

Comments on Krischer's and Pai's Papers

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First of all, I would like to thank both presenters who provided us with the results of such intensive research. They raised many important issues, not least those relating to specific historical facts, which deserve in-depth academic discussion, but today I would rather pay attention to the final words of the presentations that suggest the possibility of applying the questions to broader issues. I regard this as a vital dimension of this conference, so let me try to link the topics as spoken with some contemporary problems.

Professor Pai's story of Korean colonial heritage preservation overlapped in my mind with today's international cultural heritage management. While I am studying the 19th century history of diplomacy and cultural exchange, I was once a UNESCO staff member in the field of cultural heritage, and my comments here are based on my honest feelings from that experience. To select 'politically' monuments, ancient buildings, or even living traditions such as rituals or performing arts, in order to position them in the narrative of human history, is not only a colonial act but is also exactly what we do today in the name of 'respecting cultural diversity'. To hire photographers and also video makers in today's context in order to make an inventory of heritage is part of UNESCO's important work. It is profitable in this regard to look at UNESCO's website, which itself functions as a visual library of heritages.

One obvious difference from the first half of the 20th century is that today a sovereign state rarely controls directly the heritage management of its colonial territories as part of its 'civilising mission'. Rather, contemporary international policy management concerning cultural heritage appears to stem from reflection on, or compensation for, the history of colonial rule that destroyed local cultures. UNESCO itself as the international authority is to help the respective governments or people themselves manage and preserve their own heritage, instead of intervening in each country's heritage management.

However, I do not take up this topic in order to argue that the situation has changed or the problem has been solved. On the contrary, I would like to attract your attention to the fact that UNESCO, with developed nations as its leading members, has taken one step back from directly managing colonial heritage, and now, instead, gives generous financial aid and expert guidance to the third world countries. They advise on what kind of heritage has international value and should be selected, and how to photograph relevant objects and sites, how to train heritage management specialists, and so forth. All such acts are explained meeting the purpose of building each country's capacity to conduct cultural policies of an international standard. I would

propose that this is nothing other than today's version of a civilising mission.

In such practices, many photographers, artists, or scholars, not necessarily innocent but at least conscientious, are engaged. Here, it is particularly important to be reminded of Dr Krischer's warning that we should not ignore the official or political frameworks that existed behind the acts of individuals, and intellectuals, in particular.

If I may ask specific questions to each presenter, my question to Dr Krischer would be: As an art historian yourself, what do you learn from Ōmura Segai's life? What indeed would you suggest to him knowing the political framework that worked behind him? And, to Dr Pai: What is your reaction to the fact that now in UNESCO, Korea is the leading political engine in internationally promoting cultural heritage preservation policies, especially in the field of intangible heritage. Japan is also active, but Korea is politically eager. Let me add that Samsung of Korea and NHK of Japan are the two major supporters of UNESCO for its film making and photographing activities in the field of cultural heritage preservation.

Finally, I would like to reiterate the importance of learning the lessons that are inherent in our two presentations. They have immediate applicability in today's world. I would further propose that the scope of the question here is not limited within the area of cultural heritage or art history but should be perceived more widely and severely as being relevant to the acts of intellectuals.