alive' (Hashimoto, 1998, p.135). In documenting the folktales of the *sanka* Yanagita's work was implicitly nostalgic, but also his work as an ethnographer was driven by an anticipation of the impact of the continuing growth of the cities on the countryside. Yanagita had failed to influence

government policy regarding rural poverty during his time as an official in the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce and, in Harootunian's assessment of Yanagita's aims in pursuing folklore studies, 'he sought to formulate a method that might more adequately account for the incidence of unequal development and thus delay the conquest of capital over the surviving forms of received social life' (Harootunian, 1998, p.149).

The pictorial work of the Ai-Yū Photo Club can be considered as a visual complement to Yanagita's ethnology. Both bodies of work are posited on an imported, supposedly positivist epistemology, but equally are dedicated to reifying a constructed narrative of authentic native life. Furthermore, if we consider that 'Yanagita used the rhetoric of center - periphery to locate Japan in the world' (Hashimoto, 1998, p.142) in which 'Japan itself was the periphery (*chihō*) of the global modern world' (Hashimoto, 1998, p.143) we have a useful model for reconciling the Ai-Yū Photo Club's use of a non-native schema in scrutinising a local environment. In figs. 2.1 and 2.2 (p.18) we can see two depictions of isolated settlements; fig. 2.1, entitled *Twilight (Shayō)*, a gum bichromate print produced by Hidaka Chōtarō in 1914, a village at the foot of a mountain range is sandwiched between a darkened sky and a barren foreground. The word *shayō* carries the supplementary meaning of a financial and social decline, and with this metaphorical titling the image cannot be taken as simply eulogising country life. The placing of the buildings in the composition does not make for a gentle human-scaled arcadia in which nature has been anthropomorphised. Fig.2.2, an undated and untitled gum bichromate image by Masuko Aitarō (1882-1968) is representative of another recurring subject in the work of the Ai-Yū Photo Club, which is the coastal settlement. Again in this image the habitats appear isolated, in this case not only geographically, with no other villages interrupting the view to the horizon, but also from each other. With no people or signs of human activity visible the place seems deserted, and reading the picture right to left we follow the line of the cottages out to the empty space of the open sea.

Both images have a distinct sense of being on a territorial and social periphery. Whether we regard this as a positive or negative attribute is of course a matter of interpretation,

however, while these are pictorial images, they are not necessarily picturesque in the sense of being merely charming; there is a sense of the grandeur and indifference of nature. Certainly the work of the Ai-Yū Photo Club is best known for being picturesque, however, as the photo critic Iizawa Kōtarō notes 'compared to the Besu-tan school, Hidaka Chōtarō, whose work focussed on nature in the Kiso area, had a more serious and down-to-earth quality' (Iizawa, 1998, p.5). One of these 'serious' qualities, shared by other members of the club, was the interest in portraying labour – mending fishing nets, carrying water, washing clothes and so on. If these images are nostalgic for the rural way of life, they also include a recognition of daily life tasks necessary for survival, but, in contrast to life in the city have the dignity of traditional manual labour. We are no longer in fairyland; a construct which mythologised away the need for real work, the posed and decontextualised tableaux vivants of 'types' engaged in traditional occupations notwithstanding. Rather this is the vision of 'salarymen, civil servants, teachers, doctors – the middle class of society, who were highly educated, had a deep interest in art and literature and enjoyed a life of culture, but on the other hand were estranged from a traditional community ... anxiously adrift as individuals' (Iizawa, 1998, p.5). As much as they sought out 'nature' and rural life as their visual inspiration there is an implicit acknowledgement and denial of the city in the work of the Nagoya pictorialists. Just as Yanagita Kunio created a narrative which 'centered a vanished place (in actuality no-place, neither here nor there, past or present, true nor false)' (Harootunian, 1990, p.107) the subject matter of the Ai-Yū Photo Club, like the photographers of *Yokohama shashin*, is not so much what *is* as what *is not*. This is compounded in both styles of photography by the addition of tinting - creating a print which has an explicit hand-made quality, allowing an encroachment on to the territory of painting - which in the case of the gum bichromate or bromoil process is an avowed attempt to provide the photographer with a means of self-expression.

What did the Nagoya pictorialists wish to express? Iizawa characterises the general tendency of Taishō pictorialism as 'the mentality of escaping from reality' for which photography was a 'temporary respite from the anxiety of modern life' (Iizawa, 1998, p.6).



More specifically, the interests of the Ai-Yū Photo Club can be discerned by the opposition that arose to their style from other contemporary photographers. Takeba Jō notes that in a June issue of *Sundō mainichi* of 1922 an article entitled '*Geijutsu shashin wa sonna mono de wa nakarou (This is not Art Photography)*' the Osaka-based commercial photographer Yūki Shinnosuke criticised excessively pigmented prints and suggested that only 'straight'<sup>1</sup> photography could be considered art photography. This prompted a number of defensive replies by Ai-Yū Photo Club member Sakakibara Seiyō (1887 – 1974) in which pigmented printing is posited as having an exclusive ability to 'fully express an emotional reaction to nature' (Takeba, 1990, p.11). This effectively summarises the problematic of the Nagoya pictorialists, as perceived by their contemporaries, as they seemed to seek a romantic epiphany in the presence of nature while advocating the technical mastery of particular processes.

A more significant comparison that helps define the particular nature of the Ai-Yū Photo Club's escapism is to consider the work of the Fukuhara brothers, Shinzō and Rosō. Though both classifiable as Taishō pictorialism, the photography of the Ai-Yū Photo Club and the Fukuhara brothers differs widely in concept, technique, subject matter and composition. The light, high-key images propounded by the Fukuhara's *Shashin geijutsu-sha* (Art Photography Club) were a 'way out' for photographers 'dissatisfied with the oppressive, gloomy pigmented prints' (Kaneko, 1994 p.13) of the Nagoya pictorialists. In this respect the clash of styles is reminiscent of the late nineteenth century opposition to the 'brown' school by the 'purple' school of *yōga* (western-style painting) in which the Barbizon-influenced style of painting promoted by the Italian artist Fontanesi was challenged by the lightened palette of *plein-airism* championed by Kuroda Seiki.

Fukuhara Shinzō, the *sensei* (master/teacher) of the *Shashin geijutsu-sha*, spearheaded this assault on bromoil and gum-bichromate pictorial images in his serialised article *Shashin no shinshimei (The New Mission of Photography)* that first appeared in the club's magazine *Shashin geijutsu* in April 1922. The main grounds for contesting the kind of work

produced by the Nagoya pictorialists was of their unimaginative imitation of the compositional sensibilities of painting, which primarily favoured consideration of line, shape and composition. Shinzō posited that this undermined photography's truly original purpose which was the study of 'light and its harmony' (*hikari to sono kaichō*), a process that was closer to the poetics of the haiku, as epitomised by the sensibility of wandering poet Matsuo Bashō (1644-1694), than to the aesthetics of painting. Matsuo Bashō, in such works as *The Narrow Road to the North* (*Oku no hosomichi*), had transformed the previously light and insubstantial use of the haiku into an extremely economical vehicle for expressing a profound truth. Through this format he had refreshed the formulaic and somewhat mechanical world of classical verse by seeking out the universal in the commonplace and estimating a poem's success as being dependent as much on the artist's sensitivity to their environment as on their technical skill, all of which Fukuhara Shinzō considered to be appropriate to photography.

In referencing literature Fukuhara Shinzō advocated a sense of taste and elegance (*shumi*) that, given his status as a wealthy amateur, had distinct connotations of the *literati* movement that had originated in the Northern Song dynasty in China (907-1126) and had been revived in the Edo-period by Ike no Taiga (1723-1776) and Yosa Buson (1716-1784). Hirayama Mikiko, in her study of the use of the concepts of *shumi* and *shūyō* (discipline) in Japanese photography from 1903 to 1923, suggests the combination of 'the ideal image of the literati artist, and the concept of [the] modern ideal artist would have been an effective rhetoric for Art Photographers ... Theoretically it elevated the status of the Japanese photographer by liberating him from the lowly status of an artisan.' (Hirayama, 2003, p.64).

Fukuhara Shinzō not only advocated a different kind of art to what he considered 'conventional' pictorialism, but a different kind of artist, one who, like the *literati* painters, was free from the injurious and 'common' necessity to pander to the market or from obsessive attention to technique. A complimentary description of this lifestyle, from an introductory essay to a 1992 Shiseidō-sponsored exhibition of the Fukuhara brother's work is given by Iizawa Kōtarō;

When one thinks of the lives of photographers Shinzō and Rosō Fukuhara, one is struck by a feeling of radiance. This feeling derives not only from their privileged upbringing, not only from the fact that they were blessed with an environment that allowed them to take just the kind of photographs they wanted to, but also from the radiance present in the age in which they grew up and in their photographs as well.

(Iizawa, 1992, p.20)

As Iizawa later notes in the same essay, however, post-World War II photographers dismissed the Fukuhara brothers as mere 'salon photographers', and while they may have had the resources to pursue photography unrestricted by financial concerns, Shinzō, having taken over the family business, was not in a position to pursue life as a full-time artist, and, according to his nephew, Nobukazu, had been denied a 'career' as a painter by his father (Fukuhara Nobukazu, 1977, p.100) despite having studied both *nihonga* (Japanese style painting) from the age of 12 under Ishii Teiko, and subsequently *yōga* (western style painting). This hardly seems to have prevented Shinzō from engaging in a variety of photography-related activities including setting up the *Shashin geijutstu-sha*, running and contributing to monthly publications, organising exhibitions at his own gallery and taking prolonged photographic trips. Rosō had no official position in the Shiseidō Corporation, and while he did not publish any of his works, exhibited several times in the Shiseidō gallery in Ginza, Tokyo.

In terms of experimentation Rosō applied the Fukuhara style of narrow depth of field, compression achieved through the use of medium telephoto lens, close cropping, and a lyrical interplay of light and shadow to a wider range of subjects than his older brother. Fig. 2.3 *Zinc Wall* (p.19), an image of the galvanized corrugated iron wall of the factory in front of his house - a subject that he returned to several times - is indicative of Rosō's interest in the urban everyday. If we compare it with fig.2.4 *Lattice* (p.19) an image by Shinzō taken in Kanazawa we can see a similar understated treatment of a relatively unremarkable street scene, made photogenic by carefully balanced composition and use of sunlight and shadow, however, Rosō's photograph is of the *contemporary* everyday.

While Rosō's work represents a significant move away from pictorialism towards more modernist subject matter, what connects these two images is their attempt to conflate the quotidian with the spiritual. Both Shinzō and Rosō were flâneurs, Rosō (real name Nobutatsu) being an adopted pseudonym meaning 'not going home directly'. Living in Ginza they were able to indulge in the specifically Tokyo version of flâneurism - *Ginbura* (a contraction of Ginza and *bura bura*, or walking around) - as soon as they went out the door, though characteristically Shinzō preferred to go further afield for his inspiration, producing bodies of work from Paris, London, China and Hawaii and Taiwan.

It is notable that whatever his location, whether central or peripheral to western modern culture, Shinzō's photographic treatment of his subject was such that it rendered any particular topography as a sentimental dream-like world occasionally occupied by figures in contemplation (fig.2.5, p.20) or at play (fig.2.6, p.20). Shinzō effectively rejuvenated the fairyland model in glossing over cultural difference and applying an indiscriminate utopian vision of harmonious interaction with nature. Shinzō was explicit in this view regarding Hawaii, oblivious to its colonial history, viewing it as a tropical paradise akin to the mythical Chinese version of Utopia, Peach Blossom Land - a fictional retreat from political and social strife, but also describing an Eden-like nature in which man has no natural predators,

There were originally no animals except for dogs. Horses, cows and pigs were imported and have become wild, deer came from Japan The cows and horses are chased after by cowboys. This is exactly as *Tōkagen*<sup>2</sup>. Moreover there are no doors to close as a protection against robbery, reminiscent of the Zhou period in China, I suppose this is the only utopia on earth.<sup>3</sup>

(Fukuhara S. 1977, p.61-62)

This brings us back to the question of how we can differentiate between the escapism of the Ai-Yū Photo Club and that of the Fukuhara brothers. Both forms of photography were posited on depicting landscapes as an index of cultural identity, for Hidaka Chōtarō and members of the Ai-Yū Photo Club this identity was timeless and epic, and, in contrast to the work of the Fukuhara brothers its nostalgia was for a culture in which the everydayness of modern life was to be completely evaded. This entailed a physical retreat from Japan's increasing urbanization and a conceptual retreat into the pre-Historical community of the traditional village.

The escapism of the Fukuhara style took place both in front of and behind the camera. Shinzō claimed that 'photography is a matter of culture from top to bottom' (Fukuhara S. 1922, p.14) and his nostalgic escapism engaged the photographer as well as the photograph. The superficiality of the *Shashin geijutsu-sha* gaze is noted by Mitsuda Yuri and described as a product of class;

The self-satisfactory sort of attitude of its members was shown in the sweet nostalgia they felt towards the subjects they chose. This could also be considered as the limit of *Shashin geijutsu-sha*. They strolled the streets, found objects, and took snapshots of them. They had very few figures of people in their photographs. Their members, who all belonged to the wealthy class, chose to stroll around "shitamachi" (a traditional style neighbourhood) and the suburbs ... They enjoyed the sentiments of life as seen from the outside, and could discover beauty in the casual, domestic articles because they were outsiders, and, in a sense, from a different land ... They believed that to show "light with its harmony" effectively, they should only express "radically but freely, the main object that is reflected to their eye". Therefore, the details of subjects that were outside their view need not be included'

(Mitsuda, 1998, p.185)

As Harootunian notes, 'Speaking from the perspective of life-style, the *petit bourgeoisie* that formed the backbone of the salaryman strata aspired to living a tidy, correct, culturally peaceful existence; from the psychological view, they liked to present themselves as composed, optimistic, serene, cheerful, peaceful and harmonious, habits they hoped emblemized their social location' (Harootunian, 2000, p.204). Shinzō and Rosō were *grande* rather than *petit bourgeoisie*, and by some accounts their lives could not be described as 'cheerful, peaceful and harmonious'<sup>4</sup>. However, the point is that, ideologically speaking, the promotion of the image of a 'culturally peaceful existence' through nostalgia for the noble and refined life of the amateur *literati* artist, and a photographic practice that could assimilate the idea of daily life but gloss over any unpleasant realities, is the most likely aesthetic for the Fukuhara brothers precisely because they were *grande bourgeoisie*.

Despite Shinzō's cosmopolitanism, the harmony that was central to his vision derived from traditional Japanese sources and prefigures the more essentialist aesthetics of Kuki Shūzō and his 1930 work *Iki no kōzō* (*The Structure of Iki*). The contemporary legacy of this

conflation of Japanese literary aesthetics and photography can be seen in the following unapologetic celebration of the ideological landscape by Iizawa Kōtarō, from a 1997 Japanese history of photography:

To all Japanese over a certain age there is a fondly remembered (*natsukashii*) scenery which comes to mind when we close our eyes: shadows of trees on the surface of gently flowing water, the whole scene blurred like mist, wild flowers bloom under a gentle light and you can see mountains in the far distance. This is indeed what we would call a view of the original Japanese landscape.

Such a landscape often appears in the work of the Fukuhara brothers, one that has been almost lost in reality, and in this sense their photos are the best example of Japanese views on nature that have managed to survive generations. This is a different nature for that of westerners which sometimes is violently against humans or sometimes so sublime as to be religious. A Japanese feeling for nature softly cosses the viewer and tempts them into a territory of peace (*shukakumibun*) and oneness with nature. It seems to me there is a desire to melt into such a landscape and identify with it that is alive in the work of the Fukuhara brothers.<sup>5</sup>

(Iizawa, 1997 p.3)

While the work of the Ai-Yū Photo Club was an attempt to resist the centripetal effect of urban modernisation, Iizawa's assessment of the Fukuhara's contribution to Japanese landscape photography underlines the effectiveness of what Julia Adeney Thomas has described as 'a form of naturalized nationhood that refused to recognize the independence of either individuals or their physical environment' (Adeney Thomas, 1998, p.129). With its lack of discrimination the Fukuhara style of light and harmony, as I hope to show in chapter 3.1 on landscape photography in Manchuria, proved to be an useful medium in the initial stages of blurring Japan's territorial boundaries and creating an acceptable face for imperial expansion.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> i.e. silver gelatine print

<sup>2</sup> In using the Chinese syntax for Peach Blossom Land (Japanese - Tōgenkyō) I have assumed Shinzō is referencing the Chinese 'retreatist' prose poem *Peach Blossom Spring* by Tao Yuanming (Tao Qian, 365–426), rather than the Japanese creation myth. Tao Yuanming's tale, which like Thomas More's *Utopia* proposed itself as a real-life account, is the story of a fisherman who stumbles on a perfect society, unchanged for 500 years, whose ancestors were political refugees from the Qing dynasty.

<sup>3</sup> '*Kemono rui wa inu igai inai ga, yunyū sarete yasei ni natta mono wa gyūba, nobuta, nihon kara itta shika no tagui de kaubōi ni oikakerareru teido, masani tōkagen, shikamo shū no jidai womo awaseru gotoku, tōzoku no tame ni tozasu beki to suramo iranai to yūni itattewa, chikyū jō yuiitsu no yūtopia de arō.*'

<sup>4</sup> Their nephew Yoshiharu describes an episode with unsettling overtones in which Shinzō talks to him as a boy at primary school about art being an elevation of a man's sexual urges to a 'higher dimension'. He goes on to describe Rosō as 'difficult, self-centred and above all being very highly-strung' (Kanazawa, 1992, pp.10-11), and implies that both of them were difficult to get on with.

