

PhotoResearcher

ESHPh European Society for the History of Photography



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Editorial

Dear Reader,

While work on this issue was nearing completion, the dramatic events following the natural disaster in Japan made us painfully aware of its consequences for the inhabitants of that country and the entire East Asian region.

With this special number, **Photography in East Asia: New Archives, New Histories**, the ESHPH continues with its principle of devoting special issues of PhotoResearcher to individual topics. In recent years, international photo-historical research and exhibition projects have increasingly focused on East Asia. This special issue presents the latest research findings by several highly respected scholars in the field. The individual contributions throw light on the various aspects of the manifold photographic histories of Japan and China after their political opening in the middle of the nineteenth century. We are extremely pleased that Luke Gartlan from the University of St Andrews has served as guest editor and contributor for this special issue.

Carmen Pérez González draws a portrait of Yokoyama Matsusaburō, a pioneering Japanese photographer, painter and lithographer, who possessed an extraordinary creative mind and imagination, and created an oeuvre remarkably personal in nature. **Luke Gartlan** questions the role of gender in the photographic histories of East Asia and draws our attention to women photographers in the region, taking the remarkable photographer Isabella Bird Bishop as an example. The portrayal of Colonel Charles Du Pin, head of the topographic bureau of the French Army in China, by **Sebastian Dobson** focuses specifically on the portfolio of Japanese images he created in 1861, recently rediscovered in a British university collection.

Tani Akiyoshi and **Peter Pantzer** shed entirely new light on Wilhelm Burger's Photographs of Japan by making new attributions to his glass negatives preserved in the Austrian National Library. In her case study, **Banu Kaygusuz** deals with the photographic albums of Japan in the photography collection of Abdulhamid II, focusing primarily on the significance of photographs for diplomatic exchange between Japan and the Ottoman Empire.

Régine Thiriez provides a review of William Pryor Floyd's less well-known views of colonial Hong Kong. **Allan D. Coleman's** article China: Insights examines the condition of contemporary mainstream documentary photography in the People's Republic of China, bringing together the work of seven contemporary photographers from the PRC.

This special issue follows the modified Hepburn system of romanization for Japanese words (shin-bun). Japanese words that feature in standard English-language dictionaries and well-known place names such as Tokyo and Kyoto are rendered without macrons except in the citation of Japanese-language sources. Japanese names are provided in the conventional Japanese manner of family preceding given names, except in the case of authors publishing in Western languages. Chinese words and names are transliterated in the pinyin system. However, in some instances such as place names, common nineteenth-century transliterations are used followed by their pinyin equivalent in parentheses, as in 'Hongchow (Hongzhou)'.

Luke Gartlan, Ulla Fischer-Westhauser, Uwe Schögl
Vienna, April 2011

Yokoyama Matsusaburō (1838-1884): A Pioneering Experimental Japanese Photographer

Carmen Pérez González Photography arrived in Japan around a decade after its invention was announced in Paris. Although this took place before the great wave of westernization that marked the Meiji period (1868-1912), it was relatively late compared with other Eastern countries, such as India and Turkey, which had already greeted the new medium in 1839. In Japan, as in other Asian countries, the photographic process was adopted after an initial period of hesitation and moulded to the country's own pictorial traditions. A prime example of this process is provided by the work of Yokoyama Matsusaburō (1838-1884), a pioneering Japanese photographer, painter and lithographer, who possessed an extraordinary creative mind and imagination, and created an oeuvre remarkably personal in nature.

Yokoyama was born on Etorofu Island but spent his childhood in Hakodate. He was first and foremost a painter and his interest in the art had already developed at the age of fifteen. When Commodore Perry's ships visited Hakodate in 1854, Yokoyama discovered the daguerreotype through the work of Eliphalet Brown (1816-1886). In his biography on Yokoyama, Yokoe Fuminori, curator at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, reports that when Yokoyama saw these photographs "his desire was to learn the technique in order to leave a portrait of his mother to posterity".¹ According to the historians Luisa Orto and Matsuda Takako, "he was a leading figure among the second generation of Japanese photographers. These artists learned their skills from Japanese rather than foreign teachers and participated in the rise and consolidation of the picture industry during the mid-nineteenth century".² Yokoyama travelled to Yokohama and studied photography under Shimooka Renjō (1823-1914)³ before returning to Hakodate and continuing with the Russian consul and amateur photographer Iosif Antonovich Goshkevich (1814-1875).⁴ In 1868 Yokoyama opened his first commercial photographic studio. Scholars disagree on whether this studio was in

Yokohama or in Tokyo. Whereas the photography historian Yokoe Fuminori has suggested the former,⁵ Ishii Ayako and Iizawa Kōtarō state that he opened his first studio in the Ryōgoku district of Tokyo. Shortly thereafter he relocated to Ikenohata in the Ueno district and named his studio Tsūtenrō.⁶ The historians



Figure 1
Yokoyama Matsusaburō,
The Great Buddha, c. 1870,
stereoscopic view, 7,8 x 7,2 cm,
Yokoyama family private collection.

Torin Boyd and Naomi Izakura also agree that he opened his first studio in Tokyo, as noted by Bennett.⁷

Yokoyama was the first Japanese photographer to seriously practice stereographic photography. An album of stereographs has survived of his travels throughout Japan

1 Yokoe Fuminori, 'YOKOYAMA Matsusaburo [1838-1884]' in: Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography (ed.), *The Advent of Photography in Japan*, Tokyo and Hokkaido: Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography and the Hakodate Museum of Art 1997, 183.

2 Luisa Orto, 'Yokoyama Matsusaburo' in: Anna Wilkes Tucker, *The History of Japanese Photography*, Houston: The Museum of Fine Arts 2003, 369.

3 Shimooka Renjo is one of the seminal artists of the first generation of Japanese photographers, along with Ueno Hikoma, Uchida Kuichi, and Shima Kakoku. See Terry Bennett, *Photography in Japan: 1853-1912*, Tokyo: Tuttle Publishing 2006, 69-72; and Wilkes Tucker 2003 (reference 2), 360.

4 For more information on this photographer, see Bennett 2006 (reference 3), 117-118.



Figure 2
Kitagawa Utamaro,
A Married Woman Looks at Her Teeth in a Mirror,
c. 1792-93, ukiyo-e painting, 37,1 x 24,1 cm,
former Georg Oeder Collection, Düsseldorf.

between 1869 and 1873. An example of this early work is a stereoview of the Great Buddha (Daibutsu) at the Tōdai-ji in Nara (fig. 1), which depicts the image of the 14.98 metre-high bronze statue of the “Cosmic Buddha” (Mahavairocana) located in the Daibutsu Hall of the temple’s compound. According to contemporary guidebooks of the period, this was a favourite place for tourists and photographers:

*NARA. One of the many attractive sights of this place is the bronze image of Buddha or Dai-Butsu. It is the largest statue in Japan. Mention has already been made of its dimensions, under the head of Kamakura. There is a large bell at Nara, equal in size of that of Chioin. The stone lantern opposite to the Dai-Butsu contains fire, said to have been originally brought from Ceylon, and never yet extinguished.*⁸

Yokoyama produced at least three series of views published at this time. However, they are now very rare. According to photography historian Rob Oechsle, “these groups of works that Yokoyama produced from 1869 through the 1870s are the only notable Japanese-made stereographic series from the early Meiji period.”⁹

In the early 1870s, Yokoyama came into contact with the art scholar and collector Ninagawa Noritane (1835-1882), who founded three small museums during this period in Japan. At Ninagawa’s request, Yokoyama participated in photographing the partially destroyed Edo Castle in 1871.¹⁰ He took part in the Jinshin Survey, a project that was born after the government pointed out the need to study the treasures kept at the Shōsōin Treasure House at Tōdai-ji in Nara in 1872. The condition of the treasures can be seen partially in the photographs taken by Yokoyama.

