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*Review of Assimilating Seoul: Japanese Rule and the  
Politics of Public Space in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945*

Michael Wert

Marquette University, michael.wert@marquette.edu

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Henry, Todd A. **Assimilating Seoul: Japanese rule and the politics of public space in colonial Korea, 1910-1945.** California, 2014. 299p  
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Seoul, the capital city of Korea, was called Keijō when the Korean peninsula was a Japanese colony (1910-45), and is the lens through which Henry (Univ. of California, San Diego) analyzes Japanese colonial

governmental policies. He does this by pursuing a broad range of topics connected to public and private spaces in Keijō, from the seemingly basic redesign of city streets to complex efforts by the colonial government to assimilate Koreans spiritually (ordering visits to Shinto shrines and distributing Shinto amulets to households), civically (promoting Japanese hygienic values), and materially (enjoining Koreans to visit exhibitions that promote scientific and technological progress, and thus capital production). Henry does an excellent job of highlighting counterintuitive moments. This is not a simple story of a colonial government oppressing the populace from above, but a mix of reactions from both Koreans and expatriate Japanese of lower and elite classes, sometimes acting in unexpected ways. This first deep study of colonial Seoul builds on scholarship on Korean colonialism as well as the Japanese imperial period more generally. **Summing Up:** Highly recommended. ★★★ Upper-division undergraduates and above.—*M. J. Wert, Marquette University*