Nishiyama Kiyoshi, a member *Nihon shashinkai*, describes the members relationship with their chairman, Shinzō,

'... I suppose that everyone in the club felt the same way; we seemed to have made him a God as a result of too much respect. We hardly talked to him directly, for example in a club meeting none of the members would walk in front of *sensei* - everyone walked behind him or at a distance. In my memory I was never praised by him.' (Kamekure, 1977, p.104)

'... *shikashi kore wa watashi hitori dake dewa naku, tōji no kaiin zenbu mo onaji kimochi datta to omoimasu. Shitagatte sensei wo sūhai suru no amari kamisama no yō na sonzai ni shite shimatta yō deshita. Chokuseitsu taiwa suru koto nado mare deshita. Tokiniwa konna koto mo arimashita. Aru satsueikai no toki, sankā shita kaiin tachi wa, sensei no mae wo aruku mono wa hotondo naku, mina atokara zorozoro to aruku ka, aruiwa tōku hanarete yokome de sensei no osugata wo ogamu yō na kimochi de aruita mono deshita.*'

<sup>5</sup> '*Aru nenrei ijō no nihonjin naraba, daredemo me wo tojireba atama no naka ni ukande kuru yōna natukashi jōkei ga aru. Yuruyaka ni nagareru mizu ni, jumoku ga kage wo otoshite iru. Keshiki no zentai wa moya ga kakatta yōni usuku kemuri, odayakana hikari no shita de na mo shiranu hana ga sakimidare, tōkuni yama no sugata ga mieru – sore wa masani wareware nihonjin ni totte no genfūkei to demo yūbeki nagame de arō.*

*Fukuhara Shinzō to Fukuhara Rosō no kyōdai no sakuhin niwa, imawa mō genjitsu niwa hotondo ushinawarete shimatta, sono yōna fūkei ga tabitabi tōjō suru. Sono imi de, karera no shashin koso, sedai wo koete uketsugarete kita nihonjin no shizenkan no mottomo yoku taigen shita mono to ieru darō. Takedakeshiku, tokiniwa ningen to hageshiku tairitsu shi, aruiwa shūkyō teki to sae ieru yō na igen wo sonaeta seiōjin ni totte no shizen towa chigatte, yawaraka ni miru mono wo tsutsunde [shukaku mibun] no yasuragi no kyōchi ni sasoikomu yōna shizen eno omoi de aru. Sonna fūkei no naka ni tokekomi, dōka shital to yū kimochi ga, karera no shashin no naka niwa itsudemo myaku utte iru yōni omoeru.'*

## **2.2 The pictorial landscape in the present-day**

In my comparison of the work of the Ai-Yū Photo Club and the Fukuhara brothers I hope to have shown that within the overarching category of Taishō pictorialism the nostalgic landscape could perform different ideological functions. However at this point I would like to focus on the characteristics that these and other forms of photography of the period had in common thereby setting a context for the practical work I have produced in response to landscapes of the Taishō period.

The development from low-key images of mountains, forests and coastlines in which the characteristics of the print were promoted as the primary aesthetic innovation to delicate close-cropped high-key images which focused on roadside details is unquestionably a significant change of style. However, in histories of photography Taishō pictorialism as a whole is frequently referred to as 'romantic', 'sentimental' and 'nostalgic'<sup>1</sup> which has seemed so self-evident as require no further explanation. The practical research in this section has been aimed at exploring why these terms seem eminently applicable and also in investigating what, if anything, can be redeemed from a form of photography that has generally failed to resurface in a positive critical light since its succession by social documentary and avant-garde experimentation. The work of Michael Kenna and the 'Architecture' series by Sugimoto Hiroshi are discussed as examples of contemporary work that in various ways touch on issues related to pictorialism and contextualize my practical work.

The commonality of Taishō pictorialist photography is a combination of formal aspects of the image and an overall aesthetic tendency towards symbolism (in the case of the Fukuhara brothers, a combination of Steichen's 'equivalence' and Bashō's representation of



the universal in the concrete). The image itself could contain the most modern of subjects, from the odd telegraph pole in the work of Fukuhara Rosō to full-blown urban landscapes in the work of Ishida Kiichirō (1886 -1957), a regular exhibitor with *Shashin geijutsu-sha*, however what seems to most engender the epithets of sentimentality and nostalgia is a partiality of vision. This could be expressed in the obfuscation of detail (mostly through soft focus, sometimes combined with an oil wash - *zōkingake* - a technique particularly favoured by the *Besu-tan* photographers) or in the omission of context. The critical failure for the Ai-Yū Photo Club for Fukuhara Shinzō was that bromoil and gum bichromate images obscured what was seen as the inherent purpose of the camera; capturing the effects and sense of light, behind a print that compositionally and texturally resembled painting. In due course the critical failure of the Fukuhara style was the limitation of its engagement with its subject matter; creating idyllic scenes by the considered exclusion of social and visual context<sup>2</sup>.

My practical response to this issue is to have exaggerated the effect of soft focus through the use of digitally applied blur. I have also used a working Kodak Vest Pocket Autographic Series III (circa 1925) in order to emulate the visual quality of cameras in use in the period in question<sup>3</sup>. The objective of the practical work in this section, however, was not simply to replicate pictorial images, but to establish their aesthetic boundaries, and to determine whether it was possible to work within the style while maintaining a critical distance from its nostalgic function. A few 'natural' non-blurred landscapes were also photographed as a 'control group' with which to contrast the main body of work, which addressed the issue of content in two ways:

1. simulating original photographs by photographing period or reproduced structures
2. photographing modern and contemporary scenes which would challenge the nostalgic content of the original images

Regarding images of the first category, fig.2.7 (p.21) shows an image of the auditorium of the Chihaya-Akasaka Primary School built in 1897, a building in Meiji Mura, the open-air architectural museum near Nagoya in Aichi prefecture which contains Meiji and Taishō period buildings that have been disassembled and then reconstructed as a commercial attraction. Fig.2.8 (p.21) shows the summer house of Lafcadio Hearn, another preserved building in Meiji Mura, in direct reference to work produced by Fukuhara Shinzō on Hearn's residence in Shimane. (figs. 2.9 and 2.10, p.22). The 'soft focus' of the two images from Meiji Mura (as is the case for almost all of my images in this section) has been exaggerated through digital blur so that the subject is only just discernible. In this way I hope to reference the partial vision of the pictorialist image but at the same time to obviate its dysfunction; the 'dreamlike' sense of longing, characteristic of soft focus, has become a frustrating partial blindness.

Fig. 2.11 (p.23), an image of a reproduction Ainu settlement from the theme park / open-air museum<sup>4</sup> Little World, also in Aichi prefecture, is based on Hidaka Chōtarō's 1919 work *Snowy Village*, fig.2.12 (p.23), and takes on the notional subject of the periphery. Little World is an assemblage of pre-modern structures which, with some exceptions, have been constructed on site by native builders and craftsmen as copies of original buildings. These include a village from Burkina Faso, a Peruvian hacienda, Indonesian and Micronesian longhouses, a Bavarian chapel and Native American teepees. Hendry, in her study of cultural representation *The Orient Strikes Back* gives a cursory explanation of Little World as given by its director anthropologist Professor Ōnuki Yoshio, 'the overall rationale of the museum was to demonstrate that people the world over are basically the same, but have different cultures that are interesting to study' (Hendry, 2000. p.158). While Hendry does not directly challenge Ōnuki's description of Little World's purpose, it is clear from her general argument that sees the cultural and ideological roots of this and other *gaikoku mura* (foreign

villages) in the world's fairs and exhibitions of the late nineteenth/early twentieth century. While acknowledging Benedict Anderson's argument, proposed in *Imagined Communities*, of ethnographical display in these cases being a symbolic 'display of power' Hendry poses the question, but fails to clearly answer, whether contemporary Japanese theme parks/*gaikoku mura* are a form of reverse Orientalism. I would suggest that in common with the cultural displays of the world fairs Little World is also a symbolic display of power, directed inward (it is primarily marketed to native tourists) and that its unstated function, by focusing on cultures that are geographically, temporally and socially distant to the technologically modern urban environment, is to act as an indicator of Japan's advancement.

In this sense Little World and Meiji Mura<sup>5</sup>, are 'discourses of the vanishing', to use Marilyn Ivy's terminology. Ivy, in her examination of nostalgic cultural practices, including an extended discussion of *Tōno monogatari* and the subsequent development of the Tōno area into a 'museum'd utopia', posits that, 'Through tourism, folklore studies, education, and mass media – and through everyday moments of national-cultural interpellation and identification – Japanese of all generations seek a recognition of continuity that is coterminous with its negation' (Ivy, 1995, p.10)<sup>6</sup>. Photography, clearly, must also be considered a potent medium in this quest for continuity and the nostalgia of pictorialism rather than preserving the past, replaces it with mythology and in essence ruptures true historical continuity. My intention in photographing 'traditional' structures and contrasting these with contemporary urban landscapes is to obviate a problematic particular to Taishō pictorialism; *where* continuity could be located and *how* it was to be represented.

In the course of investigating this issue, and in establishing a working form for the photography in this section I used a Kodak Vest Pocket camera in Ōnuma Quasi-National

Park in Hokkaidō Prefecture (fig. 2.13, p.24). Visited by the Meiji emperor in 1881 and Crown Prince Yoshihito in 1911, the year before his accession to the throne as Taishō emperor, Ōnuma lake was designated as a recreational area for foreigners in 1854, when Commodore Perry berthed at nearby Hakodate after negotiating the Treaty of Kanagawa. The park has a particular relevance to the concept of landscape in the Taishō era as the park was voted one of the three 'new scenic views of Japan' (shin nihon sankei<sup>7</sup>) to rival the *meisho* traditionally considered the most beautiful - Amanohashidate, Miyajima and Matsushima - by a readers' poll held by the publisher Jitsugyō no nihonsha in 1914. My intention in taking unaltered pictorialist images of Ōnuma, and other non-urban locations, was to establish whether a replication of the characteristics of the pictorialist style would result in work that, as simulacra, could be a medium of critical contrast to the originals. However, with no visual clues, apart from perhaps a close examination of the paper to distinguish them, I found that a reproduced pictorial image suffered from all the aesthetic pitfalls of the originals.

The contemporary British photographer Michael Kenna (1953 - ) photographed lake Ōnuma in 2002 (fig.2.14, p.24) as part of an ongoing interest in Japanese landscape. In a 2003 interview he described his idea of a Japanese aesthetic, his schematization of which is reminiscent of Fukuhara Shinzō's attempt to define, perhaps ironically, an *exclusively* Japanese practice of photography<sup>8</sup>:

I love the Japanese aesthetic. I've spent a lot of time in Japan. One of my recent books is titled Japan. I spent three years on and off photographing in Japan for this book, and some of the photographs also date back to the 80s. It's difficult not to be influenced by their sense of serenity, tranquility, pureness and simplicity of design. It again harkens back to the essence of haiku, just a few elements ... There is kind [sic] of calmness and grounded-ness, and a centered-ness, which I really appreciate.

(LensWork, Dec 03)

Kenna's practice is a self-avowed development of early pictorialism (interview in *Photo Review*, January 2003), in which he has retained the effect of visual softness by a variety of techniques, other than the use of a soft focus lens, such as using long exposure times to blur the movement of clouds and water. To this he has wedded a modern minimalism with the intention that 'elements of mist and rain and water and so forth, they all act, in a sense, as veils to filter out a lot of the background clutter, noise and distraction' (*Photo Review*, Jan 2003). At its worst this could be seen as being an updated form of the superficiality that dogged the Fukuhara style, however, conceptually Kenna's work differs from pictorialism in one major respect, most evident in his work on Nazi concentration camps, which is that in the place of nostalgia there is an ambivalent reminiscence of historical events.

Kenna's relationship with pictorialism is an almost entirely sympathetic one, in which he celebrates the possibility of an aesthetic union with nature through his practice. With the aim of putting the Japanese pictorialist's relation to nature under scrutiny the second body of work I produced in this section entailed photographing modern and contemporary structures or spaces that would create a dissonance with the warm-toned softness of the image. The locations I targeted were to have the expansive grandeur of the mountain and coastal landscapes of the Nagoya pictorialists but within the urban environment (figs 2.15, 2.16, p.25 and 2.17, 2.18, p.26). Fig. 2.15, *Flats, Odaiba*, is a modern 'coastal settlement'; an image of apartments on the artificial island of Odaiba in Tokyo Bay in which the habitats themselves form the mountainous backdrop. Figs. 2.16 and 2.17 are two images of the home of the Ai-Yū Photo Club; in *Dawn, Nagoya* the monumental scale of the urban environment is again emphasized, with a characteristically wide Nagoya street forming a valley between the office blocks. In fig. 2.17 *Blue Lodgings, Shirakawa Park*, based on fig.2.18 Hidaka Chōtarō's 1920 image *Morning Light (Asa no hikan)* the rural periphery, with its connotations of a simple life and primitivism, is relocated into the centre of the modern

city with an image of the numerous tents of blue vinyl that house the 'homeless' and which are a ubiquitous sight in towns throughout Japan since the end of the bubble economy.

This body of work bears some comparison with the *Architecture* series by Sugimoto Hiroshi<sup>9</sup>, which is also a series of blurred large format monochrome images, not only from a stylistic point of view, but in the link that is established between blurred vision and 'the distance between reality and utopia' (Bonami, 2003, p.10). Like Kenna, Sugimoto works from a minimalist tradition, his interest being in 'taking away all the details but being left with a very strong vision' (Sugimoto, 2003), however Sugimoto's minimalism is driven, to a greater degree, by conceptual, rather than visual concerns<sup>10</sup>. In these out-of-focus images of single structures, Sugimoto has been described as presenting 'monuments to our unfulfilled desires for utopia' (Yau, 2003, p.19) in which the unfocused quality of the image plays a vital role:

Conceptually speaking, Sugimoto had to arrive at a photograph that is not bound by time, that transports the viewer into a dreamlike realm and reconstitutes the subject into something else. His solution was elegantly simple. He set the focal point of his camera to twice "infinity," and found a particular view that resonated with what we know of his subjects, but that dislodged them from their familiar surroundings and postcard vistas.

(Yau, 2003, p.20)

The strategy and objective (barring perhaps the reference to postcard vistas) is comparable to that of the pictorialists' soft focus, though Sugimoto's unfocused gaze is directed at the utopian possibilities of modernism. Critic Jonathan Jones has given an ambivalent assessment of Sugimoto's obfuscation of detail which bears a telling similarity to Mitsuda's analysis of the Fukuhara style:

He certainly takes liberties as if they were toys. While architects might applaud his sense of space and structure, he subordinates everything to his own remote sensibility ... Sugimoto is a kind of fetishist, and as you walk among these photographs you realise that when he looks at a modernist building, he is interested in it not so much for reasons of architectural

connoisseurship or historical documentation, but insofar as it satisfies certain hungers, appetites he has for light and, mostly, shadow.

(Jones, 2002)

The common ground, it would seem, between nostalgic and utopian representation is the evasion of 'here' - the creation of a mythic represented space at the expense of what is outside the frame, and 'now' - the projection of the photographer's desire beyond the everyday. However what distinguishes Sugimoto's work from the romanticism of his soft focus predecessors is that *Architecture* deals with other people's visions<sup>11</sup>, and as such there is a critical distance (albeit a highly sympathetic one) with the subject matter, the avoidance of which, to all intents and purposes, can be considered a hallmark of the pictorialist genre. In these terms I have attempted, in my own work, to combine the representation of a mythical space with the everyday urban environment. This has not been done in as a 'distracted' postmodernist manoeuvre which 'only clocks the variations ...and only knows too well that the contents are just more images' (Jameson, 2001, p.ix), rather my intention has been to retrieve the act of dreaming from the pictorialist vision in the consciousness of the social construction of reality.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to works already cited see also Kaneko, 2001, and Dower 1981 p.16.

<sup>2</sup> Photography critic Ina Nobuo's 1932 essay *Return to Photography (Shashin ni kaerø)* in *Kōga* magazine, in which he urged photographers to 'document, report, analyse and criticize this society's life and its relationship to nature', encapsulated the opposition to pictorialism's evasion of the modern which has been described as having developed, in part, to the trauma of the 1923 Kantō earthquake (cf. Dower, 1977).

<sup>3</sup> The original camera used by Fukuhara Shinzō was a UK made Tropical Soho Reflex, while the first Besu-tan photographers would have used a Mark I Vest Pocket, a fully-working model of which was difficult to find.

<sup>4</sup> I have described Meiji Mura as an open-air museum, while suggesting that there is a stronger element of the theme park in Little World, mainly due to the conservational function of Meiji Mura, whereas the majority of the buildings in Little World (a collection of dwellings and communal structures from around the world) have been built on site. However, as both are commercial enterprises (owned by the same company - Nagoya Tetsudō) and perform dual functions of entertaining and educating I am not suggesting this as an absolute criterion of distinction (cf. discussions in Leheny, 2003 and Hendry, 2000) but as a way of distinguishing between original and reproduced structures.

<sup>5</sup> A longer discussion of the theme park and nostalgia will be pursued in the final chapter of this thesis.