In 1876, Yokoyama transferred the rights for his studio to his assistant Oda Nobumasa and became a lecturer at the Japanese Military Academy, where he taught photography and lithography.¹¹ In 1881, a recurrence of his tuberculosis, which he had first caught around the age of fifteen, forced him to leave his post at the Military Academy. He nevertheless went on to found *Shashin Sekiban-sha* (the Photolithography Company) and continued to paint. Around this time, he created what he called *shashin abura-e* or “photographic oil paintings,” in which the paper support of a photograph was cut away and oil paints applied to the remaining emulsion. Yokoyama produced a number of works using this technique.¹² In addition to this, he mastered several printing techniques such as the carbon process, electrotype print and the carbon process on silk.¹³ Yokoyama’s versatile production includes landscape photography, portrait photography, photographic self-portraits, paintings, large format

5 Yokoe 1997 [reference 1], 183; Bennett 2006 [reference 3], 82.

6 Wilkes Tucker 2003 [reference 2], 313.

7 Bennett 2006 [reference 3], 82.

8 W. E. L. Keeling, *Tourists’ guide to Yokohama, Tokio, Hakone, Fujiyama, Kamakura, Yokoska, Kanozan, Narita, Nikko, Kyoto, Osaka, etc, etc, etc*, Tokyo 1880, 90.

9 Rob Oechsle, ‘Stereoviews-Index of Japan-Related Stereoview Photographers and Publishers, 1859-1912’ in: Terry Bennett, *Old Japanese Photographs: Collector’s Data Guide*, London: Quaritch 2006, 161-222.

10 A famous album of this project was published shortly afterwards.

See Wilkes Tucker 2003 [reference 2], 369.

11 Yokoe 1997 [reference 1], 183; Bennett 2006 [reference 3], 82.



Figure 3
Yokoyama Matsusaburō, *Self-portrait*, c. 1872,
albumen print, 10,5 x 8,0 cm,
Yokoyama family private collection.

albumen prints (monochrome and hand-coloured) and *shashin abura-e*. He produced studio souvenir albums, some of which have survived to this day. His experimental photography had a deep influence on other Japanese photographers such as Ogawa Kazuma (1860-1929). According to Yokoe, “Yokoyama’s connections to members of the new government of Meiji allowed him to freely experiment with photographic techniques and to expand them in all directions, making him one of the happy few who could live at the avant-garde of his era”.¹⁴ Today, the three main holdings of his work are located in the Yokoyama family photo archive in the keeping of Mr. Yokoyama Tomoyoshi, the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, and the Hakodate Museum of Art in Hokkaido.

There are three elements in this photographer’s work that I find especially interesting as they represent an aesthetic approach to photography quite unique for his time: firstly, the large number of self-portraits; secondly, the use of text or calligraphic inscriptions on the photographic surface; and thirdly, his experiments in combining photography with oil painting. In 1991, a major solo exhibition on Yokoyama was held at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography. The catalogue of *The Rise of Photography in Japan* (in Japanese), contains a rich selection of his work, both as a painter and a photographer.¹⁵ As Yokoe has observed, “Yokoyama was able to fuse emotions and science together in his thought process, which now allows us to appreciate the ‘vision’ of Yokoyama Matsusaburō the scientist”.¹⁶ The meticulous manner in which he inscribed his works with the date, as well as with extensive information regarding his technique, demonstrates this scientific component of his visual practice. The inscriptions on the photographs are hand written on a white strip of Japanese paper attached directly to his photographs.

The use of text or inscriptions in the photographic space may have been inspired by Japanese traditional painting, and, in particular, by *ukiyo-e* or woodblock prints. The term *ukiyo-e*, or “pictures of the floating world,” refers to a style of genre painting and woodblock printing that first appeared in Japan in the seventeenth century and was practiced until the nineteenth century. As the Japanese art historian Tadashi Kobayashi states:

*The phrase ‘floating world’, which was originally associated with a Buddhist world view and alluded to the ephemerality of man’s existence, subsequently came to suggest a hedonistic preoccupation with the present moment, with the latest fashions, pursuits, and life style of an urban culture, and implied a certain chicness.*¹⁷

12 Yokoe 1997 [reference 1], 182-183; Bennett 2006 [reference 3], 82-83.

13 Wilkes Tucker 2003 [reference 2], 369.

14 Yokoe 1997 [reference 1], 183.

15 For more information about the life of Yokoyama Matsusaburo, see Kuwajima Yoichi, ‘Matsusaburo Yokoyama’ in: Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography (ed.), *The Rise of Japanese Photography*, Tokyo: Tokyo Metro-

politan Museum of Photography 1991, 54-61 [In Japanese]. Yokoyama’s most famous paintings and photographs appear in this exhibition catalogue.

16 Yokoe 1997 [reference 1], 183.

17 Tadashi Kobayashi, *Ukiyo-e: An Introduction to Japanese Woodblock Prints*, trans. Mark A. Harbison, Tokyo, New York, and London: Kodansha International 1992, 65. For further reading on *ukiyo-e* paintings, see Rupert



Figure 4
Yokoyama Matsusaburō, *Self-portrait*, c. 1872,
albumen print, 10,5 x 8,0 cm,
Yokoyama family private collection.



Figure 5
Yokoyama Matsusaburō, *Self-portrait*, c. 1872,
albumen print, 12,5 x 9,2 cm,
Yokoyama family private collection.

The three themes that recur most often in ukiyo-e painting are beautiful women (*bijin*) and their world in the tea house and at home, the samurai, and the landscape. The influence of the ukiyo-e painting tradition on nineteenth-century Japanese photography is also evident in hand-coloured photography, which not only adopts the colour palette of paintings, but also copies the poses of the persons depicted and even the objects that they are holding.¹⁸ A married woman inspects her black teeth in a mirror (fig. 2) – a typical ukiyo-e – was painted by Kitagawa Utamaro (1754-1806). In the top right corner, we find a cartouche divided into three parts with some calligraphic inscriptions in the two outer sections. In the right section, the title of the series to which this ukiyo-e belongs is written in black ink (*Fujin sōgaku juttai*, or “Ten Physiognomic Studies of Women”) and a seal in red ink reveals the identity of one of the owners of this artwork. On the left side of the cartouche, we can read *somi* (physiognomic seen) written in black ink at the top, and the name of the painter, Utamaro, at the bottom. This method of placing calligraphic inscriptions within the pictorial space is typical of the Japanese painting tradition.

Yokoyama also consistently used text within the photographic space written in both red and black ink. The fact that other Japanese photographers, such as Kojima Ryūa, also tended to add inscriptions within the photographic space points to the fact that this combination of image and text was an element particular to Japanese photography, as was the case in other countries in Asia. Iran, which has been the subject of my in-depth research over the last seven years, provides some particularly interesting examples of this. My focus has been on the work of nineteenth-century Iranian photographers such as Abdull Ghassem Nuri (active in the 1880s) and Mirza Hassan Akkasbashi (1854-1916).¹⁹

Nevertheless, a comparative analysis of the use of inscriptions in Iranian and Japanese portrait photography makes it apparent that the content and manner of the inscriptions on the photographic surface differ both in nature and form. The inscriptions on Iranian photographs are usually philosophical reflections or written in a poetic tone, whereas the Japanese photographs that I have analyzed so far tend to provide more factual and straightforward information. In addition, the inscriptions in the Iranian photographs are implemented in a manner similar to the methods used in Persian miniatures (within cartouches arranged around the image, or freely flowing in the photographic space), whereas their Japanese counterparts tend to insert the inscriptions on white strips, as we have already pointed out, in the traditional manner of the Japanese visual arts. This is the topic of an ongoing research project that I started a couple of years ago.

Faulkner, *Masterpieces of Japanese Prints: The European Collections; Ukiyo-e from the Victoria and Albert Museum*, Tokyo, New York and London: Kodansha 1991; and Rose Hempel, *Meisterwerke des Japanischen Farbholzschnitts: Die Sammlung Otto Riese*, Munich and New York: Prestel 1997.
18 Carmen Pérez González, 'Hand-Coloured Photography in Asia: Japan,

India and Iran' in: Anna Auer and Uwe Schögl (eds.), *Jubilee. 30 Years ESHPh. Congress of Photography in Vienna*, Vienna: Fotohof Edition 2008, 100-109.

19 Carmen Pérez González, 'Defining a Model of Representation for Nineteenth Century Portrait Photography in Iran', *PhotoResearcher* 10, 2007, 17-22.

Figure 6
Yokoyama Matsusaburō, *Portrait of Nitta Tomi*,
c. 1874, albumen print, 10 x 7,2 cm Yokoyama
family private collection.



