



Jaroslav Olša, jr., Kang Hong-Bin (eds.). 1901 년 체코인 브라즈의 서울 방문. 체코 여행기들의 서울 이야기 / *Soul roku 1901 objektivem E. St. Vráze a jak viděli Koreu další čeští cestovatelé / 1901 photographs of Seoul by Enrique Stanko Vráz and other early Czech travellers' views of Korea.*
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The publication *1901 Photographs of Seoul by Enrique Stanko Vráz and other Early Czech Travellers' Views of Korea* is the result of cooperation between the Náprstek Museum of Asian, African and American Cultures and the Seoul Museum of History. Despite the fact that the Korean collection is one of the smallest works at the Náprstek Museum of Asian, African and American Cultures, it includes unique artefacts and ethnographic photographs. As Korea opened its borders in 1876, as Japan had in 1854, Czech travellers started exploring its territory little by little. The most significant traveller was Enrique Stanko Vráz who visited Korea in 1901 and spent three days in its capital city, Seoul. He had first thought of visiting Korea in 1896 when he visited Japan. He is, most likely, the first Czech to have been photographed with a Korean (probably a servant and interpreter called Kim) at the stairway of the Imperial Palace. In his travel book *China. Travel Sketches* (Čína. Cestopisné črty, 1904), particularly in the article *Korea and Koreans* (Korea a Korejci, 1919) as well as through his lectures, Vráz presented basic facts on Korean society and culture.

Detailed and carefully organized information about Vráz is presented in the opening study by Jiřina Todorovová. As the Head of the Department of Non-European Ethnography at the National Museum, she has been long involved in studying Vráz and his work and is elaborating the inheritance from his travels. In her study she presents Vráz as a traveller, photographer, writer and active collector. Throughout three decades, Vráz took many photographs leaving us a large collection documenting the local scenery, artefacts and members of foreign cultures. Vráz's position among Czech photographers is very special as no other photographer took so many photographs from so many different cultures during the Austro-Hungarian period.

He was the first Czech to have visited Ghana and New Guinea with a camera. He wrote his notes and comments directly on glass negatives. In times of globalization

resulting in ever increasing unification and the decay of diversity, his invaluable photographic collection enables comparative research by capturing the unique texture of different places and embracing the process of cultural change.

Since the invention of the camera, photography has documented the lives of different individuals. As early as the first half of the 20th century, cameras became an essential part of expeditions. Travellers, anthropologists or ethnologists tried to capture the world of different cultures through their lens. Although ethnographic photography was generally available, in the traditional understanding of visual anthropology it remained neglected and side-tracked in favour of motion pictures. Visual materials represented merely optional evidence or they were only in the form of illustrations accompanying a written text. In spite of its undeniable didactic value, it did not bring any new scientific findings. A certain advancement of this kind of media came in the 1970's when some branches of science such as visual sociology and visual ethnography became independent. As contrasted to other visual technologies, a camera is perceived as a tool representing what is in front of its lens at the moment of pressing the shutter release. A photograph records a texture of a particular place with its unique feeling and atmosphere, a kind of chimerical moment that cannot be easily described with words. Moreover, a photographic record remains instant. Although a photograph might be framed and cut, it always leaves a visual trace of what was in front of the camera at the moment when it was taken. A photograph is a death mask which is an imprint of its referent and makes it possible to freeze time. Seen from the angle of mobility, a photograph is an object that travels. It is taken at one place and shown somewhere else. The value and significance of a visual object usually changes depending on its different "travels" through space and time. What can be considered fundamental is the analysis of the context of photograph creation and the way in which its visual content depends on subjective positions and intentions of individuals.

The largest part of the publication is composed of four photographic chapters containing Vráz's photographs. Those photographs document the people of Korea, or the state of a specific place or a cultural monument at the time of Vráz's visit. Localisation of the place is specified with historiographical, architectural and geographic comments. They can be therefore used as a tool for comparative recognition of "yesterday and today". As the photographs and comments preserve the *genius loci* and continuity of cultural ideas despite socio-cultural change that has taken place since then, they incorporate this aspect of cultural heritage into constitutive consciousness and overcome the process of its evaporation from collective consciousness.

The first chapter called *Palaces* offers views of royal palaces, pavilions, gardens and lakes with special attention to Gyeongbokgung Palace and Changdeok Palace. The second chapter *Places of Seoul* presents places in Seoul, such as its main street Jongro, other shopping streets Jonggak and Namdaemunro or a market. Its atmosphere is complemented with street vendors and pedestrians. The third part *People in Seoul* represents common people, their everyday lives, habits and customs. Photographs capture a wedding, children on a veranda of a house, a family reading the Bible, people at routine work or while relaxing. Everyday life enables us to perceive the imaginary spatio-temporal context of the past in which the members of the society lived their natural lives in the studied historic period and place. This world of common people reveals basic patterns of behaviour, thinking and attitudes of Korean society and

culture at that time. The last chapter *Westerners in Seoul* depicts the consequences of the arrival of Western culture and modernization which can be seen in establishing institutions imitating the Western way, as documented by photographs of an American missionary school.

The book is closed with a study by Jaroslav Olša, an orientalist and the Czech Ambassador to Seoul, which presents seven Czech travellers – Maxmilian Taubeles (1845–1886), Josef Kořenský (1847–1938), Enrique Stanko Vráz (1860–1932), Jiří Viktor Daneš (1880–1928), Václav Novák (1895–1979), Barbora Markéta Eliášová (1885–1957) and Bohumil Pospíšil (1902–?). The objective of his study is to draw attention and name travellers who visited Korea before the Second World War. Maxmilian Taubeles actually died in Korea in 1886 and he was the first traveller of Czech origin who, at least symbolically, opened Czech-Korean contact.

At the end of the publication there is an extract from a travel essay *Silhouettes from the Land of the "Morning Calm"* (1934) by Bohumil Pospíšil about Korea, which illustrates how Korea was received by Czech society. The book is not only about how Korea was explored by Czech travellers in the 19th and first half of the 20th century, but also how Korea was explored by "the others" in different space and time. The photographic part constitutes the fundamental part of the book and represents the "eternal and invariable" that was in front of Vráz's lens when he pressed the shutter release. Through this book, readers become participants of comparative research and at the same time, when watching the photographs, they can experiment the same social experience Enrique Stanko Vráz did over 100 years ago.

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1901년
체코인 브라즈의
서울 방문

SOUL ROKU 1901 OBJEKTIVEM E. St. VRÁZE
a jak viděli Koreu další čeští cestovatelé

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