<sup>6</sup> Ivy discusses localised, specifically Japanese subjects, but I include Little World, with its international scope, because, as *Yokohama shashin* subsumed Japan into a general Euro-American centred nostalgia for a mythical pre-modern, Little World acts to confirm Japan as a post-industrial leisure oriented society by establishing itself as a centre for which other 'primitive' cultures can now be considered peripheral.

<sup>7</sup> Of the two other sites, Yabakei in Kyūshū, like Ōnuma, had no cultural associations and was chosen for only for its 'natural' beauty.

<sup>8</sup> Kenna's work generally gives the impression of integrating the haiku aesthetics of *shiori* (delicacy/tenderness), *sabi* (loneliness/desolation) and *hosomi* (slenderness), which promote a comparison with the Fukuhara style and some individual images such as *Temple Garden*, *Negoroji*, *Kagawa*, *Shikoku*, by Kenna (2003) and Shinzō's 1929 *Camellia* and their



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photographs of the Houses of Parliament show a particular similarity (see below). However, these similarities are coincidental, as Kenna claims no knowledge of the work of the Fukuhara brothers (email communication 19/10/04).



*Temple Garden, Negoroji*  
Michael Kenna, 2003



*Camellia*  
Fukuhara Shinzō, 1929



*Big Ben and Westminster Abbey*  
Michael Kenna, 1975



*London*  
Fukuhara Shinzō, 1913

<sup>9</sup> I came across Sugimoto's *Architecture* series in 2004 after having already started the blurred series in 2001. The similarities in style are therefore coincidental.

<sup>10</sup> Despite Sugimoto's high-profile as a conceptual photographer/artist he places great emphasis on the technical aspects of his practice (cf. Sugimoto 2003), an irony discussed at length by Guardian critic Jonathan Jones (Jones, 2002).

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<sup>11</sup> 'I'm trying to recreate the imaginative visions of the architecture before the architect built the building, so I can trace back the original vision from the finished product.' (Sugimoto, 2003)

### 3.1 Manchuria: modernity Inside out

Instead of struggling in our small land,  
We find our satisfaction in these spacious fields. Our pioneering spirit ...  
Look! It grows day by day.  
This is our second homeland, our paradise.

(A Song for the Development of Manchukuo (*Manshū kaitaku no uta*)  
*Manshū kaitaku kakyokushū* 1940, p.133, quoted in Guelcher, 2001, p. 81)

This chapter examines the role of the nostalgic landscape in constructing a narrative of authenticity by comparing a variety of travel literature supported by the South Manchurian Railway (SMR) with the work of photographer Fuchikami Hakuyō (1889-1960, real name Fuchikami Kiyoki) and other images produced in Manchuria from the late 20 to the early 40s. Whereas in previous chapters I have considered nostalgia as an *a priori* mechanism of modernism with a concomitant function in deliberations over national identity, its appearance in the Meiji and Taishō landscape photography already discussed could not be described as wilfully political. The avowed intent of the nostalgic landscape was, in these cases, primarily an artistic one, but with its transposition to north-east China, this form was in the full embrace of a political adventure. Despite this, just as Japan's presence in Manchuria was an uneven mixture of vision, opportunism, accident and expediency, the nostalgic landscape was both a personal and highly politicised treatment of the territory.

Matusaka considers Japan's progress from economic investment in Manchuria to creation of the puppet state of Manchukuo within the framework of 'rationalization after the fact of acquisition' (Matusaka, 2001, p.11), and that 'the process lent itself to a constant reinvention of imperial policy over time' (Matusaka, 2001, p.12). Just as the state of Manchukuo has been eloquently described as a chimera, i.e. an illusion made up of incongruous parts<sup>1</sup>, changing styles of photography reflected various aspects of the Japanese presence in Manchuria. Responsive to the influence of Western art movements and the social realism of Soviet propaganda, photography was used to portray Manchuria in such diverse ways that the territory can be considered a background to visual experimentation. One of the most distinct contrasts in this diversity was the necessity to

represent Manchuria simultaneously as a location of pastoral harmony but also as a dynamic centre of industrialization and modernity, indicative that, as Louise Young notes,

The builders of Manchuria were a motley crew. Visions of empire fired the imagination of a mixed collection of right-wing officers, reform bureaucrats, and revolutionaries of left and right, making bedfellows of erstwhile opponents ... This did not mean that they held the same vision of Manchukuo's future. Far from it: their ideas were frequently at odds with one another. Where intellectuals saw in Manchukuo's new colonial cities an urban utopia, rural reformers dreamt of agrarian paradise; where businessmen looked upon Manchukuo as the remedy to a faltering capitalist economy, radical army officers saw it as the means to overturn capitalism itself.

(Young, 1998, p.16)

Where Japan had once provided a suitable location as mythical periphery for industrialised European and North American fantasies of the pre-modern, Japan found in Manchuria a suitable *tabula rasa* onto which could be inscribed a new history of social evolution. The plain-speaking first director of the South Manchuria Railway (SMR) Gotō Shinpei, trained as a medical doctor and with an abiding belief in the possibilities of science and technology, saw Manchuria as a proving-ground for Japan's ability to compete in nation's social Darwinist struggle against nature;

Before us lie vast prairies several times the size of Japan's territory, presenting us with a great question. Are we to continue our colonial policy, which since the Meiji era, has been one of advancing the nationalist and imperialist (*teikokushugi*) cause? If so, the problem of whether these vast prairies will belong to Japan or some other country is one with which we must come to terms today.'

(quoted in Matsusaka, 2001, p.182)

As a guest of the SMR under its second director Nakamura Zekō in 1909, the renowned writer Natsume Sōseki, despite a distinct ambivalence to his sponsors, gives a vivid portrayal of how the local Chinese were viewed from the perspective of visiting Japanese in his travel diary *Travels in Manchuria and Korea (Mankan tokoro dokoro)*. Referring to them derogatorily as *chan*, the equivalent of 'chinks', Sōseki, despite his aversion to nationalistic sentiment and the Russo-Japanese war, which he had expressed four years earlier in *The Heredity of Taste (Shumi no iden)*, characterises native Manchurians as hapless, uncultivated, and, above all, unhygienic. In a descriptive mode reminiscent of the Meiji-era travel literature discussed in chapter 1.1 Sōseki's disgust with the 'primitive' habits of the locals contrasts with his lyrical portrayal of the landscape, which is seen as

vast, majestic and fertile. At times the territory is rendered as a bigger and better version of Japan; the following passage occurs at the moment that the author in a fit of rage with the Chinese driver of his carriage jumps down and comes into physical contact with the steppe over which he has been travelling in discomfort,

I noticed that the view from each side of the carriage was already blocked. They were not bamboo, but the height of the green masses made it look exactly like a bamboo grove. I had a deep sense of tranquillity, as if I had been walking in the Japanese countryside ... it gave one incomparable pleasure to walk along, bending one's head beneath the greenery ... In one place, tall pines rose up. Their needles were twice as long as those in Japan, and they were even darker than the pines that grow by the sea.

(Natsume, 2000. pp.130-131, trans. Brodey, I.S & Tsunematsu, S.I.)

This point represents a rare moment of joy in a tragicomic narration of which the central theme is not empire, but personal discomfort brought on by the difficulties of travel combined with health problems. At any time that the narrator of *Travels in Manchuria and Korea*, who we cannot necessarily rely on to be the unmediated voice of Sōseki, is put in a situation to pronounce on political or historical issues, he retreats into complaining of stomach pains, or highlights his disengagement through pointed forgetfulness<sup>2</sup>. This is wholly in keeping with Sōseki's 'I' novel (*shishōsetsu*) practice, and makes the general tone of *Travels in Manchuria and Korea*, one of personal introspection rather than social commentary. However it is through this very strategy that the narration inadvertently reveals the extent to which Japan assumed its presence in Manchuria as a legitimate civilizing mission, posited on an image of China as backward and incapable of modernising without direction. It can also be taken as representative of how the space of Manchuria could be used as a foil for defining identity, whilst ostensibly the territory itself is relegated to being a backdrop for a foreign narrative.

The SMR was subsequently to invite numerous other literary figures to Manchuria in an effort to give its activities intellectual legitimacy (cf. Fogel, 1996), of whom an interesting comparison to Sōseki is the poet Yosano Akiko (1878-1942). Yosano, renowned for her 1901 poetry collection *Midare-gami*, which controversially placed her feelings for her brother, who fought in China, above support for the Sino-Japanese war, gives a more sympathetic view of China and the Chinese from her visit in 1928. Where Sōseki's

travelogue is subtly overshadowed by the preceding events of the Russo-Japanese war, Yosano's work takes place in a time of growing tension and she recounts changes in her travel itinerary in response to news of skirmishes and attacks on the railway by anti-Japanese forces. Despite this, in contrast to Sōseki's acceptance of the Japanese presence in Manchuria (seemingly tacit in his travelogue, but cast more positively in less public intercourse)<sup>3</sup>, Yosano directly expresses her opposition to Japan's presence in China as she observes Japanese troops at Shěnyáng (then called Fengtian) station,

When I consider the Sino-Japanese issue from the perspective of a Japanese, or when I try to consider it from the perspective of our neighbour the Chinese, or from my position as a citizen of the world, I cannot remain indifferent as these despicable bloodcurdling facts press in before my eyes. I imagine that Japan will end up isolated from the world, and it saddens me.

(Yosano, 2001, p.56. Trans. Fogel)

After travelling north to Mongolia Yosano's return to Shěnyáng coincides with the assassination of warlord Zhāng Zuòlín by Japanese army officers and, amidst rumours of an impending attack on the city, Yosano stoically continues her sightseeing to visit the Qing palace in the old town and the Beiling tombs, characteristically giving her readers an eloquent explanation of their historical background. This incident is revealing inasmuch as throughout Yosano's travelogue her interaction with China is mainly through her appreciation of its historical and literary culture, rather than with actual Chinese, with whom contact is often characterised by uncertainty or anxiety on her part. This is hardly surprising given the circumstances, but in narrating her journey as a tour of cultural sites the overall effect is that Manchuria is not regarded in her travel diary as a territory populated by real people so much as a matrix of historical representations. In one moment, however, when Yosano experiences the Manchurian landscape as landscape, in a passage reminiscent of Sōseki's epiphanic moment in the bamboo grove, Yosano's gaze is suffused with homesickness,

At 4:50 P.M. we arrived in Wulongbei, a quiet Chinese village. There were no Japanese living here outside of the staff at the station and at the hot springs inn, the Wulongge, located only about two hundred yards east of the station. In front one looked out onto the Sha River, and from behind rose the mountains. Nearby were paddy fields maintained, oddly enough, by the hot springs hotel, with frogs croaking and a thicket of trees reflected on the surface - the whole scene had a Japanese flavor to it. Two or three miles to the northwest, there floated up a mountain air tinged with purple, the distinctive character of a granite mountain known as Wulong

Mountain ... When I arose here the next morning ... I wrote a few lines of a poem, such as the following:

The paddies and the grove of willows put the traveller in a  
frame of mind of returning home.

(Yosano, 2001, pp.54-55. Trans. Fogel)

As two of the leading writers of their times Sōseki and Yosano could be expected to write their travelogues with particular attention to their own aesthetic interests, however the point is to consider how these interests impact on their visualisation of Manchuria. Despite Sōseki and Yosano's very different views of their social status *vis-à-vis* the Chinese (for Yosano the Japanese come off rather badly in comparison<sup>4</sup>) their narratives essentially marginalise them to make room for, in Sōseki's case, a vast landscape of introspection, and in Yosano's case, one of cultural antiquity. As these processes are reminiscent of travel diaries of 19<sup>th</sup> century Euro-American globetrotters grappling with difference, other less literary forms of propaganda-oriented commentary simply juxtaposed the exotic with the familiar in an attempt to make Manchuria a desirable 'other' but mapped as recognisable, and therefore legitimately appropriable, territory.

Adachi Kinnosuke's 1925 English-language text *Manchuria, A Survey*, for example, draws on both an American and an 'oriental' sense of nostalgia to naturalise the Japanese presence in Manchuria by using the conceit of travelling on the Seoul-Mukden Through Express in a carriage with Japanese businessmen and American tourists. As they speed through 'the sacred land' Adachi notes a battleground from the Russo-Japanese war, also fought over in the Sino-Japanese war and reflects,

Reverence for the old, for the things of the past, the glorification of History with a capital H, is the dominant trait of all oriental races. My countrymen used to share this trait with their neighbour peoples - they used to.

(Adachi, 1925, p.7)

After the train passes over the river Taitze, one of the Japanese passengers sees a mountain range and likens it to scenic views of Ōita prefecture, which Adachi manages to further compress into a comparison suitable for his American readership,

... a few seats ahead of us rose an exclamation:

**"Yabakei! - the Yabakei of Manchuria!"**

Now whenever a Japanese traveller explodes with a shrill shout of "Yabakei!" He is trying to tell the world - and he doesn't care particularly who hears him - precisely what Americans mean when they thrill over the mention of the sunset's colors in the Grand Canyon of Arizona, of the splendours of the Yosemite, of the orchestra of the sky, the peaks and mountain streams of the Canadian Rockies.

(Adachi, 1925, p.9)

After further colourful descriptions of the wonders seen from the train Adachi writes,

Fairy Land - for fifty-five miles - from Lienshankuan to Chiatou, nothing less!

(Adachi, 1925. p.10)

and later notes the reaction of some American passengers upon seeing 'miles and miles of level fields',

"Why," said one of the Americans, "here is our dear old Kansas."

(Adachi, 1925. p.10)

While the natural landscape was co-opted into sustaining narratives of cultural and topographic nostalgia, the cities of Manchuria were to be utopian symbols of Japan's Asian modernity, and in the 1933 *A Tale of Three Cities* Adachi, during the course of describing a journey along the SMR from Dàlián (Dairen) to Chángchūn (Hsinking) via Shěnyáng (Mukden) is obliged to conflate Manchuria as both a romantic landscape, a vast plain of arable land, and the site of technological and social modernity for which he takes cities in the United States as his benchmark. The opening of Adachi's text describes his entry into Dàlián harbour, which in its tone is reminiscent of Pierre Loti's entry into Nagasaki,

Day was breaking on a turquoise sea set in an encircling arm of amethyst hills. Ahead of us gleamed a white lighthouse at the entrance to the harbour of Dairen. The sunset on the sea of myriad isles, the Tatokai, off the southern tip of Chōsen, was still opal and warm in our memory. There was enchantment in the scene – the lure of the Eternal East, in spite of all the evidence of civilization. The premier port of the newly born Manchukuo state – the mightiest entry port of all the Northern seaboard of continental Asia – is a princely city built on the gentle slope of a range of hills dipping into the sea, like Kobe, like Seattle.

(Adachi, 1933, p.1)

Adachi then goes on to use Dàlián as evidence of Japan's effectiveness as a modernising influence,

... in China, cities have stood for ten centuries without making a single forward step. No boomtown in the western states of the United States has



gone much faster than Dairen. She has outdistanced all the cities in the whole of North China as a thoroughly modern city.

(Adachi, 1933. p.4)

The centrepiece of Dàlián's modernity is the central laboratory in which,

Experts are busily engaged, with flasks and test tubes, in ambitious experiments, in an effort to realize what might seem futuristic dreams to the laity. And many a dream, indeed, has come true, giving birth, one by one to a new industry in this land.

(Adachi, 1933. pp.7-8)

while of Shěnyáng (at that time Mukden) Adachi writes,

its wide streets are paved as smoothly as any of the show streets of New York or Chicago and its modern equipment, including water supply and drainage, is quite the most up-to-date in the world.

(Adachi, 1933. pp.14-15)

In the course of Manchuria's transformation into Manchukuo photography was to function as a dynamic projection of this modernity in the documentation of cityscapes, trains and military hardware, but also underpinning this utopianism was the necessity of appropriating Manchuria's past.