The first photograph selected here is one of the many self-portraits taken by Yokoyama around 1872 (fig. 3). The first self-portrait in the history of photography was probably taken by the French photographer Hippolyte Bayard (1801-1887) in 1839, *Self-portrait as a Drowned Man*. Like Bayard, other photographers were often drawn to the plastic and theatrical possibilities of photography. A less well-known example of this tendency is evident in the work of Yokoyama. Being the experimental soul he was, it comes as no surprise that Yokoyama experimented with himself as sitter and, in doing so, the possibility of projecting multiples selves. In the early years of Japanese photography, it was extremely difficult to perfect one's own photographic technique and I believe that he took such a remarkable number of self-portraits because he needed to experiment as much as possible to

achieve mastery in his art. He was, indeed, a perfectionist who tried hard to master his photographic technique. In his discussion of the significant number of self-portraits in the photographer's oeuvre, Yokoe has asked "whether this can be interpreted as a sign that the artist always looked at himself with a detached sense of observation".²⁰

Alongside the fact that this photograph is a self-portrait, the other significant element is the text pasted on the right edge of this photograph. The top inscription shows the date of the photograph (circa the 7th year of the Meiji Era, or 1874) written in red ink in Kanji script with the name of the photographer, Yokoyama Matsusaburō, written below that. For the art historian Helen Westgeest, the use of the white-strip to frame the inscriptions seems to be an influence of the *ukiyo-e* tradition on Japanese photographers, including the aforementioned Yokoyama.²¹ This hypothesis seems quite plausible since Yokoyama was also a painter and therefore most likely influenced by the traditional practices of Japanese art.

Yokoyama's oeuvre includes many examples of self-portraiture created at different points in his life and in varying moods; some focused on his own personality, and others staged within the paraphernalia of his studio. His experimental attitude is obvious when we analyze his self-portraits, which demonstrate a variety of poses, angles of view, and studio accoutrements. In an especially appealing photograph, Yokoyama and an anonymous colleague look at a photograph attached to a wall (fig. 4). The inscription also records the date it was taken and the name of the photographer. This photograph hanging on his studio wall can be

20 Yokoe 1997 [reference 1], 183.

21 Helen Westgeest, personal communication, September 2008.



Figure 7.
Yokoyama Matsusaburō, *Portrait of Nitta Tomi*,
c. 1872, albumen print, 10 x 7,2 cm,
Yokoyama family private collection.

Figure 8
Yokoyama Matsusaburō,
Portrait of Yamamoto Rimpei, c. 1874, albumen
print and oil painting, 20 x 25,7 cm, Yokoyama
family private collection.



seen in the background of many of his studio portraits, including one of his grandfather, shown from behind, holding a mirror which reflects the sitter's face (fig. 5). This results in an interesting compositional portrait with three centres of attention: the portrait photograph on the wall, the posterior view of the sitter, and the reflected face in the mirror.

The next photograph is a portrait of Nitta Tomi taken around 1874 (fig. 6). One of the most interesting elements in this photograph is, again, the inscription placed on a white strip at the top right corner. The text has been written in red ink in Kanji script and provides exhaustive information about the date, the technique used to produce the photograph, and additional factual information about the sitter. At the top right, Yokoyama informs us that this photograph constitutes the beginning of his work on portraits of women and identifies the sitter as Nitta Tomi. Beneath this, we find another inscription which establishes that the photographer had opened a studio in the district of Asakusa. On the left, the

inscription gives the date the photograph was taken as “circa the 7th year of the Meiji Era” and the location as “in Yokoyama’s studio in Ikenohata”. Many nineteenth-century Japanese photographs depict sitters in the traditional Japanese pose kneeling on the floor. However, in this photograph, the woman is shown sitting on a chair, a clear sign of the influence of Western studios with their profusion of equipment and furniture. It is actually possible to trace a chronological evolution in nineteenth-century Japanese photography from the traditional Japanese kneeling pose to a more westernized one, indicated mainly by the use of chairs in the photographer’s studio. Accordingly, the photographer has raised the vantage point in order to fully depict the person seated on the chair. Nitta Tomi was portrayed several times by Yokoyama. However, in the next example, she is depicted kneeling in the Japanese traditional pose (fig. 7). In the central white strip there is an inscription written in black ink in Kanji script. The first four characters reveal that the photograph was taken, “circa the 5th year of the Meiji Era” (1872), and the next three signs state that the technique used was albumen paper, or “Japanese-lack paper”. The photographer has written very detailed information in red ink about the process, the identity of the sitter, and the location of the photographic sitting: “Nitta Tomi, sister of (illegible sign), the 7th year of the Meiji Era a photo-studio was opened next to the five-storey pagoda of the premises of the Asakusa Temple”.

Portrait of Yamamoto Rinpei, one of Yokoyama’s disciples, is an example of his *shashin abura-e* or “photographic oil-paintings”, as he has indicated on the upper right-hand white strip in the



Figure 9
Yokoyama Matsusaburō,
Todaiji-Daibutsu in Nara, c. 1870, hand-coloured
albumen print, 26,8 x 20,7 cm,
Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Cologne.

lower part of the inscription: “the back of the photograph has been hand-coloured” (fig. 8). This technique involved peeling off the emulsion covering the face of a photograph and then painting the reverse with oil paints.²² Under these characters, the inscription reads: “the work of the master Yokoyama”. On the lower right-hand white strip, we find a very long and detailed inscription that informs us of the date when Yokoyama started experimenting with this technique and its development: “circa the 13th year of the Meiji Era (1880) he discovered this technique and in the 15th year of the era (1882) the technique was refined. At that time, the photographer hired Mr. Azusazawa Ryōichi, who has since died, as his assistant, and they made experiments with this technique together. His assistant started in the 17th year of the Meiji Era (1885) to... (illegible)”. The name of the sitter has been written in the left bottom corner: disciple Yamamoto Rinpei. As stated by the art historian and critic Kohtaro Iizawa, these kinds of photographic oil paintings

*... are able to startle the viewer with the fresh reality they still express more than one hundred years after they were produced. Yokoyama's pictures can truly be described as a harmonious blending of painting and photography, and the technique for making them could be said to sum up the way the Japanese of the time looked at photography.*²³

It is actually very interesting to contrast the words used for photography in English and Japanese in order to understand Iizawa's argument: *shashin*, the Japanese word, is derived from the characters for “reproduce” and “true”, meaning the process of making a true reproduction, or “truth copy”; *photography* comes from the Greek *photos*, meaning “light” and *graphia*, meaning “drawing” or “writing” and, in combination, mean the process of drawing or writing with light. As noted by Iizawa, this is evidence that “early Japanese photographers

22. Bennett 2006 [reference 3], 83.

23. Kohtaro Iizawa, ‘The Shock of the Real. Early Photography in Japan’ in: Robert Stearns (ed.), *Photography and Beyond in Japan: Space, Time and Memory*, Tokyo: Hara Museum of Contemporary Art 1994, 43–44.

24. Iizawa 1994 [reference 23], 38.

25. For a detailed introduction to Fischer and his collection, see Adele Schlombs, *Aufbruch in eine neue Zeit. Die Gründung des Museums für Ostasiatische Kunst in Köln / The Dawn of a New Era. The Foundation of the Museum*



Figure 10
Yokoyama Matsusaburō,
Deer in Kugura-Nara, c. 1870,
hand-coloured albumen print, 25,8 x 20,7 cm,
Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Cologne.

did not see photography as a way of drawing with light, but rather as a means of producing a picture that is as faithful as possible to the original subject”.²⁴ Yokoyama and his photographic oil paintings are a good example of this. His work precisely reflects the period when Western-style paintings and photography were introduced into Japan and the difference between the two media was not fully understood.

I have recently found a collection of large-format, hand-coloured photographs by Yokoyama in the Museum of East Asian Art in Cologne. They are part of the Fischer Collection of Historical Photographs that consists of around a thousand nineteenth-century photographs mainly taken in Asia.²⁵ The Austrian traveller and art collector Adolf Fischer (1856-1914) and his wife Frieda accumulated the photographs during their travels in Japan, China, Korea, India, Sri Lanka, Egypt, Indonesia and Turkey.²⁶ After his first visit in 1882, Fischer travelled to Japan on several occasions and, in 1897, published a book entitled *Bilder aus Japan* richly illustrated with the work of the Austrian painter Franz Hohenberger (1867-1941),²⁷ who accompanied Fischer on one of his journeys to Japan, and the German illustrator Johann Bahr (1859-?). All of these artworks were based on photographs purchased by Fischer for that purpose. The collection of Japanese photographs consists of more than 300 albumen prints, most of them hand-coloured, and includes some fine examples of Yokoyama's work.