When Fuchikami Hakuyō arrived in Dàlián in 1928 to work as a photographer in the public relations department of the SMR he brought with him a form of aesthetic expression that was applied to the territory of Manchuria, rather than created in response to it (fig. 3.1, p.27)<sup>5</sup>. Exposed to the Fukuhara style from their publication *Shashin geijutsu*, Hakuyō was an early adherent to the ideas of 'light with its harmony', and like Fukuhara Shinzō, Hakuyō's original ambition was to be a painter, though his family's bankruptcy prompted him to consider photography as a profession. In this respect Hakuyō's relationship with photography was qualitatively different from many of his amateur peers, a point duly noted in an exhibition review by Kometani Kōrō (1889-1947) of the Naniwa Shashin Club,

Mr Fuchikami's practice is unlike that of our class in which we have a feeling that it is a hobby or leisure activity done outside of our busy working lives, and there is no sense of it being a mere pastime. He is devoting everything as a human being to his practice, for Mr Fuchikami photography is never a bourgeois diversion, so it is natural that [in his photography] he is giving of his own blood, sweat and tears.<sup>6</sup>

(Regarding the exhibition of *Nihon kōga* (*Nihon kōga-ten o miru*) in *Hakuyō* magazine, Sept. 1923, vol. 2, issue 9, quoted in Iizawa, 1986, p. 161. Translation by author)

Hakuyō's transposition of the pictorial landscape to Manchuria was not representative of a linear development of his artistic principles, however. In the years preceding his move to Manchuria, through the media of his own magazine *Hakuyō* and the Japan Photographic Art Association (*Nihon kōga geijutsu kyōkai*), both established in 1922, Hakuyō had progressively moved away from pictorialism to developing the 'constructivist style' (*Kōseiha*) which aimed at expressing 'abstract beauty based on the organic relationship of mass and line' (quoted in Iizawa, 1986, p. 162). In the 1925 September issue of his magazine, Hakuyō described an experience of street photography with distinct overtones of futurism, and which signalled a radical departure from the rural idyll of pictorialism,

With cars, motorbikes and pedestrians the stage of the city is host to a cacophony of noises which cause misery and disturb us. My lens seems like it will have a nervous breakdown facing the objects that rush endlessly towards me. The hurried shutter and the aperture ring together react with wildly repeated metallic groans. A white car speeds by, glinting with strongly reflected light, those green leaves will be my background. My finger touches the shutter button and I feel anxious; now it's just a matter of waiting for the right triangular composition in the viewfinder, but a bicycle unexpectedly breaks into frame, destroys the image and I lose my prey.<sup>7</sup>

(quoted in Iizawa, 1986, p.163. Translation by author)

The anxious modernity of *Kōseiha* lasted until the end of *Hakuyō* in 1926, but by that time, according to Iizawa, had become 'mere decorative photography, imitative and repetitive' (Iizawa, 1986, p.164). This stylistic dead-end, combined with the financial drain of *Hakuyō*, which was not a money-making enterprise, meant that Manchuria and a lucrative contract with the SMR presented a fresh start. However, despite his reputation as a stylistic innovator who was responsive to foreign art movements, Hakuyō, to some extent, backtracked from his embrace of the modern to revert to the pictorial landscapes which were already being produced in Manchuria by the *Tokyo shashin kenkyūkai* (Tokyo Photography Study Group) influenced *Manshū shashin kenkyūkai* (Manchuria Photography Study Group). As Japan had become an unbearably modern centre of urban life, Hakuyō found in Manchuria a location that suited his interest in expressing landscape in the style of the Barbizon painters. By doing so, Hakuyō and other photographers such as Terashima

Manji of the Manchuria Photo Association (*Manshū shashin renmei*) (fig. 3.2, p.27) 'didn't describe the original landscape witnessed in Manchuria but superimposed upon it a world depicted by 19<sup>th</sup> century French artists like Millet and Corot' (Takeba, 1994).

However, if the Barbizon school was a realist reaction to the idealised landscape of academy painters, Hakuyō's Barbizon-like photography represented a more ambiguous relation to the real. Just before the Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923 Hakuyō expressed a position characteristic of pictorial photographers' desire to establish their medium as a distinct art form that was not merely a mimetic procedure,

It should not be a waste to compare the artistic value of realism [*shajitsushugi*], based on objectivity, and expressionism [*hyōgenshugi*]. Expressionism deals with abstract beauty in contrast to realism's concrete beauty. In short realism mainly grasps the external form and by contrast expressionism mainly depicts the internal essence or one's own emotions. Which has the higher value artistically? I don't hesitate to choose expressionism. It can never be said that profound art can exist when it deals with objectivity, this is why I say that art has to be an expression of self. Realism can never catch up with expressionism and that is why I choose to be subjective.<sup>8</sup>

*Jiko no geijustu tare to iu koto* (Hakuyō, vol 2 issue 7 1923, quoted in Takeba, 1998, p.62. Translation by author)

As a representative of the SMR however, Hakuyō's expressionism was obliged to operate within the social and political context set by his employer, and in *Sunset* [1], for example, his contribution to the 1930 *Manshū Photo Annual* (fig. 3.3, p.28) Hakuyō emotive depiction of a scene at a strip mine, contrasts interestingly with his commentary on the scene,

I saw a pathetic human battle take place in the grandeur of nature that was a serious representation of the anguish of human life, but also it was an indication of the dignity of human labour. Human endeavour made a significant difference to the surface of the world; a deep valley being dug before the light of the setting sun. The twilight reflected back wonderful colours and energy onto the terraces of the mine as a gigantic machine, the apparatus of civilization, roared like a monster.<sup>9</sup>

(*Manshū Photo Annual*, 1930, p.77)

The grim, low-key image of ragged workers with heads downcast is in distinct contrast with other more pastoral images in the Annual, though from the point of view of print quality the image still conforms to the pictorial style. While Hakuyō's ambivalent commentary attempts to put a positive spin on the scene, in hindsight the disjuncture between the text and the

image is revealing of conflicts between the representation and the socio-economic realities of the Japanese presence in Manchuria. Firstly, it manifests a long-running discord in propaganda material, which generally aimed at (and in this sense *Sunset* [1] is an anomaly) portraying a vast land of sublime oriental and ancient beauty<sup>10</sup>, but simultaneously had to propound the economic exploitability of the territory, which the Japanese alone among races were supposedly able to understand<sup>11</sup>. Secondly, apart from the obvious gulf between the vision of building a new paradise and the actual sight of everyday exploitation of Chinese coolies and agricultural workers, stylistically Hakuyō's image is caught somewhere between the unambiguously self-centred expression of pictorialism and an attempt to identify the 'real' through the recognition of social issues.

Where a hybridity of purpose can be seen just in the image *Sunset* [2], Terashima Manji's contribution to the same *Manshū Photo Annual* (fig. 3.2, p.27) *Shepherds Talking* is a more straightforwardly pictorial image portraying the simplicities of rural life, but combined with its accompanying artist's comments, obviates in the most direct way the employment of nostalgia as an ideological tool,

... at the top of the hill there was uniquely Chinese tower which was very photogenic. Looking at them I noticed an evil gash that broke the gently curved lines of the hills. I was told it was a trench from the Russo-Japanese war, so I couldn't complain about it, being Japanese. To my astonishment the trench moved. Hey! I said, our eyes opened in astonishment. But the mystery was soon solved – it was merely a flock of sheep. Soon after we prepared for our own battle and started advancing towards the army of sheep. The battle started at the foot of the hills near the enemy as we advanced we started rapid fire, and soon ran through all our film and had to stop. After the battle when we looked down at the flock of sheep under slanting rays of sunlight it reminded me of a veteran friend 'shown by the red of the setting sun' I had a moment of realisation that it is impossible to truly manifest the endless grandeur of *Manshū* and the feeling it evokes by pen or camera.

After more than twenty years I wonder how much joy it must have been to conquer this hill in the Russo-Japanese war. Have I now been able to conquer it in this battle of art? I felt sadness well up in me.<sup>12</sup>

(*Manshū Photo Annual*, 1930, p.23. Trans. by author)

In 1937 Hakuyō started *Hikaru oka* (*Shining Hills*), a privately-funded publication which promoted the personal work of photographers of the *Manshū Photographer's Club* (*Manshū shashin sakka kyōkai*), which he had established in 1934. Although ostensibly a

non-professional publication, in contrast to the official SMR publication *Manshū gurafu*, for which he had been editor from 1933, *Hikaru oka* took on the mantle of promoting photography not just as an aesthetic medium but also one of active social engagement. Responding to the political context of his professional work and his exposure to Soviet propaganda publications, Hakuyō's pre-Manchuria love of self-expression became a strident advocacy of realism<sup>13</sup> and this facilitated a revival of his earlier constructivist interest in still life (fig. 3.4, p.28).

But just as Manchuria was portrayed in propaganda texts as simultaneously a rural paradise and the location of technological and social modernity, the pictorialist landscape, though it may have lost its soft-focus, was destined to survive alongside, and sometimes incorporated within, more dynamic self-consciously 'modern' photography. As Hakuyō put in a 1939 issue of *Manshū gurafu*,

There are many landscapes in Manchuria that are suitable as photographic motifs; a flock of sheep or camels roaming free in great open fields, a sublime red sunset - the symbol that has been in the heart of the Japanese people since the Russo-Japanese war, the scenery of street vendors. Farmers bodies wrapped up in layers of clothes in paddy fields, the lines and forms are indistinct and it has beautiful composition and internal richness. Some other modern subjects like exotic Harbin, the industrial cities Hōten, Bujun, port Dairen [Dàlián], the capital Shinkyō etc. especially lives of brave immigrants who pioneer the new land. There are good themes like these everywhere. Therefore the artistic quality of photographic practice is flourishing.<sup>14</sup>

(*Manshū gurafu* 1939 January issue, quoted in Takeba, 1998, p.65)

In other words nostalgia, exoticism and a vision of an ideal modern future did not mitigate against each other, but in fact could *collectively* express the identity of Manchukuo - the ultimate hybrid nation-state.

While wholly pictorial treatments reminiscing pre-modern rural life continued to be produced into the 40s, as evidenced by fig. 3.5 (p. 29) an anonymous image from *Manshū Travel Diary (Manshū kikō)*<sup>15</sup>, the almost schizophrenic desperation to represent visually the best of all possible worlds was most amply served by the photo collage. Used to great effect in the propaganda magazine *Front* (fig. 3.6, p.29) multi-language publication based on *USSR in Construction* which ran from 1942 to 1945, and earlier in Japan in *Nippon*

magazine (fig. 3.7, p.30), the nostalgic landscape is revealed in a historical moment of crude utility as integral to modernism, the form of the collage mirroring its instrumentality; made up, distorted, entrancing.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Following Hobbes, who compared the modern state to the monster known as Leviathan, and F. Neumann, who compared the Nazi Third Reich to a Behemoth, should not Manchukuo be seen as that mythical Greek monster, the Chimera, with head of lion, torso of goat, and tail of dragon, where the lion is the Kwantung Army, the goat the (Japanese) emperor system, and the dragon, needless to say, is the Chinese emperor? And the common meaning of Chimera in Western languages is simply illusion...'

(Yamamuro Shin'ichi, 'Saigo no "Manshūkoku" būmu o yonde', Chūō Kōron, June 1989, pp. 354-362, at p. 362, quoted in McCormack, 1991.)

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Brodey's discussion of Sōseki's apolitical stance in his introductory essay to *Travels in Manchuria and Korea* pp.24-25

<sup>3</sup> Fogel notes that in letters written home during his stay Sōseki states 'As I traveled around Manchuria and Korea, I really felt as though the Japanese were indeed a trustworthy people' and that 'Japanese are vigorously engaged in activities all over Manchuria, and these activities are just remarkable. I thought the Japanese were really something'. (quoted in Fogel, 1996. p.252)

<sup>4</sup> In, for example, discussing the Japanese ability to trade in Mongolia, Yosano goes from discussing the practice of Japanese in trade to an assessment of national character,

the Japanese ... lack the stoic strength and industrial and frugal mindset of the Chinese. They are also weaker in group cohesion, and when they go overseas and find themselves excluded, the isolatedly attempt to secure profit ... I must lament the lax nature of the Japanese spirit of adventure and hard work.

(Yosano, 2001, pp.74-74)

<sup>5</sup> Okatsuka Akiko's general assessment of Hakuyō's career in Manchuria, in her essay *Consciousness and Expression of the Modern*, posits the exact opposite of this view stating that his work was 'rooted in the specific locale, climate and customs of Manchuria and the Asian continent. Unlike similar photographic styles concurrently practiced in Japan which concentrated on an 'I'-novel like concern for the subjective experience of the artist, the group centred around Fuchikami attempted to infuse the specific context of Japan with the humanistic world view of the West' (Okatsuka, 1995, p.24). While Hakuyō's work can undoubtedly be seen as inextricably linked with Manchuria, this view does not take into account the range of styles Hakuyō employed and the strong pictorial element of his work in the early part of his 13-year career in China which was a continuation of his practice in Japan.

<sup>6</sup> 'Fuchikami san no undō wa isogashi shigoto no yoka wo motte itonande iru watashitachi no kaikyū no yōni dokokani dōraku meita kibuntō wa marukiri miidasenai sonna namayasashi monodewa nainoda, ningen to shitenō subete wo kono undō ni sasagete orareru ....Fuchikami san ni totte kesshite shashin wa burujowa no yūgi dewa nai, dakara sokoni chino deru yōna shinkokusa ga nijimidete kuruto yūnomo dōri darō janaika.'

<sup>7</sup> 'Jidōsha ya ōtobai ya, jitensha ya udeguruma ya hokō no hitotachi de, tokai no katsubutai ga memagurushiku senkai suru, koko zatsuon no ōkesutora ga seikatsu no hisōna kyokumen wo tenkai shite heiwana kanjō wo tatakitsubusu. Madan naku hasō shitekuru mokutekibutsu ni mukatte, watashi no renzu wa shinkei suijaku wo okoshisouda. Shattā no sokudoki to shibori no kaitenkan towa kinzokusei no umeki wo jibō ni kurikaesu. Shiroi jidōsha ga kyōretsu na hanshakō wo hanatte tokkan suru ... sā ano aoba no kage ga bakku da! Shattā ni yubi ga furete kanjō ga kyokudo ni kinchō shita, ima wa pintogurasu no

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*sankakukei wo matsu bakari datta. Shikashi kokodemo omoimo kakenu jitensha no chinnyū ni yotte mokutekibutsu wo kakimidasare atara emono wo isshi satta.'*

<sup>8</sup> *'Kyakkan wo shu to shita shajitsu shugi no taishō ni, hyōgen shugi no kaiga wo hikiai ni dashite, sono geijutsu kachi wo hikaku suru kotomo muda dewa arumai. Hyōgen shugi wa shajitsu shugi no gushōbi ni taisuru chūshōbi wo toriatsukatta mono de aru. Tsumari shajitsu shugi ga gaikei wo shu to shite toraeta mono ni taishite hyōgen shugi wa naiteki ni kansatsu shi, matawa miuchi ni haranda jiko jōnen no hyōgen wo shu to shita mono ga ōi. Shajitsu shugi to hyōgen shugi to, dochiraga geijutsu teki ni kōka de aruka watashi wa kokoni, hyōgen shugi de aru to kotaeru ni chūcho shinai. Sore to dōji ni keitaibi to naiyōbi no kachi no hikaku wa ronzu yochi ga nai.'*

*Kyakkan wo shu to shite toraeta mono ni shin'en na geijutsu ga arieru towa kesshite ienai koto de aru. Geijutsu wa jiko no mono de nakereba naranu.....to yū riyū wa sokoni aru. Shajitsu shugi no geijutsu kachi ga, hyōgen shugi ni oyobanai riyū mo sore de aru. Watashi ga shukanteki de aritai to yū nomo sokode aru.'*

<sup>9</sup> *'Dai shizen no naka ni seikatsu suru, ningen no hisō naru funtō wo watashi wa mita. Sore wa shinkoku naru jinsei ku no hyōji de atta. Shikashi mata, sore wa ningen no shigoto no idaisa no hyōji demo atta. Chīsana ningen ga, chikyū no marui men ni ōkina henka wo ataeta noda. Rakujitsu no mae ni tenkai sareta rotenbori no dai keikioku ga sore de aru.'*

*Yūhi kō wa, fushigi na iro to chikara to wo, sono kirikuzusareta tansō ni terikaeshite ita. Kyodai na bunmei no kikai wa kaibutsu no yōni, ōkina todoroki wo maite ugoite ita.'*

<sup>10</sup> Yosano Akiko in *Travels in Manchuria and Mongolia* also expresses an ambiguous reaction to seeing the effects of strip mining, which stands in stark contrast to the book's generally positive treatment of the Manchurian landscape,

At first, I felt that this frightful, grotesque sight was an apparition from the earth opening up its immense mouth toward the sky, but when we went down a short way and stood where the stairs had been made, I sensed the magnificence of a huge open-air theatre two or three times the size of those in Roman times. I felt that the human beings using nature here were like ants with intelligence.

(Yosano, 2001, p.121. Trans. Fogel)

<sup>11</sup> A typical description of Japan's unique ability to realise the potential of Manchuria can be found in a 1924 SMR English-language guide,

A great developing influence has been brought into South Manchuria and the adjacent provinces by the railroad. The progress since the railway came under the control of the Japanese has been phenomenal. The once "Forbidden Land" has been not only opened to the world at large, but, more particularly, to the Chinese themselves, who never dreamed that such opportunities lay at their very doors. Less than a generation ago the Russians opened up portions of the country, but the Japanese have made it a land of opportunity for the world.

(*Manchuria Land of Opportunities*, South Manchurian Railway Co. 1924, p.6)

After an in-depth analysis of the territory's industrial and agricultural statistics the volume concludes with an assessment of its natural beauty,



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Manchuria is of easy access to the travelers and business men of the world. Beauties of scenery, as wonderful as anywhere in Asia, lure the European and American to this far country. Not only is Manchuria the scene of amazing developments, new cities, modern industries, scientific achievements and vast agricultural areas, but there is in this old Land of the Manchus [sic] a wealth of unforgettable beauty. The cities have a twofold charm. Adjoining the principal age-old Chinese towns there have arisen modern cities, thus providing the traveler not only with the delights of ancient Oriental life and scenes but making it possible to live while there as he would live at home.

(*Manchuria Land of Opportunities*, South Manchurian Railway Co. 1924, p.91)

<sup>12</sup> *Zenpō niwa ikueka no kyokusen wo motte naru yamaga ari, chōjō niwa shina dokutoku no tō ga attari shite wareware no satsueiyoku wo yorokobashimeta. Futo nagameru uchi, sono yama no chūfuku ni kyokusen wo yaburu jasen! Sore wa nichiro sensō tōji no zangō to kikasaretewa wareware nihonjin to shite fuman wo kataru wakeniwa naranakatta. Shikashi fushigina kotoni sono zangō ga ugokihajimeta. Oya! Wareware wa iyōna me wo mihatta ga nazo wa toketa, sore wa hitsuji no mure de atta. Wareware wa suguni sentō junbi wo totonoe hitsuji no gun(mure) e mukatte zenshin wo hajimeta. Tekigun chikaku yama no iraka yori sentō wa kaishi sareta. Nikuhaku suruni tsurete ransha ranpatsu, tachimachi firumu wa tsukai hatasare kyūsen no yamunaki ni itatta.*

*Tataakai sunde yama no itadaki kara, ganka ni, shayō wo abiru hitsuji no mure wo nagmuru toki, [akai yūhi ni terasarete] to shōni nimo utawareru [sen'yū] no uta wo sōki shinagara, nanbyakuri tomo hateshiranu sumiwataru tairiku manshū no yūdaisa to sokono kibun wa, tōtei jibun no fude ya shashin ni yotte arawasu koto no zettai ni fukanō de arukoto wo satotta.*

*Nijū yonen mae, nichiro sensō tōji waga chūkun aikoku no shi ga kono yama wo seifuku shita toki no ureshisa to yorokobi wa ikabakari de attarō. Jibun wa ima geijutsu sensō ni oite kono yama wo kanzen ni seifuku shieta de arōka? Sore wa amarini waga kotono sabishikatta.*

<sup>13</sup> The year after the first publication of *Hikaru oka* Hakuyō expressed the following almost mirror image of his earlier views on realism,

I say the essence of art in photography is the powerful energy of reality. Photography is effective only for the existing object, there is no photography where there is no object; in short, photography doesn't permit the creation of meaning by the individual. This absolute fact is the *raison d'être* of photographic art and justifies its existence. The ideal of photographic art is to depict the real. To conform to the real is to give value to the existence of photography in society. If a photographer strays into the abstract which is unrealistic and non-existent that would invite a fearful result akin to the suicide of photographic art.

(*On Photographic Art (Shashin geijutsu ni tsuite)* from *Manshū shashin dokuhon*. Mantetsu shain kai 1938, quoted in Takeba, 1998, p.64. Trans. by author)

<sup>14</sup> *Manshū no fūbutsu niwa shashin no sozai to shite tekisuru monoga ōi. Daiheigen ni hanatareta hitsuji ya rakuda no mure, nichiro sen'eki irai nihonjin no nōri ni shimikonde iru [akai yūhi] no kiwamarinaki sōgon, gaitō no monourī fūkei, den'en ni okeru kibukureta nōfu no shitaī, subete sen to katamari toga ōmaka de, gamen kōsei no bikan to naikan no yutakasa toga aru. Sonota ekuzochikku harubin, kōgyō toshi taiten, bujun, minato dairen, kokuto shinkyō tō no kindaiteki shudai, tokuni, tairiku wo hiraku isamashi imin no seikatsu*

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*nado kōko no daizai ga itaru tokoro ni tenkai sarete iru. Shitagatte shashin no shumi wa nigiwai, geijutsuteki kōjō mata mezamashiki mono ga aru.'*

<sup>15</sup> The caption for the photograph runs as follows,

Peace always seems to reign over the farmhouses in the tranquil Jehol valley, where farmstead, peasant, donkeys and coal-black hogs form part of the very landscape.

*(Manshū Travel Diary, 1941, p.160)*

### 3.2 'Imagination fails to conjures up a pleasanter spot to loiter': Manchurian dreams redux

Nostalgia continues to be a potent narrative in post-war Japanese literature and photography about Manchuria. This contemporary nostalgia is predicated on the selective remembrance of settlers whose recollections tend to focus on events at the end of the war and hence their own suffering as they attempt to return to Japan under threat of attacking Soviet troops and angry Chinese. In an ethnographic study of former peasant settlers now living in Nagano prefecture Mariko Asano Tamanoi found that, 'They recall the end of their experiences in Manchuria, but they hardly address the beginning, that is, their arrival in Manchuria, or the middle, their everyday life in Manchuria'. (Asano Tamanoi, 1998, p.169). This lacuna permits Manchuria to become an object of nostalgic longing, a location of ahistorical desire whose existence is authenticated not by the provision of documentary evidence, but by its absence.

In two published works, *Manchurian Legacy*, by third generation immigrant Kazuko Kuramoto, and *Nostalgia* by Kihara Chika, a young photographer who accompanies her father on his first trip back to Manchuria after being repatriated at the age of three, the territory of Manchuria is compounded with nostalgic longing for the author/photographer's father. In *Manchurian Legacy* this is expressed by opening and closing the memoirs of the author's flight from Furanten, a village seventy miles north of Dàlián, with a description of the author's father's face which in its intimate detail resembles a topographical survey.

Kuramoto is painfully honest about her childhood naivety regarding Japan's presence in Manchuria, with innocent belief in the multi-racial goals of Manchukuo becoming incredulity at the hatred and violence that she and her family encounter after Soviet Russia invade from Siberia in 1945. While her recollections are often retrospectively placed within a

historical context the memoir does not follow a progressive development into political or social consciousness; Manchuria begins and ends as a fiercely defended object of nostalgia that, being the author's birthplace, is only ambivalently negotiable as a site of historical events.

The photo book *Nostalgia* lacks even this ambivalence, and starts with the following passage,

'The Chinese look frightening' my father said, looking worried at the beginning of the trip. Two Chinese people had started arguing at the other side of the aisle soon after we got onto the plane bound for Dalian. Two adult men were shouting loudly at each other and gesticulating wildly in a serious argument. It seemed that they were arguing about space in the overhead locker; a passenger had become angry that he couldn't fit his luggage in because of what was already there. But the man who had already put his luggage there insisted that the space belonged to him as well. Neither of them backed down, and the argument got more vociferous. Probably if they had been Japanese they would not have thought about who was wrong and who was not, but just looked for another empty space and just forgot about it. They were not worried about the gaze of other people and this loud arguing, even about this unimportant thing, so it was no wonder that my father started worrying. Also they were the first Chinese people that my father had seen on this trip.

The flight connected China and Japan so most of the passengers were Chinese or Japanese. The colour of the skin as well as the colour of the eyes were very similar; so much so that if the passengers didn't speak you couldn't tell which was which. But even if they looked the same their character, customs and way of thinking were very different.

(Kihara, 2003, p.2. Trans. by author)

Recollections of Manchuria in the text only begin in the closing months of the war, with stories of the author/photographer's relatives' passage back to Japan, and, similarly to *Manchurian Legacy*, the book begins (after the first two paragraphs given above) and ends

with passages discussing the author's father. Kihara closes the book with a black and white archive image of her father as a baby surrounded by his family, describing how she found the photograph at her grandmother's house after they had returned from their trip. The photograph is presented as the Manchuria that she had looked for in her photographic journey, but failed to find; 'a lost homeland' (Kihara, 2003, p.191. Trans. by author), as she puts it.

Kihara's self-confessed failure is on one level inevitable, since to preserve the victim status of her father and his family, the narrative cannot engage with everyday life in Manchuria before their enforced departure. This evasion also results in a second, representational, failure; as she does not confront the historical context of her father's presence in Manchuria, her images are a visual travelogue of contemporary north-east China with only very occasional references to the Japanese occupation. The nostalgic intent of the book is predominantly pursued in the textual reminiscences, but appears in a few images of Japanese colonial architecture and more pointedly in portraits of her father, whom she captures either grimly staring at the camera or into the distance. In general though her images tend to use conventional subjects of travel photography; smiling native faces, market scenes, poverty and local festivities, and Kihara compounds her status as a tourist by noting her resentment at the interested gaze of the Chinese, all the while that she is photographing them.

Kihara's images do not portray Manchuria as a nostalgic landscape in itself, but rather the history of Manchuria has been put to one side in order to permit the enactment of her father's nostalgia. Kihara's project illustrates that Manchuria is still being used as a background to discussions of Japanese identity, in which selective omission of subject matter is used to support the notion of an original landscape beyond history and outside the

realm of political and social complexity<sup>1</sup>. The photographic work in this section was intended as a counterpoint to this narrative construction, and addresses the vision of Manchuria as a vast fertile plain which is simultaneously pre-Historical and the site of modern potentiality. Produced from fieldwork in Dàlián, Chángchūn, Shěnyáng and Hǎ'ěrbīn in May 2004, the resulting body of work contrasts the nostalgic/utopian complex with an exploration of the historical aftermath of the Japanese occupation and attempts to engage with Manchuria as contemporary space.

In contrast to the simulated album and the blurred images produced in response to soft-focus pictorialism, my practical work in this chapter was not determined by engaging with the style of archive photographs but based on a critique of the ideological and aesthetic functions of pictorial photography as produced in Manchuria. This is, in part, a response to the mechanism of overlaying a prefigured aesthetic onto the space of Manchuria that is characteristic of the literary and visual treatments as discussed in the previous chapter. Correspondingly, the objectives of my own photographic practice in this section were to:

- counter nostalgia with historicity
- work in a passively framed style in which the image is not digitally manipulated
- contrast the utopian imagination with the banal and decrepit

Although not all the images portray specific locations based on archival research, in most images particular sites were used whose histories are particularly representative of a utopian vision<sup>2</sup>. These were the area around Rice Perfume village, known as Aikawa Village during the Japanese occupation, the Tie Xi industrial district of Shěnyáng and Chángchūn – the erstwhile capital of Manchukuo – the puppet state inaugurated by Japan in 1932.

Aikawa (Love River) village, north-west of Dàlián, was founded in 1915 by local Japanese officials after the Kwantung Government-General had initiated a project to establish 'a

model rice-farming community' (Matsusaka, 2001, p.261) in SMR-leased territory. Despite being 'Japan's most concerted attempt at agricultural colonization in Manchuria prior to 1931' (Guelcher, 2001, p.4), the village was an early story of failure in Japan's attempt to promote colonisation as by 1931, despite financial subsidisation by the Kwantung authorities, the settlement was home to only seven families out of a possible thirty-two. Matsusaka notes that 'The crude and inhospitable conditions encountered by the first group of families recruited for the project on their arrival... so discouraged many that they turned around and went home without even attempting to establish themselves' (Matsusaka, 2001, p.191).

A 1935 report published by the Kwantung prefecture government posited a variety of reasons for the village's lack of success. These included the alkalinity of the soil, the lack of irrigation, the Japanese immigrants' habituation to a higher standard of living than the local Chinese farmers, and 'the personal failings of the would-be colonists' (Guelcher, 2001, p.11), who were accused of lacking the requisite communal spirit to make the settlement work. Documentary images in the report, despite its negative assessment, showed standard propaganda type scenes of settlers in paddy fields and harvesting grain, intimating fecundity and cooperative labour (figs. 3.8 & 3.9). Other images showed the settlers in group portraits, the main buildings, and a panorama of the surrounding countryside.

The fate of Aikawa village is largely representative of an overall, and one might say inevitable, failure to create the agrarian paradise imagined in propaganda material such as the image that adorned the cover of a 1940 issue of *Manshū gurafu* (fig. 3.10). Where the nostalgic landscapes of the Ai-Yū shashin club had been an aesthetic revolt against urban modernism, Manchurian agrarian settlement programmes were an attempt to realise an actual social solution. As Louise Young, in her study of the culture of imperialism in

Manchuria, notes this programme 'appeared to offer a route to a future of social stability that circumvented the city' (Young, 1998, p.323) and 'allowed agrarianists to imagine modernity in utopian rather than dystopian terms' (Young, 1998, p.350).

Would-be settlers, however, caught between rural poverty at home and the pressure of multifarious forms of propaganda, in magazines, song, postcards and film that exhorted them to go west, found that when they moved to Manchuria their expectations were often confounded by a reality far more precarious than they had suspected. Guelcher's study of life for Japanese settlers describes a life characterised by 'bitter cold, fear and boredom' (Guelcher, 2001, p.143) which until the late 30s entailed farming with 'a hoe in the right hand and a gun in the left' (*ibid*, p.145), due to the continuing threat of anti-Japanese attacks by hostile Chinese. Records of these hardships would be disseminated in various forms however, and while the obstacles to the establishment of agrarian settlements were described in official, and sometimes confidential, reports, the narrative of a heroic struggle for survival served as a useful device for portraying Manchuria as a thrilling space of pre-modern barbarity that could confirm Japan's moral and technological ascendancy. In a discussion of the First Scientific Expedition to Manchukuo in 1933, which combined 'a chance to see the natives, pick up some souvenirs, and taste a sense of danger without getting killed' (Law, 2003, p.110), Morris Law notes that 'Commentaries at the time [of the expedition] describe Manchukuo more like a theme park than an informal colony' (Law, 2003, p.110)<sup>3</sup>.

In photographing Aikawa village I intended to make an impassionate record of the present-day condition of the area as a contrast to the settlement's functions as a supposed nostalgic return to the pre-modern and its utopian projection. The resulting images depict land that is without obvious use or function (figs. 3.11, 3.12 & 3.13) and, deprived of an



overt narrative, re-present Aikawa with an emphasis on the sense of utopia as *no-place*. The emptiness of the compositions is a literal depiction of the sparsely populated and semi-developed area. However, it is also an attempt to combine the recurring propaganda vision of a 'vast' landscape with an acknowledgement of the failure and moral ambiguity of the Aikawa project.

This reference to historical events combined with a portrayal of contemporary space as ambiguous and liminal is a development of a previous project entitled *Scenes from the End of History*. This series started as my MA project and depicts sites related to the development and decline of Marxism as a master historical narrative and socio-economic practice. Intended as an exploration of Francis Fukuyama's contentious assertion in *The End of History and the Last Man* that global capitalism and the liberal democracy represent the last stage of man's political and ideological evolution, the series documented locations such as Karl Marx's Camden residence (fig. 3.14) and the Telephone Exchange in Barcelona (fig. 3.15). Titles for images in this project included the dates of the events from which the sites derived their significance (rather than the date on which the photograph was taken), indicating that the subject of the image was not necessarily the scene in front of the lens, but the invisible shadow of history over the present<sup>4</sup>.

In many of the photographs in this series structures act as edifices that memorialise the events that took place at that location, effectively recalling the possibility of the grand historical narrative. The depiction of tall buildings was used to anthropomorphic effect to portray the figure of man with utopian aspirations, i.e. before the 'end of History', which for Fukuyama is a time devoid of striving or aspiration. The overall mood of *Scenes from the End of History* is melancholic; attempting to acknowledge both the narrative of utopian aspiration and the subsequent conflict and suffering that it engendered. However, the

images of Aikawa are not intended to express this ambivalent sentiment, and the contemporary space of this social experiment is primarily characterised by emptiness.

This theme of unfulfilled dream as no-place/empty space was the basis for other images in this section, the majority of which used specific historical locations. Figs. 3.16, 3.17 and 3.18, however, used sites primarily for their visual qualities. These portray ambiguous spaces of grand scale, with *puncta* that both situate the image in the present-day, but also act as objects of utopian promise. These objects appear at the end of a path (time) and serve to identify a dissonance between the terrain and narratives placed upon it to produce 'landscape'. In fig. 3.16 a disused railway line running through partly-excavated wasteland leads towards newly-built apartment blocks in Hǎ'ěrbīn city centre (the modern metropolis). In fig. 3.17 a factory expelling billows of waste (technology) is seen behind a green space in Chángchūn. Finally, in fig. 3.18 a billboard, with a design reminiscent of the wartime Japanese imperial flag, offers the hire of advertising space (space as functional property).

Figs. 3.19 and 3.20 explore liminal space with a more direct historical reference, and show the sites of recently demolished Japanese factories in the Tie Xi district on the west of Shěnyáng. Where images of Aikawa village investigate the nostalgia for pre-modern rural life, these images are a counterpoint to the propaganda vision of Manchuria as technological utopia. The east side of Shěnyáng had been the location of Chinese warlord Zhāng Zuòlín's arsenal which was requisitioned by the Kwantung army after the 'Mukden Incident' of 1931. After this watershed event, in which the pretext of an explosion on the tracks of the SMR, planned by Japanese officers, was used to justify military occupation of Chinese towns and cities along the railway route, Shěnyáng's west side was redeveloped to be one of the primary industrial sites of the new state of Manchukuo.

Munitions were a significant aspect of this industrial production, however in Adachi's *A tale of Three Cities in Manchuria* the placing of Shěnyáng under Japanese martial law was presented as a step towards making Manchuria a more peaceful place,

The Arsenal – the famous Heikosho, the greatest individual arsenal in all the world .... One thing stood out impressively with such overwhelming emphasis that it was practically impossible to miss it if one tried. The whole 100,000,000 dollar plant was dead – dead as the old ex-bandit Chang Tso-lin's [Zhāng Zuòlín's] dream of a new dynasty on the dragon throne at Peking. Not a single wheel was turning in that vast enclosure. Not a hum or a whirl in all that bewildering world crammed full with the most modern and approved machinery for the manufacturing of war materials. It went dead the instant it fell into the hands of the Japanese army.

(Adachi, 1933, pp. 16 – 17)

This short passage is an interesting manifestation of the contradictions at the heart of Japanese narratives of Manchuria. As well as being emblematic of the discrepancy between the projected identity of Japan on a *mission civilisatrice* and the brutality of its actual occupation we can see the Japanese army symbolically representing both social progress and opposition to soulless technological modernity. By contrast, the Chinese warlord Zhāng Zuòlín, who had been assassinated in 1928 by a Kwantung army bomb, is assigned the role of representing the revival of a lawless, autocratic past coupled with the threat of inhuman machinery.

With the images of Aikawa village, figs. 3.19 and 3.20 of the space left by the demolition of the Tie Xi factory district are a response to the two-fold vision of a nostalgic return to rural life and the promise of a technological utopia. They act as a kind of visual excavation, in which the narrative which once overlaid the sites is revealed as essentially empty<sup>5</sup>. Figs. 3.21, 3.22 and 3.23 deal with a third aspect of the utopian Manchurian vision, namely, the modern metropolis.