The hand-coloured albumen print entitled *Tōdaiji-Daibutsu in Nara* gives us a fine view of the whole temple complex of Tōdai-ji in Nara (fig. 9). This temple was founded during the heyday of Buddhism in Japan in the eighth century. Its size alone is an indication of its leading position among the monasteries of Nara. At the bottom left corner of the photograph, a cartouche with a long inscription provides detailed information about the temple and emphasizes its large dimensions. From right to left and top to bottom, the cartouche



Figure 11
Franz Hohenberger,
Deer in Nara, c. 1886,
hand-coloured albumen print, 29 x 18,5 cm,
Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Cologne.

für Ostasiatische Kunst in Cologne, Cologne 2009.

26. For more information about this collection, see Bettina Clever and Carmen Pérez González, 'Ein Schatz mit Zeitzündung', *Kölner Museums Bulletin*, no. 3, 2009, 38-47.

27. For biographical information and a study of the work of this travel painter, see Claudia Delank, 'Der Reisemaler Franz Hohenberger (1867-1941)' in: Claudia Delank, *"Japanbilder" von Jugendstil bis zum Bauhaus. Das Imaginäre Japan in der Kunst*, Munich: Ludicium 1996, 93-100.



Figure 12
Yokoyama Matsusaburō,
The Idols in Sanyusan-Gendo, Kyoto, c. 1870,
hand-coloured albumen print, 21,2 x 27,4 cm,
Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Cologne.

reads: “Tōdaiji Temple/ Height 15 jon (45.45 m) 6 shaku (1.8 m)/ east-west width 29 jo (87.87 m)/ south-north width 17 jo (51.51 m)/ 96 columns in the hall/ floor east-west length 85 ken (154.53 m)/ south-north 100 ken (181.8 m).”

Sacred Deer at Kasuga Temple Park also bears a cartouche with an inscription in Japanese and English in the lower left corner (fig. 10). Deer were considered sacred and we can read an entry referring precisely to this matter in Keeling’s guidebook for tourists:

NARA. This ancient town is noted for its picturesque beauty, and the lovely wooded grounds surrounding it. Here game is abundant and the hills are rich in multitudes of very tame deer. They are not allowed to be destroyed, as they are considered the retainers of Kasuga (Spring Morning – the name of God). Formerly, any one killing them was punished by death.²⁸

In his book, Fischer dedicated a chapter to Nara entitled “Japan zur Zeit der Kirschblüte. Nara Horyuji” and printed several drawings based on historical photographs from the city, including one that shows several deer near the main temple. Fischer gives a detailed explanation of why deer are considered sacred on the temple grounds:

Für Nara ist das Reh ein heiliges Tier, denn einer Mythe zufolge kam im 8. Jahrhundert auf der Suche nach einer neuen Residenz der Gott Take-mikazuchi auf einem weißen Reh gen Nara geritten und beredete dann drei andere Gottheiten, mit ihm hier zu hausen. Darum werden in den Straßen der Stadt, die im 8. und 9. Jahrhundert, als die Kaiser der Fujiwaradynastie hier residierten, mehr als zehnmal so groß war, den Pilgern allenthalben aus Holz geschnitzte kleine Rehe verkauft, und es ist drollig zu sehen, wie die lebenden Tiere bis zum Verkaufsstande mitgehen und verwundert die Leute angucken, die ihre künstlichen Nippes-Ebenbilder kaufen.²⁹

In the collection, there is another hand-coloured albumen print depicting deer which was used by Hohenberger as the source material for the drawing reproduced in Fischer’s book (fig. 11).

The Thousand Kannon Images in Sanjūsangendō Temple in Kyoto presents a perspective that was very popular among Japanese photographers at that time (there is an almost identical one by Kusakabe Kinbei) (fig. 12). The temple enshrines the thousand Kannon offered by Taira Kiyomori at the request of the ex-Emperor Go-Shirakawa. The thousand Buddhas (there are actually 1,001 wooden statues of thousand-handed Kannon) are based on the ancient theory that the whole nation will be promised happiness if a ruler creates many

28. Keeling 1880 [reference 8], 90.

29. Adolph Fischer, *Bilder Aus Japan* 1897, 38: “The deer is treated as a sacred animal in Nara because, according to myth, the god Take-mikazuchi

came to Nara riding on a white deer while searching for a new residence and persuaded three other deities to live with him here. That is why the pilgrims can buy small deer carved out of wood throughout the city, which was more than ten times as large as it is today in the eighth and ninth centuries when



Figure 13
Yokoyama Matsusaburō,
Yasaka Temple, c. 1870,
hand-coloured albumen print, 26,4 x 20,2 cm,
Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Cologne.

Buddhas. There are five hundred statues in ten rows on both sides of the principal image of the seated thousand-handed Kannon, as well as one behind. According to Keeling's guidebook:

SANJUSANGENDO. Sanjusangendo, sometimes Rengehoin, is the name of the temple near Daibutsu, built in the year 1162, in honour of Senjo Kuwanon (the god of one thousand hands). The temple contains one thousand idols of large size; and each of these is surrounded by a number of satellites or smaller figures. The total number of the idols is supposed to be 33,333. The largest image is a representation of Senjo Kuwanon in a sitting posture, measuring eight feet in height.³⁰

Figure 14
Yokoyama Matsusaburō,
A View of Chion Street in Kyoto, c. 1870,
hand-coloured albumen print, 21,2 x 27,4 cm,
Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Cologne.



The next image, *Yasaka Temple*, shows a woman, seen from behind, holding an umbrella, at the point where Sannenzaka changes to Ninenzaka on Yasaka Street in the Higashiyama district of Kyoto (fig. 13). The five-storey pagoda of the Eikan-ji can be seen ahead. Eikanji is an ancient temple dating back to the Heian era (794-1185) but, today, only this pagoda and a small temple remain following the restoration of the Muromachi period (1333-1573). Another photograph from this collection depicts Shijō Street, a famous thoroughfare in Kyoto, which begins at the steps and gate of the Yasaka Shrine and runs seven kilometres through the Gion district, finishing at the Matsunoo Shrine (fig. 14). Shijō literally means the “fourth street” of Heian-kyō, the ancient capital. Exactly the same view and perspective of the street can be found among the work of other photographers active at that time, including the Italian Adolfo Farsari (1841-

the emperors of the Fujiwara dynasty were in power here, and it is charming to see how the live animals go down to the stands and stare in amazement at the people buying knickknacks that look just like them.”

30. Keeling 1880 (reference 8), 81.



Figure 15
Yokoyama Matsusaburō,
from the album *Styles of Young Girls in the Early Meiji Era*, albumen print, 9,0 x 6,0 cm,
Yokoyama family private collection,

Figure 16
Yokoyama Matsusaburō, from the album *Styles of Young Girls in the Early Meiji Era*, albumen print,
12,5 x 9,2 cm,
Yokoyama family private collection.



1898). As noted by the photo historian and curator Anne Nishimure Morse, it served as inspiration for the famous painting *Carp Banners in Kyoto* (1888) by the French painter Louis-Jules Dumoulin (1860-1924).³¹

To finish this review of Yokoyama's versatile oeuvre, we should mention an interesting album named *Styles of Young Girls in the Early Meiji Era* that provides us with a few examples of how photography and painting were intermingled in his work. The photographs show that he painted lines on the images in red paint or ink. Sometimes the lines form a grid or mesh, sometimes they appear like strokes of rain, and at other times as an irregular frame surrounding the woman (figs. 15, 16). These traces of painting reveal the experimental intention behind those photographs, which – at some point and after much transformation – would become paintings. This album constitutes yet another example of the experimental profile of this photographer.

To conclude, Yokoyama was, indeed, a keenly creative photographer whose work was extremely varied and of a very high quality. His versatile and productive oeuvre remains largely unknown and deserves further investigation. This would include further research to locate unknown archives of his work outside of Japan, but also a deeper study of the well-known collections in his native country.

Acknowledgments: I would like to thank Mr Yokoyama Tomoyoshi for his kindness in granting me permission to reproduce some of the photographs printed in this article. Thanks are also due to June Ueno (Japanese Culture Institute, Cologne) for his valuable help with all the translations of the inscriptions in these photographs and to Mio Wakita for her explanation about the way in which the text had been implemented within the photographic space. I also wish to thank Dr. Helen Westgeest and Professor Kitty Zijlmans (Faculty of Art History, Leiden University, the Netherlands) for the valuable remarks they made while reviewing some of the material selected for this article.

31. Anne Nishimura Morse, 'Souvenirs of old Japan: Meiji Era Photography and the Meisho tradition', in: Anne Nishimura Morse and Sebastian Dobson (eds.), *Art and Artifice: Japanese Photographs of the Meiji Era*, Boston: MFA Publications 2004, 48.

'A Complete Craze': Isabella Bird Bishop in East Asia

Luke Gartlan For all the recent interest in the history of photography in East Asia, several issues remain notable for their comparative absence from research in the field. Whether conscious of such silences or not, the rising attention evident in major exhibitions and conferences inevitably results in the promotion of certain questions above others. One such issue concerns the role of gender in the photographic histories of East Asia. While some scholars have highlighted the portrayal



Figure 1
Scovill Manufacturing Company
advertisement, *The Photographic Times and
American Photographer* XII, no. 134,
February 1882, frontispiece. British Library.

of male and female sitters before the camera, little attention has been directed to women photographers in East Asia.¹ One key reason for this historical absence concerns the availability, or indeed the survival, of relevant archival materials.

While the contributions of women photographers to the history of the medium are well known, their role as travel photographers has received much less scrutiny.² Even before the Kodak Girls campaigns sought to make photography an essential hobby of affluent women in America and Europe, photographic manufacturers recognised the potential market for their product.³ As early as February 1882, the Scovill Manufacturing Company advertised their portable camera kits to women in *The Photographic Times and American Photographer*, reprinted from a chapter entitled 'Photography for Ladies' from the manufacturer's series of photography manuals (fig. 1). Dressed in the fashionable garments of the period, a young woman stands before her camera, lens cap in hand and camera case at her feet, in the act of photographing the scene before her. The accompanying text confirms her enterprise: 'The fair artist, who is equipped with one of the Scovill portable outfits, has before her a scene of pictorial interest which she is engaged in photographing, and it is not too much to say that copies of that landscape will, ere many days, adorn the portfolios of her friends.'⁴ That her photographs will adorn her friends' portfolios, and not those of her customers, reminded the potential female novice of the social restrictions against access to a professional career in photography. Nonetheless, such portable camera kits became a common feature of women's luggage.

1 For an exception, see Fuku Noriko, *An Incomplete History: Women Photographers from Japan, 1864-1997*, Rochester, NY: Visual Studies Workshop 1998. For Japanese women as sitters, see Mio Wakita, 'Selling Japan: Kusakabe Kimbei's Image of Japanese Women', *History of Photography* 33, no. 2, May 2009, 209-223.

2 For a general introduction, see Naomi Rosenblum, *A History of Women Photographers*, New York: Abbeville Press 1994, 93-113.

3 On Kodak Girls, see Nancy Martha West, *Kodak and the Lens of Nostalgia*, Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia 2000, 109-135.

4 *The Photographic Times and American Photographer* XII, no. 134, February 1882, 59.

This essay highlights the significance of British women photographers in the late nineteenth- and early-twentieth centuries in East Asia. These travellers were a small but prominent subset of the dozens of women who published travelogues of their visits to Japan and China in the Victorian era.⁵ Among the better-known women to photograph and publish accounts of their travels in East Asia, an ever-expanding list includes Lady Annie Brassey, Emma Lasenby Liberty, Gertrude Bell, and Zaida Ben-Yusuf.⁶ Others, such as the wealthy Bostonian Isabella Stewart Gardner, were keen collectors of photographs from local professionals on her travels around the world.⁷

Given the perhaps surprising number of such female traveller-photographers, Isabella Bird Bishop (1831-1904) provides a convenient, albeit exceptional, case study for two reasons. Firstly, Bird left behind a vast corpus of published travelogues, unpublished letters and manuscripts rare for a Victorian woman traveller. The recent acquisition by the National Library of Scotland of the John Murray Archive, which includes extensive correspondence between Bird and her publisher, as well as her photographic archive, provides an important opportunity to reassess her activities.⁸ Secondly, few women of Victorian Britain rivalled her contemporary fame. Placed within a decade of her death alongside Queen Victoria and Florence Nightingale as one of the most noteworthy women of the era,⁹ Bird remains a figure of immense fascination for biographers and readers alike. The tendency has been to praise her career and life as an independent woman who struggled against the patriarchal strictures of Victorian society, without sufficient acknowledgement of her own investment in, and promotion of, the imperialist agendas of Victorian Britain. With all-too-apparent frustration, Susan Morgan has recently characterised Bird as ‘the poster child of the intrepid woman traveler...’¹⁰ Such views represent a welcome critical shift toward her travel writings and reputation which denies neither her unstable gender position nor her investment in British colonial attitudes.

For all her significance as a travel writer, Bird’s activities as a ‘lady photographer’ have been largely overlooked or deemed secondary to her written accounts. Historians of English literature, rather than photography, have been much more active in assessing her work. The intention here is not to single out her work as deserved of special attention, but to assess her activities as emblematic of a broader cohort of neglected women travel photographers active in late nineteenth-century Asia. It is perhaps due to her fame that her visu-

5 Lorraine Sterry, *Victorian Women Travellers in Meiji Japan: Discovering a 'New' Land*, Folkestone: Global Oriental 2009.

6 On Lady Annie Brassey, see Nancy Micklewright, *A Victorian Traveler in the Middle East: The Photography and Travel Writing of Annie Lady Brassey*, Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing 2003, esp. 65-67. Emma Lasenby Liberty visited Japan in the summer of 1889 with her husband Arthur, of Liberty’s of London renown. She published a limited edition volume comprising fifty of her photographs entitled *Japan: A Pictorial Record* (1891). Gertrude Bell’s photographs and correspondence from her visit to Japan and China in 1903 are available at <<http://www.gerty.ncl.ac.uk/>> [Ger-

trude Bell Archive, Newcastle University Library, Newcastle-upon-Tyne].

Zaida Ben-Yusuf also visited Japan in 1903 and thereafter published several articles on her experiences. See Frank H. Goodyear, *Zaida Ben-Yusuf: New York Portrait Photographer*, London and New York: Merrell 2008.

7 See Alan Chong and Noriko Murai, *Journeys East: Isabella Stewart Gardner and Asia*, Boston: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum 2009.

8 On the John Murray Archive, see the website <<http://digital.nls.uk/jma/>>; (accessed March 2011).

9 Reginald Horsley, *Women of Worth in the Victorian Era: Being Brief Biographies of Queen Victoria, Florence Nightingale and Isabella Bird*. London: W. & R. Chambers, [1912].

al and textual archives were deemed to merit the preservation of state institutions, but this does not place her photography outside of the practice of her lesser-known contemporaries. However remarkable her career and activities, Bird's exception rests at an institutional level: with the decision to publish her writings and admit her to learned societies, and to acquire her correspondence and photographs for public safekeeping, rather than, as with so many of her contemporaries, for her archives to remain the private possessions of family descendents.

A Passion for Photography

By the early 1890s, Isabella Bird had an international reputation as one of the leading travel writers of her generation. With such bestsellers as *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains* (1872) and *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan* (1878), her reputation for lively, first person accounts of distant countries was well established with Victorian readers. Her election as one of the first female members of the Royal Geographical Society was emblematic of her stature.¹¹ It was in these years, prior to her final extended journey to East Asia, that photography came to occupy her attention.

Bird's instruction in photography is the subject of some conjecture. As an experienced traveller, she would have been well aware of the widespread use of photography by official expeditions and explorers. During her journey through Persia and Kurdistan in 1889 and 1890, Bird had the chance to observe the operations of a talented military photographer attached to the survey expeditionary party with which she travelled. On her return to Edinburgh, Sir Frederick Sleigh Roberts (1832-1914), commander-in-chief of Madras and India, sent her cyanotype prints of the photographer's work for use in her planned account of the journey 'with a note from the assistant Quartermaster General giving me permission to make any use of these that I please.'¹² These photographs form the basis for some of the illustrations in her two-volume publication *Journeys in Persia and Kurdistan* (1891). However, Bird was not given carte blanche rights to reproduce all of the photographs. Under the terms of her inclusion in the expedition, she was not permitted to divulge any information deemed sensitive to British military interests. As the concerns of British officials with Russian ambitions in the region increased, restrictions were imposed on the publication of photographs.¹³

10 Susan Morgan, 'The "Sphere of Interest": Framing Late Nineteenth-Century China in Words and Pictures with Isabella Bird' in: Douglas Kerr and Julia Kuehn (eds.), *A Century of Travels in China: Critical Essays on Travel Writing from the 1840s to the 1940s*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press 2007, 111.