Chángchūn, named Shinkyō or 'new capital' in Japanese, was to be the modern urban showpiece of paradise after the establishment of the Manchukuo in 1932. This was expressed through concerted efforts to produce a city that could rival west models of urban living in its modern infrastructure and layout; but which was also to be a cultural symbol of Japan's pan-Asian vision. Vance Tucker's examination of Japanese urban planning and architecture in Manchuria in the 30s and 40s discusses Chángchūn as much as an ideological construction as a physical one,

In arranging Manchukuo's capital planners attempted to affirm the state's authority through the use of space. Wide boulevards, abundant parks, and the strategic situating of key structures conveyed specific meanings regarding the nature of the new society. Aiming beyond Manchukuo, however, planners also used their command of the urban environment to demonstrate their technical authority to a more global audience.

(Vance Tucker, 2001, p.197)

The objective of the design of major civic structures, as stated by Sōga Kensuke, the leader of the architectural team responsible, was to directly manifest a hybrid identity that would be a 'new style inextricably woven with an Asian style' (Vance Tucker, 2001, p.207). This commonly resulted in vast, imposing buildings designed to 'impress viewers with a sense of grandeur and power' (Vance Tucker, 2001, 228). However, rather than focussing on the strong verticals of extant colonial Japanese buildings, my photography in Chángchūn documents peripheral structures of the Manchukuo imperial palace and another iconic feature of Chángchūn's identity as a utopian city – its green space.

After his installation as the Emperor of Manchukuo in 1934 Aisin Gioro Pu Yi was resident in the imperial palace until his capture by Soviet troops in 1945. While Pu Yi hoped that by allying himself with the establishment of the supposedly pan-Asian state he would see a restoration of the Qing dynasty, his position within the Japanese-controlled regime was only as titular head. In his memoirs Pu Yi describes his life in the palace as one of increasing

mental and emotional instability as he realises the ineffectiveness of his role and the extent to which his life is circumscribed by the Japanese. The two images from the Chángchūn imperial palace (figs. 3.21 & 3.22) are intended to indicate the hollowness of Pu Yi's role as emperor through their literal depiction of hollowed-out spaces, and through absurd stories attached to them. Fig. 3.21 shows the entrance to the palace air-raid shelter in which a neurotic Pu Yi, obsessed with the Buddhist practice of respect for all living things, 'once kotowed [sic] to an egg three times before eating it' (Pu Yi, 1979, p.307). Fig. 3.23 shows the palace swimming pool which, according to Information for visitors, was installed as a symbolic expression of the Manchukuo imperial household's modernity. However, as Pu Yi's own imperial tradition dictated that the emperor should not be seen in a state of undress he never used the pool.

The third image from Chángchūn shows an innocuous view of a path and trees in South Lake Park (fig. 3.23) and refers to the intention of making the new capital a garden city. As Vance Tucker notes 'bringing nature to man in Shinkyō was only one of the motivations behind the city's planners. The creation of green space was more fundamentally another means of creating modernity.' (Vance Tucker, 2001, p.187). Green spaces represented technical proficiency in urban planning and were a consideration of defence issues, with parks intended as refuges during attack and lakes being water sources for use in case of fire. However, in addition to their practical functions, for the city's planners 'building parks was a kind of competition'(Vance Tucker, 2001, p.187). The capital of Manchukuo was meant to supersede the model of civilized urban living presented by European or north American cities insofar as the measure of a truly modern city, judging by the emphasis on recreational spaces, should not only be defined by industrial production but should also encompass the pursuit of leisure.

The image of South Lake Park is therefore not a picture of a natural environment, but an organised urban space which is part vision of a modern utopia and part nostalgic projection of nature as a site of leisure. As in figs. 3.16, 3.17 and 3.18 a path is included in the composition as an indicator of time, however in this case it does not lead back to a particular object but is meant to indicate that the subject of the image is not the forest itself but exists beyond what is captured in front of the lens. It is rather the origin of the forest and the ideological conditions of its creation. In Thomas Struth's *Paradise* series a comparable interest in what lies beyond the frame is tied to images of forests in an investigation of utopia. This series, however, portrays impenetrable overgrown scenes that are meant to force the viewer's gaze to rebound from the surface of the image in act of self-reflection. As he puts it,

I don't understand why so many people equate the notion of paradise with escapism. Paradise was never a place one could enter - though, in this global moment, escapism is no longer an issue either. The disappearance of the social debate about utopia, which the title "Paradise" alludes to, is an impoverishment and banalization. I focus exclusively on the experience of proximity. Nowadays the human being is reduced to a consumer and therefore to an instrument of a global economic mechanism. I, on the other hand, am interested in peculiarity, the individual ways of people and what goes on inside them when their historical bearings are disoriented.

(Struth, 2002)

Though the viewer's gaze is sent in opposite directions *South Lake Park, Chángchūn* (and my image of the woodland around Meiji shrine, which will be discussed in chapter 4.3) and Struth's *Paradise* images share the common ground of questioning 'nature' as a symbol and location of utopia.

The last image in this group is another location of leisure and addresses more directly the 'theme park' Manchuria of contemporary Japanese travel literature. Fig. 3.24 shows an original image from Adachi Kinno's *A tale of Three Cities in Manchuria* of Hoshi ga ura

(from which the quote in the title of this chapter comes), that appears with the description,

And five miles southwest of Dairen, along the paved motor road to Port Arthur, one catches his breath: for there he is face to face with Hoshiga Ura - the Port of the Stars. Some advertising pamphlets call it "Star Beach", never mind that. Manchukuo is no playground for loafers. But there is irresistible temptation for loafers, professional and otherwise, in this bit of rock-studded water with its stretch of golden strand which makes up the Port of the Stars. Not even the 18-hole golf course covering some 550,000 square meters on the other side of the highway, is able to destroy the magic of the place.

(Adachi, 1933, pp.8-9)

As Adachi attempts to compound technical modernity ('paved motor road', 'no playground for loafers'), modern leisure (18-hole golf course) and the pre-modern landscape ('the magic of the place'), Hoshi ga ura fractures under its representational burdens. Hoshi ga ura, like Aikawa village, is a utopia in both senses of an imagined paradise and, being the subject of symbolic representation, a non-place. My own treatment of Hoshi ga ura (fig. 3.25), a staged composition of a young boy looking east out to sea and older man with his head in his hands, aims to manifest both the naïve longing for paradise with a reflection on the demise of a utopian dream.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> In television programme *sandē mōningu - sengo rokujūnen no shōgen* (Sunday Morning – 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the war), author Sawachi Hisae recalled her reaction to Russians overrunning her home in Manchuria as 'Where has my country gone?' – (*watashi no kuni wa doko ni icchatta?*) (viewed 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2005 on Nippon TV).

<sup>2</sup> Appendix 2 shows a series based on Adachi Kinnosuke's *A tale of Three Cities in Manchuria*. The images were taken on the train journey between Dàlián, Shěnyáng and Hā'ěrbīn, mirroring the propaganda narrative that combines descriptions of the three cities and the countryside between them. I have not included this series in the main body of work as the images were not of sufficient photographic quality (most of them were taken on a digital camera through the train window). Also the form itself has often been used in travel photography, and seemed voyeuristic in a way that compounded rather than critiqued the tone of the Adachi piece.

<sup>3</sup> Leheny, in his study of Japanese leisure practices and their relation to national identity, also alludes to Manchuria as a theme park in his inclusion of two images from Manchuria travel guides, which show traditional figures in a rural landscape (Leheny, 2003, pp.xvi & 18).

<sup>4</sup> More images from this series can be viewed at [www.jltran.net/history](http://www.jltran.net/history).

<sup>5</sup> I initially came across references to the Tie Xi district through a review of the 2003 documentary *Tie Xi Qu: West of Tracks* by Chinese film director Wang Bing. His nine hour film recorded the lives and problems of the under-class inhabiting the decaying and soon-to-be demolished area. Japanese audiences of the film at the Yamagata film festival are reported to have had a nostalgic reaction to seeing the factories that their relatives had built (Wei, 2004). Rated in the world's top ten most polluted cities by the World Health Organisation in 1988, the redevelopment of the Tie Xi district is part of a US\$18 million project to make Shěnyáng a garden city (China Daily, January 4<sup>th</sup> 2004).



## 4.1 Fairyland revisited: the landscape of contemporary heterotopias

### Theme parks

It is not alone in the virtual presentness of every past event that every present experience embodies a third dimension which points back to the past, but it is also because the future is being prepared in it. It is not only the past but the future as well which has virtual existence in the present.

Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*,

p.246

Japan - an enigma, a curious Wonderland, a Lilliput that actually exists in the northwest Pacific Ocean.

Koseki Sampei, *Japan: Homo Ludens Japonicus*, p.115

In a 1989 examination of the status of Japan's leisure culture Koseki Sampei begins with a tongue-in-cheek revival of the western tourist narrative of fairyland. Written at the height of the 'bubble' economy, Koseki's account discusses the changes in society brought on by affluence and laments the disparity between Japan's economic prosperity and a poverty of moral values,

...some people, feeling unfulfilled with mere material satisfaction, are losing interest in this world and are looking for a means of escape from this life. This tendency may be one of the by-products of an affluent society which has no foundation in spiritual idealism. Thus a hedonistic pursuit of pleasure exists side by side with an anomie accompanied by a hollowness or emptiness of spirit.

(Koseki, 1989, p.122)

While Koseki resists the diminutive western version of traditional Japan, he considers a return to pre-modern ideals as a sign of maturity,

Yankee imperialism has lost its prestige. Mindful of their longer tradition, the Japanese have recovered their pride. Their former inferiority complex with regard to Western civilisation has been notably mitigated, while nostalgia for national folklore and local traditions has increased. The word 'ethnic' has become fashionable among young people.

(Koseki, 1989, p.120)

With this escape from westernisation and its newly-acquired wealth, Koseki sees Japan in the 80s as a country that is beginning to explore how to spend its free time, beyond watching television. Though Koseki asserts that 'In present-day Japan politics does not exert direct influence on leisure activities' (*ibid.* p.140) in the mid-80s the Ministry of

International Trade and Industry (MITI), in collaboration with other relevant government ministries, had initiated just such an influence with its '*dai kihan fukugō yoka shisetsu seibi jigyo kōsō*' (Conception of the Creation of Large-Scale Comprehensive Leisure Facilities). Following the implementation of the 1987 '*sōgō hoyō chiiki seibi hō*' or Resort Law, which provided tax breaks and subsidy programmes for the development of leisure facilities and placed direct government control over their approval, play became a serious business in Japan. However, the growth of the leisure industry was not an entrepreneurial response to a gap in the service industry market, but a top-down attempt to catalyse Japan's transformation into a post-industrial leisure-oriented society.

The visualisation of Japan as fairyland functioned as an indirect confirmation of Japan's progression into modernity, which folded a particular cultural history into a generalised occidental positivism. The historical theme park, as discussed in chapter 2.2, can act as a symbolic display of power, attempting to confirm Japan's economic and technological status *vis-à-vis* the cultures and histories it displays. This can be through codifying and mythologizing its own history, as we have seen in Meiji Mura, or by appropriating other cultures and histories and re-packaging them as leisure activities. In a reversal of Japan's reduction to the diminutive status of 'fairy/wonderland' by 19<sup>th</sup> early 20<sup>th</sup> century western globetrotters, theme parks now recreate Japan's past, and other national histories, as sentimentalised risk-free playgrounds. As Foucault posited in his seminal piece *Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias*,

... the will to enclose in one place all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes, the idea of constituting a place of all times that is itself outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages, the project of organizing in this way a sort of perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile place, this whole idea belongs to our modernity. The museum and the library are heterotopias that are proper to western culture of the nineteenth century.

(Foucault, 1967. Trans. Miskowiec)

In Leheny's discussion of Japan's leisure culture the 1987 Resort Law is identified as a response to the 'Maekawa' report of 1986<sup>1</sup> and follow-up 'New Maekawa' report of the following year. The reports were primarily concerned with reducing the nation's current account surplus and recommended 'The expansion of domestic demand, particularly through lower taxes and reduced working hours, as well as the creation of a service industry-led economy' (Leheny, 2003. p.112). Post-Resort Law leisure developments can therefore be considered as both practical and symbolic instruments of transforming Japan from an industrial to a post-industrial leisure-oriented society. In a reflection of past identity crises this transition hinged upon Japan comparing itself with the 'west' and judging its progress in relation to the 'normality' of lives in countries with a longer history of industrialisation. In contrast, however, to the 'westernisation' of previous eras the term

used to describe the process of post-industrial social adjustment, '*kokusaika*' (internationalisation) implied a desire to broaden Japan's interaction with the world beyond 'Their former inferiority complex with regard to Western civilisation'<sup>2</sup>.

Before entering into a discussion of particular theme parks, at this point it is worth listing the salient elements of fairyland and utopia.

<u>Fairyland</u>	<u>Utopia</u>
not populated by real people	not created for real people
pre-historic	post-Historic
world in natural order	society in perfected order
pantheistic (humanity in harmony with nature)	mechanistic (perfect artificial environment)
world without conflict	society without conflict
cornucopia	unlimited choice / freedom from desire

As the nostalgic gaze has moved from the specific (*meisho*) to the local ('my Japan') to the generic (the paradise of rural life), the theme park combines the nostalgia of fairyland with a simulacra of utopia in a fusion that tends toward the eradication of cultural specificities. Albeit in a qualitatively different form, the theme park in Japan and the occupation of Manchuria perform similar functions in this respect. Manchuria accommodated projections of spiritual and historical continuity with Japan while playing the role of a cultural periphery. Meanwhile the theme park, though it thrives on creating incongruence<sup>3</sup>, surreptitiously acts to confirm the connectedness of global histories and cultures with Japan as, literally and figuratively, a central viewing point.

Sea Gaia Ocean Dome, a huge covered water park with artificial beach in Miyazaki prefecture designed to look like a South Sea island, has the advertising slogan 'Paradise Within a Paradise'. This refers to its location amongst a variety of leisure facilities run by the Phoenix Resort group, including a golf course and spa, as well as its placement by the actual sea shore in the subtropical climate of southern Kyūshū. The main area of the water park, the 'Grand Bank' (fig.4.1), features an artificial beach with a backdrop on the far side of the swimming area showing a deep blue sky. The whole facility is covered by a retractable roof, and the water is kept at a constant temperature of 28° celsius. A wave machine provides gently lapping waves and is increased in power to provide a live show by professional surfers, during which time visitors are required to exit the pool.

Ocean Dome's vision of paradise as life without modern technology achieved through the conspicuous use of modern technology is an identifying feature of Japan's theme parks developed in the 80s, and the kitsch of Ocean Dome drew the attention of artist Mori Mariko for her 1995 piece *Empty Dream*. In this work Mori appears in mermaid costume digitally inserted several times into the image. The piece manifests Mori's long-running interest in depicting 'a timeless space, a placeless space' (Celant interview, 2000), though the title suggests that, in contrast with later works such as her Pure Land series (1996-1998) she views Ocean Dome as a failed paradise. In this particular case my investigation of nostalgia and its relation to modernity and Mori's search for utopian space coincide. Where, however, I have examined historical manifestations of nostalgia as a covert mechanism of modernity, Mori's work, in its development of Buddhist-inspired 'spirituality' married with computer generated environments, makes this connection explicit and positive.

I put 'spirituality' in parenthesis as Mori often discusses her work using the dichotomy of 'east' and 'west', with the east being representative of 'spirituality', and 'spirituality' being primarily associated with Japanese Buddhism. While critical of sexism and consumerism in Japan in earlier works such as her 1994 *Tea Ceremony* series, in which she portrays herself as a space alien serving tea to salarymen, later work reflects a return to Japanese culture following a move to New York, a process she describes in a 1998 interview,

When I went back to Japan after a long stay here, I thought that the youth culture was most energetic. Up to then, culture consisted of western simulations and fakes imported from abroad. I was absorbed and stimulated and they were original and so powerful. When I was in London, I wanted to forget the fact that I was Japanese and wanted to express myself as an individual and singular entity. But since I moved to New York, there are so many ethnic groups and different cultures here that many people were curious about where I came from. I was reminded of my Japanese-ness and felt that I could not escape from it. And I was raised in that environment.

(Sugiura, 1998)

This seems like a concrete example of the kind of 'maturity' that Koseki observed developing in the 1980's, and Mori's 'spirituality' is both a personal and aesthetic act of nostalgia. While Mori may have updated the form of her nostalgia for ideal space to the point that the future, in the form of cyberspace, aliens and ultra-modern design, can unashamedly occupy the same frame as ancient myth, she is engaged in much the same market that embraced the tourist photo. In a discussion of the inclusion of Mori's *Nirvana* video installation in the Nordic pavilion at the 1997 Venice Biennale Borggreen notes that,

Mori Mariko and other young artists from Japan are often framed, by themselves or by others, in Orientalist stereotypes about Japanese culture

...Mori Mariko herself is often seen as representing Buddhism in this respect ...

Some artists include cultural stereotypes in their works specifically as a way to address the issue and pose critical questions to the mechanisms behind. Other artists may play on cultural stereotypes on purpose as a marketing strategy, as a way of seeking personal significance on a still more competitive international art market. On a broader level, it may be the system of national or regional sponsorship, such as the Nordic Council of Ministers or Japan Foundation, which invites generalizing cultural stereotypes.