11 Morag Bell and Cheryl McEwan, 'The Admission of Women Fellows to the Royal Geographical Society, 1892-1914; the controversy and the outcome', *The Geographical Journal* 162, no. 3, November 1996, 295-312.

12 Isabella Bird to John Murray, April 7, 1891, National Library of Scotland, MS.42027, ff. 25-26.

13 On September 30, 1891, Bird wrote to Murray: 'Certain stipulations were made when I was allowed to join the surveying expedition and among others that I was not to allude to the survey or the work in any way or to anything not said by the people to myself etc. It is a great pity that my route cannot be more definitely shown, but I am hampered in many ways concerning it.' Isabella Bird to John Murray, September 30, 1891, National Library of Scotland, MS.42027, ff.67-68. Thirty-three cyanotypes are preserved in MS.42032, National Library of Scotland.

14 Anna M. Stoddart, *The Life of Isabella Bird (Mrs. Bishop)*, London: John Murray 1906, 259.

Figure 2
Isabella Bird Bishop, *Tombstones of Abbots, Yu-Chöm Sa*, May-June 1894, albumen print from glass negative, 11.5 x 15.9 cm. Trustees of the National Library of Scotland. Reproduced in Isabella Bird Bishop, *Korea and her Neighbours*, London: John Murray 1898, vol. 1, 168.



We can deduce several conclusions from these events: Bird's awareness of the strategic significance of survey photographs as sources of geographical and hence military information, her desire to make use of photographs in her own accounts, and her caution at the fickleness of colonial permission to publish such materials. Such conditions may have prompted her to take matters into her own hands. According to her biographer and friend Anna Stoddart, Bird attended a course of lessons in photography under Howard Farmer at the Regent Street Polytechnic in London in June 1892.¹⁴ While there is no reason to dispute this account, Bird also sought the advice and assistance of other experienced travel photographers. Shortly before her return to Britain in March 1897, Bird wrote to John Scott Keltie (1840-1927), secretary of the Royal Geographical Society, to thank him for her instruction: 'As you originally put me in the way of getting me a camera and starting on photographing through Mr Thomson, you may be interested to hear that I am bringing back 1200 photographs. I am almost ashamed to say that photography has become a complete craze. I like it better than any pursuit I ever undertook.'¹⁵ This source confirms not only her passion for photography, but also her instruction under the Scottish travel photographer and author John Thomson (1837-1921). Appointed to the post of Instructor in Photography at the Royal Geographical Society in 1886, Thomson provided basic lessons to members in preparation for their overseas voyages.¹⁶ Given his technical expertise and personal experience as a travel photographer in China, Bird could hardly have hoped for a better instructor in preparation for her next voyage.

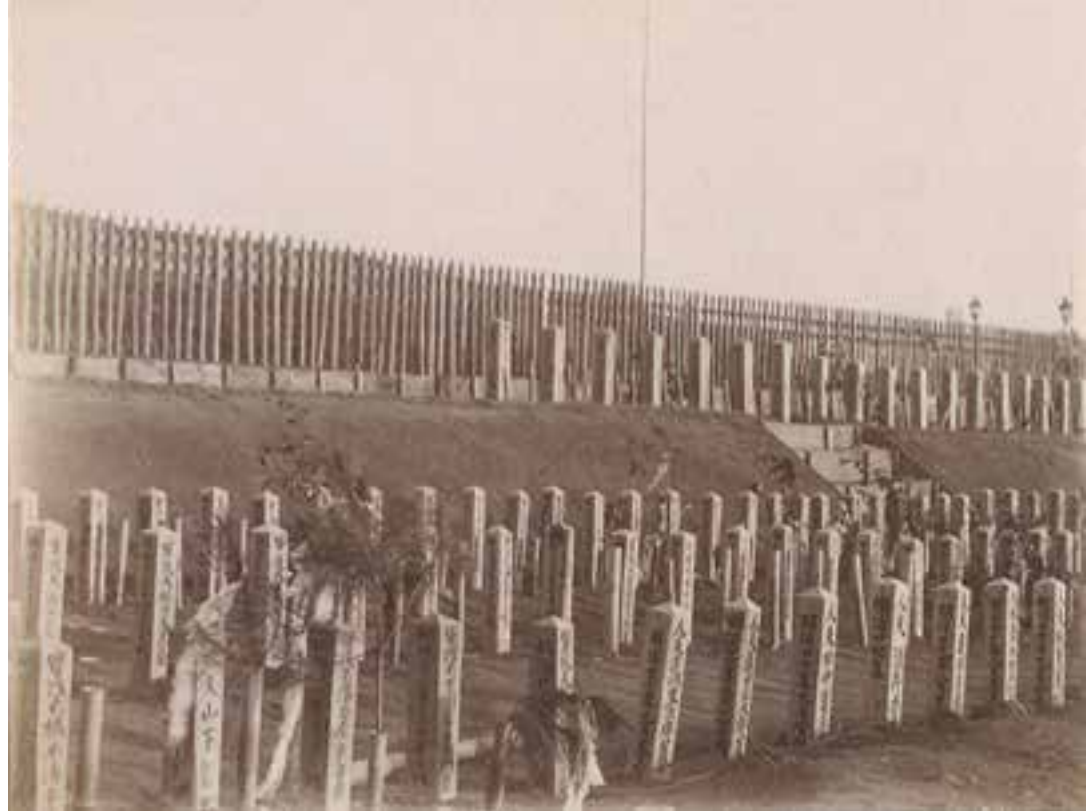
Yet the lessons acquired from the elder photographer were not merely technical. As May Caroline Chan has argued, Thomson and Bird shared a common concern in their photographs and travelogues with the affirmation of squalor, superstition, and backwardness as qualities deemed intrinsic to the Chinese.¹⁷ A belief in the unmediated directness

15 Isabella Bird to John Scott Keltie, March 10, 1897, RGS/CB7/11, Royal Geographical Society Archives, London, quoted in May Caroline Chan, 'Isabella Bird's Journey through the Yangtze Valley: Victorian Travel Narrative as a historical Record of British Imperial Desires in China' in: Lynette Felber (ed.), *Clio's Daughters: British Women Making History, 1790-1899*, Newark: University of Delaware Press 2007, 234.

16 Elliot S. Parker, 'John Thomson, 1837-1921: RGS Instructor in Photography,' *Geographical Journal* 144, part 3, November 1978, 469; and Richard Ovensen, *John Thomson (1837-1921), Photographer*, Edinburgh: National Library of Scotland 1997, 41.

17 Chan 2007 [reference 15], 228.

Figure 3
Isabella Bird Bishop, *Japanese Military Cemetery at Chemulpo, Korea*, January 1895, albumen print from glass negative, 7.6 x 10 cm. Trustees of the National Library of Scotland.



and immediacy of their materials, whether textual or visual, underpinned the purported objectivity of their respective accounts. Thomson had established the commercial success of the photographic travel publication with such deluxe publications as the four-volume *Illustrations of China and its People* of 1873-74. From popular travel narratives, such as *The Straits of Malacca, Indo-China and China* (1875) and *Through China with a Camera* (1898), to articles in society proceedings and professional journals, Thomson's diverse range of textual and photographic associations provided a compelling model for his student's own publications.

Isabella Bird's adoption of photography was no mere sideline to her travel writing but a skill which utilised the Victorian faith in the camera's impartiality to bolster her own authorial claims to veracity. Through her acquisition of a new skill and the extensive use of her photographs, Bird intended to establish her credentials as an explorer deserved of her hard-fought membership of the Royal Geographical Society. She not only spent much of her time occupied with photography but from the beginning had ambitions for her work.

Travelling with a Camera

In January 1894, Isabella Bird embarked for East Asia with two cameras in her luggage. Over the next three years, she travelled extensively through Korea, Japan, Manchuria, Siberia and China, photographing the sites and people of these countries. Bird began her travels with the first of her four visits to Korea. She travelled extensively throughout the peninsula from the southern port of Fusan to the capital Seoul and north to the frontier communities with Russia. Of the nineteen photographs from her visits to Korea preserved in the National Library of Scotland, an early example depicts a monk seated among the tombstones at the alpine monastery of Yu-chö'm Sa (fig. 2). Bird's choice of photographic subjects, characterised by a high proportion of priests, court officials, soldiers, and historic buildings, are representative of her ethnographic imperative for exemplary social groups and cultural



Figure 4
Isabella Bird Bishop, *Great Gate, Western Palace, Seoul*, January 1895, albumen print from glass negative, 7.5 x 7.0 cm. Trustees of the National Library of Scotland.

Figure 5
Mr. MacKenzie, Snapshot taken of Mrs. Bishop at
Swatow by Mr. MacKenzie, March 1895,
6.8 x 8.9 cm, reproduced in Anna M. Stoddart,
The Life of Isabella Bird, London: John Murray 1908,
opposite 298. Courtesy of the University of St
Andrews Library, St Andrews.



practices. However, such tranquil scenes of nature and tradition in harmonious union were soon to be shattered by the competing modernities of East Asian nationhood.

With the outbreak that summer of the Sino-Japanese War, Bird sought sanctuary in Peking [Beijing] at the British Legation. Few signs of the battles fought on the Korean peninsula appear in her photographs, apart from some views of the Japanese war cemetery constructed at the southern port of Chemulpo (fig. 3). To placate public anxieties at home for the expatriate community, she wrote to the London *Times* on October 6: 'Pekin[g], on the surface, is quieter just now than any Chinese city I have visited. I have gone about freely with only my Chinese servant, and in photographing the fortresses on the Tartar wall with their dummy guns, and even some of the pavilions and gateways of the Forbidden City, have not met with the slightest molestation.'¹⁸ For Bird, the ability to conduct photographic operations without local disruption serves as the litmus test of colonial security. The very act becomes the measure of her right to travel.

At least initially, Bird's correspondence betrayed gendered anxieties regarding her lack of ability in photography. During her first months in Korea, she wrote to John Murray: 'Photographing has been an intense pleasure. I began too late ever to be a photographer, and have too little time to learn the technicalities of the art; but I am able to produce negatives which are faithful, though not artistic, records of what I see.'¹⁹ Age and gender combine to suggest the self-imposed limitations of her practice. By her second visit to Korea in 1895, Bird's confidence in her photographic skills had increased along with her privileged access to the imperial court: 'The King [of Korea] suggested my photographing parts of the old & new Palaces which have long been closed to foreigners and on the occasion sent ½ a regiment with me as a guard of honour! I took 70 photographs in Soul [Seoul].'²⁰ Among the Murray materials, only one small photograph, identified on the verso in pencil, survives from this street-level access granted to the palace grounds (fig. 4). On her departure, King Kojong and Queen Min also presented her with several gifts to mark her visit to Korea. Such

18 Isabella L. Bishop, 'Foreigners in Peking', *The Times*, no. 34433, 28 November 1894, 7.

19 Isabella Bird to John Murray, quoted in Stoddart 1906 [reference 14], 277.

20 Isabella Bird to John Murray, Nagasaki, Japan, February 18, [1895]. National Library of Scotland, MS.42028, ff.5-6.

privileges do not so much mark her esteem as signal her unofficial diplomatic function on behalf of the Korean court, which had only recently gained tentative independence in the wake of the Sino-Japanese war.²¹

After a brief respite in Nagasaki, Bird embarked on a coastal tour of China. En route from Hong Kong to Shanghai, she lodged with several missionaries who noted her enthusiastic pursuit of photography. If Korea had afforded the practical training ground, China enabled Bird to fulfil her photographic ambitions. In the southern port of Swatow [Shantou], a 'Mr MacKenzie' photographed his guest dressed in her pragmatic travel garments next to her camera 'as she arranged a group of natives to be photographed' (fig. 5).²² Bird's camera has been turned from her subjects toward the photographer, as if to present a double portrait of operator and apparatus, adjacent to one another and of equivalent height. On the right, her sitters are temporarily forgotten.

In addition to MacKenzie, Bird's photographic endeavours attracted the attention of other missionaries in China. At Hangzhou, she stayed with the Reverend David Duncan Main (1856-1934), well known for his establishment of a leprosy hospital. Mrs Main wrote in remembrance of her guest:

*She was a most enthusiastic photographer, yielding to the fascination and excitement of developing her plates and toning her prints at night, midnight, and even early morning. She gave me my first lesson in photography, and was as pleased as could be to teach me how to develop, which she told me in the "dark room" was the most interesting part of it all.*²³

During her visit to Shaoxing, the Reverend W. Gilbert Walshe was no less impressed with her dedication to her 'complete craze':

*She generally breakfasted in her room, and rose late, retiring at night about 11 p.m. apparently quite worn out; but she always had sufficient reserve of strength to occupy an extra hour or two in the development of her photographs... Her absolute unconsciousness of fear was a remarkable characteristic; and even in remote places, where large crowds assembled to witness her photographic performances, she never seemed in the least to realise the possibility of danger. Had she done so, she would have missed a great deal of what she saw and learned. On more than one occasion I was conscious of a feeling of nervousness, though I flatter myself that I knew something of the character of the people among whom I lived; but even in the face of the largest and noisiest crowds, Mrs. Bishop proceeded with her photography and her observations as calmly as if she were inspecting some of the Chinese exhibits in the British Museum.*²⁴

Bird appears wholly absorbed in the pursuit of her undertaking and the routine of daytime camera excursions and after hours' dark room activities. However, Reverend Walshe also

21 On Korea's political circumstances after the Sino-Japanese War, see Andre Schmid, *Korea Between Empires, 1895-1919*, New York: Columbia University Press 2002, 55-78.

22 Stoddart 1906 (reference 14), 297.

23 Stoddart 1906 (reference 14), 298.

24 Stoddart 1906 (reference 14), 299-300.

implies that this single-minded dedication to photography could also blind her to the circumstances of her encounters with local subjects. As a transient visitor, Bird was unaware of 'a feeling of nervousness' sensed by her host in the local inhabitants. His designation of her implacable indifference to her subjects was symptomatic of the methodical working methods expected of the explorer-photographer. In comparing her unperturbed, and imperturbable, demeanour to the inspection of Chinese exhibits in the British Museum, Walshe encapsulates the imperialist tendency of travel photographers to identify, classify, and archive other cultures in the production of a portfolio. Yet Bird was not as ignorant of the personal hazards as her host may have believed. By her arrival in Shanghai in May 1895, Bird wrote once again: 'I have now been travelling in China for three months with great satisfaction and interest and have got about 100 photographs as a record of my journey. I have travelled quite alone and have not met with anything disagreeable.'²⁵ However conscious of possible dangers, the production of a pictorial record required an outward countenance of studied disregard of the subjects before her camera. These lessons would be tested the next year on her inland expedition.

In June 1895, Bird embarked from Shanghai for Japan. She spent the summer months recuperating from her travels at the alpine resort of Ikao 'where her time was chiefly occupied in working at her book on Korea and in developing, toning, and enamelling photographs.'²⁶ Late in the year, she once again travelled to Korea, before returning to Shanghai in preparation for her arduous journey up the Yangtze River to Sichuan [Szechuan] province in 1896. This five-month trek represented the culmination of her extended travels and resulted in some two hundred negatives, which featured widely in her future publications.²⁷ By this time, Bird's self-assurance with the technology was only matched by her ability to choose subjects appropriate to her written narratives. She had converted from the use of glass negatives to film in her half-plate tripod camera,²⁸ and had become adept at the kind of improvisation required of expedition photographers. In her two-volume published account of this journal, *The Yangtze Valley and Beyond*, Bird provided one of the more detailed accounts of her working methods aboard her boat, and her newfound self-perception as a photographer a cut above the average enthusiast:

... there were photographic negatives to develop and print, and prints to tone, and the difficulties enhanced the zest of these processes and made me think, with a feeling of complacent superiority, of the amateurs who need "dark rooms," sinks, water "laid on," tables, and other luxuries. Night supplied me with a dark room; the majestic Yangtze was "laid on"; a box served for a table: all else can be dispensed with.