(Borggreen, 2004)

While Mori attempts to expand consciousness through her portrayal of an ideal universe, Tōbu World Square in Tochigi prefecture, a theme park of 1/25<sup>th</sup> scale models of renowned architecture from around the world, compacts the civilized world to fit our consciousness. The United States (fig. 4.2) is a short walk away from the Egyptian pyramids (fig. 4.3), which are separated by mock hills from Europe (fig.4.4). The route around the exhibits has a notable sequencing in which world culture is topped and tailed by Japan; visitors first come across Tokyo's Narita airport, which is in the 'Modern Japan Zone' with Tokyo Tower and other post-war structures (the zone also includes the Tatsuno Kingo (1854-1919) designed Tokyo station). This is followed by the United States, Egypt, Europe, Asia and finally the 'Japan Zone', which is represented by historical structures such as Himeji Castle and Kiyomizu temple in Kyoto. Inspired by the roster of Unesco World Heritage Sites, Tōbu World Square's extremely accurate models seem predicated as much on didacticism as they are on the desire to entertain.

Another site which emphasises its verisimilitude is the leisure site Huis Ten Bosch located in an otherwise undeveloped area near Sasebo in Kyūshū (figs. 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7). This 1,520,000 square metre replica Dutch town was built using bricks imported from the Netherlands in order to ensure 'authenticity'<sup>4</sup> and replica buildings were constructed from original plans. Huis Ten Bosch does not describe itself as a theme park but 'a Dutch city in Kyūshū, Japan' (cf. official website, <http://english.huistenbosch.co.jp/about/index.html>, viewed 22/1/2005) and, in a second stage of development, property for sale was intended as the basis for a living community (cf. Hendry, 2000. p.43). Ecological concerns are also a major aspect of the Huis Ten Bosch, with a secondary site, the Nagasaki Bio Park, devoted to wildlife in which,

Unlike ordinary zoos, Nagasaki Bio Park allows its visitors to truly interact with animals from all over the world ... Nagasaki Bio Park features an extensive variety of exotic flora. When you walk around the park it will amaze you that the surroundings keep changing. One minute you find yourself in the tropics. A few moments later you are surrounded by African savannah and its inhabitants, the giraffes and zebras.

(Official website, <http://english.huistenbosch.co.jp/about/biopark/index.html>, viewed 22/1/2005)

Technology used within Huis Ten Bosch proper to promote a harmonious relationship with the natural environment,

Huis Ten Bosch is a place where city planners have created a perfect balance between an urban environment and nature ... Huis Ten Bosch offers an interesting paradox. At first sight Huis Ten Bosch appears to be a 17th century Dutch town. Below ground however, a high tech tunnel system, over 3 kilometers in length, contains networks for communication, energy and water supply.

(official website, <http://english.huistenbosch.co.jp/about/ecology/index.html>, viewed 22/1/2005)

Huis Ten Bosch's promise of a better life by design and its eco-friendliness made possible through a mastery of technology is a vision that undoubtedly has pretensions beyond mere entertainment. According to an 1999 interview with the site's Senior Managing Director, Huis Ten Bosch aims to help 'build a future world' (Hendry, 2000, p.43). Like the Disney developed Celebration, USA community in Florida<sup>5</sup>, Huis Ten Bosch looks to the past to authenticate its view of social organisation and also, by dint of the quality of its construction - its hermetic perfection - attempts to convince us that this is the world that we should, and can, be living in, if we are sufficiently decent, law-abiding and limited in our desires. Huis Ten Bosch is, in essence, a more adult-oriented and focussed version of the 'zone' layout pioneered by Disney theme parks (fig. 4.8)<sup>6</sup>. In this practice, while incongruity is achieved first at the entry into the site, it is then also suggested between the 'fantastic' differences between the zones within the park. This suggestion however, is only nominal; as Baudrillard sees it, Disney,

seeks to erase time by synchronizing all the periods, all the cultures, in a single traveling [sic] motion, by juxtaposing them in a single scenario. Thus, it marks the beginning of real, punctual and unidimensional time, which is also without depth. No present, no past, no future, but an immediate synchronism of all the places and all the periods in a single atemporal virtuality.

(Baudrillard, 1996. Trans. Debrix, F)

This is the same operation we have seen in Tōbu World Square and Little World, where cultures and histories have been unified under the rubric of, respectively, 'civilization' and 'common humanity'. And though it may seem that, in contrast to Huis Ten Bosch, there are a diversity of zones within these parks, the primary function which is common to all of them is only to create two zones – the atemporality within the park in opposition to the everyday

of the present outside. In this the historical theme park compounds Foucault's third ('The heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible') and fifth ('Heterotopias always presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable') heterotopian principles (Foucault, 1967. Trans. Miskowiec).

The 80s development of the domestic leisure industry has given rise to numerous theme parks around Japan that are based around creating a zone of temporal and/or cultural incongruity (as opposed to amusement parks such as *Sanrio Puroland*, the realm of Hello Kitty, which generate their escape from the everyday through juvenile fantasy). A number of these, including Tōbu World Square, are clustered in Tochigi prefecture, and are thus able to capitalise on the longer history of internal tourism to the shrines at Nikko and the nearby spa resorts. One of the most sophisticated of these is Edo Wonderland, Nikko (fig. 4.9), one of a chain of theme parks around the country, which replicate material culture in pre-Meiji Japan. Like Huis Ten Bosch, Edo Wonderland theme parks are aimed at an adult market and built to a high standard. The Nikko site I visited was populated by actors in period costume, and live entertainment was provided by street and indoor performances including a ninja show, kabuki, and a haunted house. Static exhibits included reproduction buildings with information panels, historical dioramas with sound effects, including a gruesome and graphic representation of crimes and punishments, and a collection of houses and shops which double as a film set for use in period dramas. The semiotics of the chain's animated website (<http://www.edowonderland.net/home.html>) has a comically direct portrayal of its opposition to contemporary Japan through nostalgia, with a slide show of images of modern Tokyo, starting with the Meiji-period Tokyo station, being gradually smothered by cut-out *ukiyo-e* characters and images.

The Edo Wonderland experience generally has a gently comic undercurrent to it, manifested in the light-hearted style of the performances and the feeling of '*kosupure*'<sup>7</sup> or dressing up. This contrasts interestingly to other theme parks in which entertainment is not necessarily sought through laughter, but through evoking wonder or provoking curiosity. Huis Ten Bosch markets itself as a romantic break for young couples, while Tōbu World Square and Little World, despite their potential for whimsicality, have quite a seriousness of purpose in the exactitude of their simulacra. This contrast can partly be explained as polite respect towards foreign cultures, and conversely the humour of Edo Wonderland has the effect of confirming to Japanese visitors that is 'our culture' since liberties of comic representation are permitted.

However, although Edo Wonderland's levity is a mechanism by which an inclusive familiarity is suggested, it is also reminiscent of fairyland's insubstantiality. The landscape

of the *Yokohama shashin* is not populated by real people either, but ethnological characters posed for the tourist gaze, and if we also consider the studio-based 'type' genre which used models in front of painted backdrops (fig.4.10) Edo Wonderland really does start to resemble a three-dimensional interactive version of the tourist photo (fig. 4.11)<sup>8</sup>. The nostalgic gaze in this case, however is an indigenous one; and in a reflection of the tourist photo's functioning as an inventory and containment of difference, the Edo Wonderland theme parks are one variation amongst many historical simulacra which collectively act to place contemporary Japan in a symbolic visual centrality from which it can survey the world and create a fairyland of its history.

The collapse of the bubble economy has meant severe financial troubles for many theme parks, with Sea Gaia and Huis Ten Bosch both having declared bankruptcy<sup>9</sup> and struggling to organise alternative funding. The policy of placing theme parks in locations remote to the urban concentrations of Tokyo and southern Kansai as a way of developing service industries in isolated towns and rural areas has added to the task of maintaining visitor numbers. McCormack, who has viewed the 'resort boom' as largely an exercise in pork barrel politics, associates the failure of Japan's leisure policy with the phrase '*fukoku hinmin*' (rich country, impoverished people) (McCormack, 1996, p.106), an ironic reversal of the Meiji slogan *fukoku kyōhei* (rich country, strong army). In his analysis

... the resort strategy merely camouflaged a failure to resolve basic problems of urban and rural work, environmental protection and enhancement, housing, and food, while the growing wave of Japanese investment in the resort and tourist industries of the whole Pacific region probably did little to alleviate trade pressures.

(McCormack, 1996, p.105)

In other words, man does not live by leisure alone, and despite the symbolic attempt to redefine Japan *in its entirety* as a centre of modernity, the failure of the resort boom has left the countryside dotted with anachronisms that, unless their fortunes revive, in their desertion may start to resemble Borges' tattered map fragments<sup>10</sup>.



## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> The report was produced by the Advisory Group on Economic Structural Adjustment for International Harmony and colloquially referred to as the 'Maekawa' report after Maekawa Haruo, the chairperson.

<sup>2</sup> My own involvement with *kokusaika* was as an English language teacher in Japan in the early 90s. My students were exclusively from the steel company Kobe Seikō, which had implemented a programme of obligatory English lessons in a conspicuous effort to 'internationalise'. As a compulsory after-work activity the programme met with varying levels of popularity with the workforce.

<sup>3</sup> Karl Mannheim, in his seminal 1929 work *Ideology and Utopia*, posits that,

A state of mind is utopian when it is incongruous with the state of reality in which it occurs.

This incongruence is always evident that such a state of mind in experience, in thought, and in practice, is oriented towards objects which do not exist in the actual situation... Only those orientations transcending reality will be referred to by us as utopian which, when they pass over into conduct, tend to shatter, either partially or wholly, the order of things prevailing at the time.

(Mannheim, 1936, p.192)

<sup>4</sup> As McCormack notes,

Holland became, for a time, the world's leading brick exporter as it geared up to supply twenty million specially fired bricks for construction of buildings that include replicas of Queen Beatrix's palace and of the offices of the East India Company, together with the Hotel of Europe, which is the pinnacle of opulence.

(McCormack, 1996, p.98)

<sup>5</sup> Celebration aims to, 'Take the best ideas from the most successful towns of yesterday and the technology of the new millennium, and synthesize them into a close-knit community that meets the needs of today's families.' and describes itself as a, 'place where memories of a lifetime are made, it's more than a home; it's a community rich with old-fashioned appeal and an eye on the future.' (Official website <http://www.celebrationfl.com>, viewed 27/1/05)

<sup>6</sup> Where the original US Disneyworld and Disneyland had zones based on fantasy themes with abstract historical references, the 1982 Epcot Centre and the 2001 Japan-based Disney Sea have more specific geographical zones. Fig.7 shows a Venetian scene from the 'Mediterranean Harbor' zone in Disney Sea. The theme park is made up of seven zones, three of which are fantasy – based. The other three are 'Arabian Coast', 'Lost River Delta' which portrays a Central American jungle, and 'American Waterfront'.

<sup>7</sup> *Kosupure*, meaning 'costume play', is roughly translatable as fancy dress. Usually based on manga characters *kosupure* is a practice of conspicuous display and generally takes place in public spaces and conventions.

<sup>8</sup> This shows a re-enactment of an *oiran dōchū* or 'courtesan procession' – a feature of life in the Yoshiwara pleasure quarter of Edo in which high-class courtesans would parade through the streets on their way to meet clients.

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Governor Apologises over Sea Gaia. In *The Japan Times Online* February 27 2001 (<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/getarticle.pl5?nn20010227b2.htm>, viewed 22/12/2004) and Huis Ten Bosch boss eyes park's salvation. In *The Japan Times Online* July 24 2004 (<http://202.221.217.59/print/business/nb07-2004/nb20040724a3.htm>, viewed 02/02/2005)

<sup>10</sup> '... In that Empire, the Art of Cartography attained such perfection that the map of a single province occupied the entirety of a City, and the map of the Empire, the entirety of a Province. In time, those Unconscionable Maps no longer satisfied, and the Cartographers Guilds struck a Map of the Empire whose size was that of the Empire, and which coincided point for point with it. The following Generations, who were not so fond of the Study of Cartography as their Forbears had been, saw that that vast Map was Useless, and not without some Pitilessness was it, that they delivered it up to the Inclemencies of Sun and Winters. In the Deserts of the West, still today, there are Tattered Ruins of that Map, inhabited by Animals and Beggars; in all the Land there is no other Relic of the Disciplines of Geography.

Suárez Miranda, *Viajes de varones prudentes*, Libro IV, Cap.XLV, Lérida, 1658'

(Borges, 1999, p.325)

## 4.2 Arcades

The mere sensation of the milieu is a placid happiness: it is like the sensation of a dream in which people greet us exactly as we like to be greeted, and say to us all that we like to hear, and do for us all that we wish to be done, - people moving soundlessly through spaces of perfect repose, all bathed in a vapoury light

Hearn. 2001, pp.12-13

These Arcades, a recent invention of industrial luxury, are glass-roofed, marble-paneled corridors extending through whole blocks of buildings, whose owners have joined together for such enterprises. Lining both sides of these corridors, which get their light from above, are the most elegant of shops, so that the arcade is a city, a world in miniature ... in which customers will find everything they need.

*Illustrated Guide to Paris, 1852.* (quoted in Benjamin, 2003, p.31)

In Benjamin's unfinished *Arcades Project* the arcade is described as a magnificent spectacle in which the boundless diversity of sights and sensations defy the division of nature and artifice. As the native of fairyland is free from material need or arduous labour, the flâneur wanders the space of the arcade pursuing leisure in a dream paradise of commodities. In this dream Benjamin perceives the 'Telescoping of the past through the present' (Benjamin, 2003, p.471), with the modernity of the arcades reliant on reviving the forms and mythology of former epochs, particularly evidenced by the use of the new building material iron in the simulation of classical Greek architectural style (cf. Benjamin, 2003, pp.150-170). In identifying this enlistment of the old to define the new Benjamin underlines the failings of a linear model of history and proposes that,

Overcoming the concept of "progress" and overcoming the concept of "period of decline" are two sides of one and the same thing.

(Benjamin, 2003, p.460)

The 19<sup>th</sup> century arcade is an exemplary modern space for its time, but inevitably its modernity, for Benjamin, is posited on a melancholic nostalgia which acted as both a projection and entrancement of the collective consciousness. For Buck-Morss the dialectic of the *Arcades Project* 'suggests that it makes no sense to divide the era of capitalism into formalist "modernism" and historically eclectic "postmodernism," as these tendencies have been there from the start of industrial culture. The paradoxical dynamics of novelty and repetition simply repeat themselves anew.' (Buck-Morss, 1999, p.359).

In an investigation of contemporary shopping malls in the United States Goss finds the same conflation of past and present as 'developers have, with remarkable persistence, exploited a modernist nostalgia for authentic community, perceived to exist only in the past

and distant places' (Goss, 1993, p.22). The arcades in Goss's survey have the characteristics of historical theme parks, and are 'idealizations of villages and small towns, chock-full of historical and regional details to convince the consumer of their authenticity' (Goss, 1993, p.23), and the function of this nostalgia is to help create 'literally a Utopia, an idealized nowhere' (Goss, 1993, 32). For Goss there is a soporific magic in the mall, which acts to deceive the shopper into believing that 'something other than mere shopping [is] going on', and this echoes Benjamin's assertion that 'Capitalism was a natural phenomenon with which a new dream-filled sleep came over Europe, and, through it, a reactivation of mythic forces' (Benjamin, 2003, p.391).

Probably the most high-profile creator of these idealized nowheres is Jon Jerde, whose Mall of America in Bloomington, Minnesota Jerde claims to be the US's 'leading tourist destination' (<http://www.jerde.com/go/place/mallofamerica?p=returns>, viewed 10/02/2005), and a profile by Time magazine notes that 'Over the past decade, Japan has emerged as the Jerde Partnership's cutting-edge laboratory' (Leibowitz, 2004, p.38). Jerde's shopping mall projects in Japan include Roppongi Hills in central Tokyo<sup>1</sup>, based on a 'shogun-era village', La Citadella in Kawasaki, which simulates the warm stone architecture of an Italian village, and Canal City Hakata which is meant to resemble Arizona canyons. On a visit to China Jerde is described as being 'attracted by parts of Shanghai that are being shunted aside or razed in the city's headlong rush toward capitalism. "People in China want these new, big shiny boxes", says Jerde. "And of course, we come over here and this is what I want." (Leibowitz, 2004, p.38). This nostalgia combined with Jerde's business of producing contemporary high-tech environments recall the mission and laments of western engineers, architects and technicians in Meiji Japan, tasked with helping to create a modern nation-state, and rueing the demise of fairyland.

Jerde's developments and the theme parks discussed in the previous section adequately illustrate the continuing use of nostalgia as an integral mechanism of modernity. However the extent to which views are controlled in these environments, both in terms of their design and the frequent prevention of unauthorised photography meant that the sites did not generally provide either the framing possibilities or freedom of access that I needed to produce images of suitable quality for this project. The one inclusion I have made is image 22 (p.16) of the simulated album which shows Jerde's 'shogun-era village' in the background of an image of the Mōri Garden<sup>2</sup> in Roppongi Hills, though the shopping environment is not the main focus of the image. Insofar as the design of shopping malls is predicated on 'enclosure, protection, and control' (Jackson, 1996, p.1118) it should not be surprising that the visual qualities of leisure and consumer environments are carefully designed to enhance their primary functions, or that these spaces protect themselves from visual scrutiny when it is not performed as a part of the act of consumption<sup>3</sup>.

The arcades I have photographed in this section<sup>4</sup> are a selection of the more usual covered shopping arcades (*shotengai*) and underground malls (*chikagai*) that can be found in most Japanese town and city centres as post-World War II developments of open shopping streets (*roten*). Time magazine's Jerde article contrasts his high-profile developments with what it describes as Japan's native 'forbidding, lifeless malls' (Leibowitz, 2004, p.40), however, though these arcades tend to be straightforward architectural structures with sometimes minimal ornamentation, during working hours they are well-used, and the structures themselves are barely visible through the crowds. Correspondingly, the arcades have been photographed empty, focussing attention on the space itself, rather than on the activity that usually fills it. Despite the relative overall simplicity of the structures, the images include signage, design features or decoration that resonate with the concerns of the thesis as a whole; the cherub in *Angel Street, Kyoto* (p.46), for example, hovers near a Starbucks coffee shop, manifesting the conflation of cultures that accompanies global capitalism. In *Café de Crié, Hamanomachi* (p.47), *Ichibangai, Motomachi, Kobe* (p.44) ironwork reminiscent of the Belle Epoque recalls the Paris arcades of Benjamin's project. The perspective of the images, as with the paths in images in the previous chapter, indicates a passage through time towards an unobtainable goal. In this case we are trapped in the 'dream-filled sleep' of commodity culture on the point of awakening (literally as well as figuratively, as the images are mostly taken at dawn), the condition which Benjamin associates with the possibility of true historical consciousness.

The series has been produced as a typology, so that the subject of the images is the idea of the arcade as much as an examination of each individual location with its variations in design. The series is bound in the covers of *The Ideal City*, originally an album of images from the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 at which Japan presented a replica of Byōdō-in's Hōōdō (renamed Ho-o-den for the fair), the Phoenix Hall of Fujiwara Michinaga's palace in Uji. The Exposition included contributions from 22 other foreign countries, including a Javanese village, a mock Mexican desert and a Cairo street, alongside symbols of modernity such as an Electricity Building and Thomas Edison's Tower of Light. The use of an antique cover of a book that documents a miniature version of the world, in which the 'primitive' is placed alongside the modern, indicates to the viewer the conflation of past and future as symptomatic to the vision of ideal topographies, and recalls the idea of the arcade as a 'world in miniature'. The book begins with the most claustrophobic and least designed examples of *shotengai* immediately followed by ultra-modern underground malls, the contrast of which is intended to evidence that regardless of differences in visual qualities the arcade represents submergence into a dream world which has its own particular functions. The last images are two of the most recently-built arcades, *Venus Fort, Odaiba*<sup>5</sup> and *Oranges Mall, Huis Ten Bosch* (p.48), which are also

theme parks. These visions of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe have been created to represent the future of Japan, and their placement at the end of the book infers a cycle in which progress inevitably implies a nostalgic return.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Roppongi Hills was financed and developed by artist Mori Mariko's uncle, Mori Minoru, one of Japan's wealthiest property developers. The official website for the development is prefaced with a utopian vision whose rhetoric bears an unfortunate resemblance to the propaganda for Manchukuo;

"Open-mind" is the will to actively absorb information  
and the power to accept new ways of thinking.  
It is an open heart, a state of spirit that continues to change.

In a safe city that welcomes people from around the world,  
many people exchange conversations.  
From the latest art and wonderful food to challenging issues of the day,  
the people who spend time at Roppongi Hills will touch upon diversity of  
thought and enjoy a variety of experiences.  
Here you are given a chance to imagine and think.  
And from there, dreams, hopes and ideas are born.

By creating open conversations with the world,  
Roppongi Hills will lead the nation and the Asian region and from here,  
visions that will shape our future will emerge.

This is the kind of place we want to become.

(Roppongi Hills website, <http://www.roppongihills.com/en/information/>, viewed 09/02/2005)

<sup>2</sup> The Mōri Garden is named after the Mōri daimyō garden which originally occupied space on which the Roppongi Hills development now stands. It does not refer to the property developer Mori Minoru.

<sup>3</sup> It was generally the case that if I contacted the PR departments of these managed spaces in advance, and explained that I was interested in photographing them as part of a doctoral thesis I was very agreeably accommodated. However it was also the case that if I had not obtained permission beforehand security guards would react very quickly to seeing me set up a tripod and stop me working.

<sup>4</sup> A selection of arcade images from this project was short-listed for the Jerwood photography Prize 2004.

<sup>5</sup> Venus Fort, a shopping mall devoted to women's boutiques, opened in 1999 and is modelled on 18<sup>th</sup> century Italian architecture. An artificial sky goes through a day/night cycle every 20 minutes.

### 4.3 Final edit of practical work

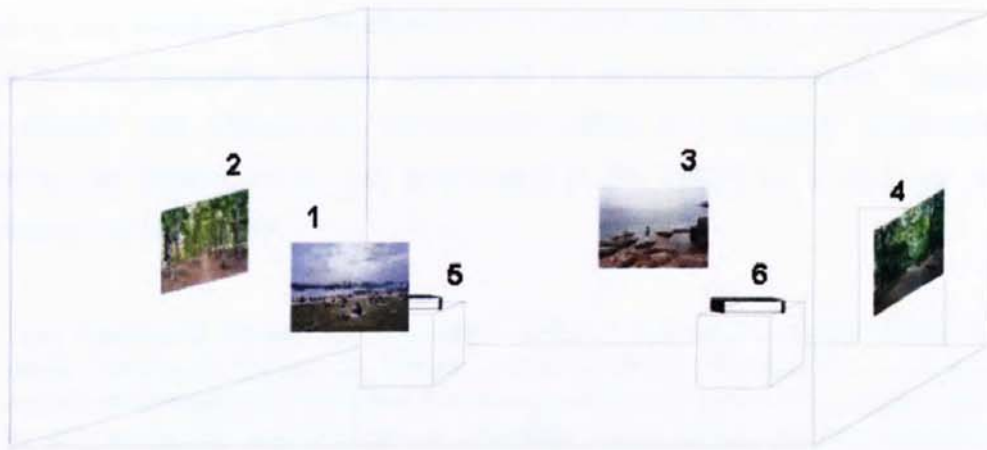
The final edit and presentation of practical work for this thesis is intended to summarise the functions of nostalgia by encompassing the historical periods examined and manifesting the salient issues of its

- utility to modernity
- arbitrariness
- functionality in creating narratives of authenticity
- recurrence across time and national cultures
- dependence on representations of nature as paradise
- proposal of centres and peripheries to modernity

It is supposed that further study would reveal that nostalgia performs the same functions in other media, epochs and cultures. Appendix 2, volume 2, for example, shows preliminary work with images derived from Japanese television in which the viewer's gaze on nostalgic narratives is interrupted by the interference of the television screen. This project would investigate the ideological element in public broadcasting, popular culture and advertising that incorporates nostalgia for a unified, and 'a priori' non-western, identity into a range of programming that stretches from historical pedagogy to selling canned drinks. This, however, is another Japan-based project, and, as has already been indicated, nostalgia as an ideological mechanism can be found wherever there is 'progress'. A logical development of this investigation would therefore be a comparative analysis of and response to nostalgia in visual and material cultures from different countries, which would have the added benefit of directly subjecting the questionable dichotomy of 'east' and 'west' to critical appraisal.

The present objective is to present a body of work that has its own aesthetic coherence and distinctive quality in regard to the material and styles discussed. The ideal layout of the practical work is shown in the illustration below, where the simulated *Yokohama shashin* album and *The Ideal City* album are enclosed by four landscape images.





Key:

1. *Anticipating the Arrival of Commodore Perry* (fig. 4.12, p.50)
2. *South Lake Park, Chángchūn*
3. *Xīnghǎi Gōngyuán, Dàlián*
4. *Ideological Forest* (fig. 4.13, p.50)
5. *Simulated Album*
6. *The Ideal City*

*Anticipating the Arrival of Commodore Perry*<sup>1</sup> depicts the view from the artificial island Odaiba towards Tokyo. A mixture of commercial, residential and recreational facilities, Odaiba was built during the boom years of the bubble economy primarily as a commercial zone, and was largely unused in the wake of the subsequent recession. Its fortunes were revived by the development of its leisure facilities, which include Venus Fort, a reproduction French village 'Wedding Mura' (fig. 4.14, p.51), a miniature Statue of Liberty, a 'Little Hong Kong' restaurant arcade, and more recently a mock Edo-period spa resort. The title of this piece refers to two aspects of Odaiba; firstly referencing it as a manifestation of post-industrial 'resort' Japan, which uses modern technology and building techniques to create anomalous nostalgic references to non-Japanese cultures as a contemporary 'fairyländ'. Secondly, it refers to the gun batteries around it, the original *daiba*, or emplacements, which were hurriedly constructed after Commodore Perry first arrived in Tokyo Bay in 1853. The anachronistic title signals a collapse and critique of the model of linear historical progress, and this point is reiterated by this image's placement opposite a photograph taken in Manchuria, which represents the future of Japan's modernity in relation to Perry's incursion, but the precursor of the historical theme park, causing a further chronological entanglement.

*Ideological Forest* depicts the woodland around Meiji Jingū, the shrine in central Tokyo dedicated to the emperor Meiji, completed in 1920 and made up of 120,000 trees transplanted from all over Japan. As a new civic space asserting the dominance of state Shintō instituted during the Meiji period, the woodland is an expression of the utilisation of

nature and tradition in the Taishō period to legitimise the modern nation-state. It is mirrored in this function by the woodland in South Lake Park in signalling historical progress through proposing man's attainment of harmony with nature. Together these images address and critique the traditionalist notion of a uniquely Japanese spiritual relationship with forests, which has been used in the 1990's as a nostalgic critique of westernisation by Sugawara,

This traditional "forest as Japanese culture" has been utterly transformed under the modernization of Japanese society. As the modernized viewpoint of nature imported from Western Europe regards nature as a heartless "thing", forests artificially transformed in scientific ways based on the modernized viewpoint of nature has become just a "thing" and the spiritual ties between forest and human has been disconnected, and traditional 'forest as Japanese culture' has begun to be destroyed.

(Sugawara, 1996, p.4, quoted in Nakashima, 2000, p.1)

The room in its entirety plays upon the idea of reflection, with images of similar content facing each other, and the miniature world of the arcade being the contemporary equivalent of the arcadia<sup>2</sup> of fairyland. Reflection is used to enclose the viewer in a 'hall of mirrors', in which the images are representations of representations, and aim to turn the dream of fairyland on itself. In the context of Benjamin's assertion that '[true] Progress has its seat not in the continuity of elapsing time, but in its interferences' (Benjamin, 2003, p.475) the goal of this presentation is to cause a moment of disturbance in our assumption of forward movement, and in this stuttering pause to understand better that nostalgia has always been, and continues to be *déjà-vu*.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> *Anticipating the Arrival of Commodore Perry and Ideological Forest*, with three other images from this project were exhibited in the group show *inbetweenandunderneath* at the Century Gallery, Shoreditch, London in February 2003, which I curated (cf. [http://www.centurygallery.org.uk/archive/2003/20030209\\_123\\_inbetween.htm](http://www.centurygallery.org.uk/archive/2003/20030209_123_inbetween.htm)). Text for the show was provided by Jason Wright a Jungian psychoanalytical therapist and appears in appendix 1, of this volume.

<sup>2</sup> The words 'arcade' and 'Arcadia' only share a phonetic similarity. Etymologically 'arcade' is derived from the Latin *arcus*, or arch, 'Arcadia' comes from the Peloponnesian area named after its first king Arkas.

## **Appendix 1**

### **A Jungian appraisal by Jason Wright**

In my role as a psychotherapist I will look at images in this exhibition from a Jungian standpoint, discussing how the works illustrate themes of liminality, longing, and relationship; the relationship between inner and outer and the collective and individual.

Jungian thought recognises a difference between sign and symbol, in that a sign offers us something known about something else that is also known, whereas a symbol offers the only way of expressing a particular experience. A symbol has a component to it that can not be known in any other way than the symbol embodies, that our relationship with the symbol conscious and unconscious engenders. The symbol then may be shared collectively or be personal. From this viewpoint a symbol, as Jung puts it, becomes reduced to a sign, to something known, as the meaning is "born out of it".

The better the symbol can carry a multiplicity of potential meanings the better we can pour ourselves, conscious and unconscious, into it and experience something on the verge of our knowledge, on the edge of consciousness.

The images in the exhibition draw us simultaneously into the outer world; Japan, estuaries in Essex, post-communist Romania, or Athens, and into our inner world of memory, fantasy and imagination. These two realities collide within the image and begin to form relationship: the relationship between the consciousness and unconsciousness of both the artist and the viewer, and the collective context within which these experiences are set.

If we take Tran's "Anticipating the Arrival of Commodore Perry" [shown above] as an example image, within it are conscious references to the history of image making; for instance the plaintive open hands of the male figure in the foreground and a resemblance to Seurat's Sunday in the Park. On a personal level it reminds me of walks I have taken on Sundays in London parks. On a collective level the open handed gesture crosses cultures. I see in it a specific reference to a Christian image of Christ as gatherer of souls, as psychopomp: as a symbol for the liminal space between life and death. So here I begin to form a relationship with the image to wonder what the figures are doing at the time of the photograph and feel some nostalgia for my own experiences. I also experience memories and associations relating to of the gestures and body language of the figures in a personal and a cultural context. I am reminded of experiences of longing. It is not the meaning I ascribe to the image, but the use of this image to give temporary form to my experiences, which flow from the personal to the collective.

Tran investigates the use of nostalgia in Japanese photography and refers to that in this image. However there is a bitterness expressed in this image, which echoes in both a western and an eastern context. Issues which might involve a longed for rural idyll, the legacy of industrialisation and man's domination of the earth, on one hand, and differing histories developed in isolation over long periods meeting in modern times.

Tran's images eloquently express not only his personal experience and a particular and scholarly view of Japanese culture, but also something which encompasses my personal experience and a collective experience of, for instance, formal and informal events in verdant urban spaces on Sundays. We are drawn by this image to engage not only archetypally with urban industrial cultures at rest, and the experiences of longing therein, but to our own personal experiences and those of the artist concurrently. This is contained within the symbolic nature of the image, which given the containing material structure of the image allows us to oscillate between meaning and experience. Making the deepening of the experience more bearable and the meaning ascribed to containing it less necessary. The complex layers, both personal and collective, that Tran weaves through his work enables an experience of both the landscape of Japanese cities and the cultural context that they express. In juxtaposition with our own inner imaginative landscape this brings up the archetypal tensions experienced in diversity.

All four artists work in a similar way to enable the viewer to use the images symbolically to explore their experiences.

Stent in her images generates tensions between inner and outer space. There is a sense of longing in her pieces which I see as more directly related to the bridge between how we come into relationship with what we long for and how are we and the space are changed in the process. The works here are photographs of the Thames estuary at Tilbury, the Stour at Harwich and the Orwell at Felixstowe, all at the point where the river begins to become the sea. She also includes a contour map of the area photographed. This is a place of change from one environment to another, a place of liminality, a place between. She recognises this in a corporeal sense inviting us with the maps and images together to inhabit the landscape she describes. Through her choice of image she invites this as metaphor for the inner journey, the liminal space between our inner and outer life, the longing for an inner completeness, and the experience thereof. However these are places of historical and industrial flux: Tilbury, the opening mouth of London to the world, and Felixstowe and Harwich as major ports to the east. The images have a peaceful quality, whilst still containing the necessities of modern living such as power stations, docks, fences and reinforced banks. This echoes our modern experience for understanding our inner world's relation to the outer, without the edifice of an external assumed myth to contain it.

**Marinescu's** work, also maps and photographs, explores a more traumatic experience of liminality. The 'border', as she describes it, between the derelict heart of Bucharest and the remains of the old town is a stark broken place. This is a place between where there is no mournful longing for transition, but a bursting through, change imposed violently from the overwhelming other. As in the images of Campu Lung where the gas pipes are, in some way, invading, not only urban landscapes, houses and streets, but picturesque forests and woods. It is as if something is coming out of the land itself to overwhelm our attempts at relationship to it. In fact of course it is the reverse; it is the attempt to overcome the forces that threaten us, natural and man-made, which generates these seeming absurdities.

The desire to impose gas pipes upon the images of Bucharest seem an attempt to make meaning from a chaotic intrusive experience, to gain control over an experience of destructive change. As if one needs to identify with that which invades us before one can mediate the experience and through the meaning generated encompass it. This is the practical use of symbol to transform experience.

**Zarifopoulos'** work addresses liminality directly he regards "beauty as an experiential situation in which we participate as spirit and matter" this is the core of the liminality. He also says "graphic creation functions as a bridge of communication between personal and communal space." Here are the themes that I have been outlining. Illustrating how we use symbols between ourselves and our environment, consciously and unconsciously, as an expression of our human experience. He offers us images of Athens, some of which form simple abstract patterns, others which offer quasi-archaeological experiences giving us differing experiences of modern day Athens and the tensions within it. These images, for me, interweave history and the modern material world expressing something of the tension between living Athens and the romantic esteem in which the city is held as the foundation of our structures of political communication.

I have followed an entirely subjective path through these works and have looked at them as symbols in a Jungian context. I have explored something of the themes of liminality that I see explored in the pieces and the context in which these pieces sit together. I hope that I have made it more possible to approach these images as symbols and to develop your own relationship with this thought-provoking and moving work.

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