I lined my "stall" with muslin curtains and newspapers, and finding that the light of the opium lamps still came in through the chinks, I tacked up my blankets and slept in my clothes and fur coat. With "water, water everywhere," water

25 Isabella Bird to John Murray, 27 May [1895], MS.42028, ff.9-10.

26 Stoddart 1906 (reference 14), 305.

27 'A Remarkable Lady Explorer: An Interview with Mrs. Bird Bishop', *The*

Japan Weekly Mail, vol. XXVI, no. 3, 18 July 1896, 75. This report was based on an interview in Shanghai on June 23, first published in the *North China Daily News*.

28 'A Remarkable Lady Explorer' (reference 27).



Figure 6
Isabella Bird Bishop, *Author's Trackers at Dinner*,
January-March 1896, albumen print from film
negative, 11.2 x 15.7 cm. Trustees of the National
Library of Scotland. Reproduced in Isabella
Bishop, *The Yangtze Valley and Beyond*, London:
John Murray 1900, vol. 1, 229.

was the great difficulty. The Yangtze holds any amount of fine mud in suspension, which for drinking purposes is usually precipitated with alum, and, unless filtered, deposits a fine, even veil on the negative. I had only a pocket filter, which produced about three quarts of water a day, of which Be-dien [her guide] invariably abstracted some for making tea, leaving me with only enough for a final wash, not always quite effectual, as the critic will see from some of the illustrations. I found that the most successful method of washing out "hypo" was to lean over the gunwale and hold the negative in the wash of the Great River, rapid even at the mooring place, and give it some final washes in filtered water...²⁹

Whereas Bird's earlier correspondence suggested a modest self-appraisal of her skills with a camera, her ability during the journey to adapt and utilise the resources available to her becomes the very measure of her credentials as an explorer. Bird fills her account with the specialist language of the experienced photographer, comfortable with the chemical terms and necessities of the process, and better suited to the professional journals than the popular travelogues of the period. In the long tradition of the resourceful explorer, the environment itself—the river's water, the night's dark—is conscripted to the photographer's requirements. Such problems as the light of 'opium lamps' or fine river sediments only un-

29 J. F. Bishop, *The Yangtze Valley and Beyond: An Account of Journeys in China, Chiefly in the Province of Sze Chuan and Among the Man-Tze of the Somo Territory*, New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, and London: John Murray, 1899, vol. 1, 229-231.



Figure 7
Isabella Bird Bishop, *The Pass at Shen-Kia-Chao*
(captioned in pencil), March-April 1896, albumen
print from film negative,
15.3 x 10.4 cm. Trustees of the
National Library of Scotland. Reproduced in
Isabella Bishop, *The Yangtze Valley and Beyond*,
London: John Murray 1900, vol. 1, 315.

derscore her purported control of both the environment and the technical process.

Bird's photographic subjects reinforce this narrative of control and regularly inscribe her own presence into the account. To take one example, *The Yangtze Valley and Beyond* includes a photograph of her guides at dinner aboard their boat on the Yangtze (fig. 6). This illustration coincides in the text with the beginning of the above-cited description of the author's photographic methods. Readers are only provided with the subject's actual theme after the author has detailed the conditions of her photographic operations aboard the boat: 'I had an opportunity of taking an instantaneous photograph of my trackers at dinner.'³⁰ Ostensibly, the illustration then furnishes a pretext to examine the trackers' eating habits and utensils, but this is only after its implied testimony of the photographer's working methods and conditions. It was perhaps this intimacy between the work of photography and the conditions of travel, which prompted one of her modern biographers to claim that this photograph was 'faintly speckled with flecks of real Yangtze mud.'³¹ Bird's account of her working methods implies that each photograph possessed not so much an indexical relationship to its subject but was literally constituted by it.

Bird's journey along the Yangtze constitutes the most significant portfolio of her photographs in the National Library of Scotland. In total, the collection includes at least twenty-three photographs of China subjects, fifteen of which illustrated *The Yangtze Valley and Beyond*. These photographs primarily consist of topographical and architectural subjects and chart the rugged terrain traversed en route west. As a sedan chair replaced her houseboat on the overland trek, Bird's panoramic photographs on the Yangtze were supplanted by an increasing concern for portrait-format landscapes (fig. 7). *The Pass at Shen-Kia-Chao*, with its tightly cropped view and dramatic diagonals, furnished valuable topographical and geological knowledge of the region. Further up the pass in the upper right distance two barely distinguishable figures stand beneath a telegraph line. Such signs of modernity receive scant acknowledgement in Bird's travel account, despite their appearance in her own photographs.

As with her predecessor and teacher John Thomson, her preference was for the grand and ancient, as evident in her depiction of the mountain temple at *Li-fan Ting* (fig. 8). Bird's accounts of her journey placed particular emphasis on this photograph, since, as she later informed members of the Royal Geographic Society, '[g]oing beyond Li-fan was a thing

30 Bishop 1899 [reference 29], vol. 1, 232.

31 Pat Barr, *A Curious Life for a Lady: The Story of Isabella Bird*, London: MacMillan 1970, 312.

32 Isabella Bird Bishop, 'A Journey in Western Sze-Chuan', *The Geographical Journal* 10, no. 1, July 1897, 29.



Figure 8
Isabella Bird Bishop, 42 *Man-Tze rock temple*
(captioned in pencil), April-May 1896,
albumen print from film negative, 15.4 x 11.0 cm.
Trustees of the National Library of
Scotland. Reproduced in Isabella Bishop,
The Yangtze Valley and Beyond, London:
John Murray 1900, vol. 2, 141.

though this may be, this concept risks divorcing the photographer from her photographs' means of distribution. In Isabella Bird's case, the production of photographs was inseparable from the question of their publication.

Bird was an inveterate correspondent, but even by her standards the letter sent to her publisher from Chengtu [Chengdu], the capital of Sichuan province, in the midst of her expedition is representative of her determination to ensure the future profit of her photo-

unheard of.³² The photograph of the mountain temple, projected with a magic lantern during her RGS lecture, thus marked the point of her claim to legitimacy as an explorer and photographer. Its reproduction in at least three publications underscores its significance in her narrative remembrance of her journey to Sichuan.³³ For Bird, specific photographs substantiate the claims of her narrative.

Publications

Even before this journey to Western China, Isabella Bird had begun to consider the best use for her expanding portfolio of photographs. As John Thomson's example had made clear, the production of a portfolio was only the first stage in the photographs' wider distribution via the illustrated press, travelogues, exhibitions, lectures, and other forms of imperial publication culture. James Hevia has recently coined the phrase 'the photography complex' to describe such global distribution networks.³⁴ Useful

33 See Isabella L. Bishop, *Views in the Far East*, Tokyo: self-published [1896], plate 42; Bird Bishop 1897 [reference 32], 29; and Bishop 1897 [reference 29], vol. 2, 141.

34 James L. Hevia, 'The Photography Complex: Exposing Boxer-Era China (1900-1901), Making Civilization,' in: Rosalind C. Morris (ed.), *Photographies East: The Camera and Its Histories in East and Southeast Asia*, Durham and London: Duke University Press 2009, 79-119.



Figure 9
Isabella Bird Bishop, *In Japan. Tea House Servant*,
1895, collotype print, 10.9 x 14.8 cm,
reproduced from *Views in the Far East*, Tokyo:
self published [1896], plate 18. Trustees of the
National Library of Scotland.

graphic labours. That the letter reached its recipient at all was evidence of the spread of foreign influence into the heretofore most isolated provinces of China. Along the Yangtze, the establishment of foreign trading settlements and regular steamship services enabled and necessitated a modern postal service. Dated April 11, 1896, Bird wrote to Murray to apologise for a delay in the submission of her book manuscript on Korea (the basis for *Korea and Her Neighbours*), but she also raised the issue of the necessity for high-quality reproductions: 'Illustrations by a cheap process seem a great feature in books of travel now. I don't think that I mentioned that I have a number of my own photographs for this purpose—negatives I mean.'³⁵ By stressing her possession of the negatives, Bird confirmed her copyright ownership of the photographs for reproduction.

With her return to Shanghai in June 1896, Bird's efforts to promote her photographs assumed the tenure of a publicity campaign. She gave an interview to the *North China Daily News* in Shanghai, in which her photography occupied a prominent section.³⁶ Soon thereafter, she wrote from Tokyo in response to a letter from her publisher John Murray:

*... you do not mention the arrival of a small matted book containing photographic negatives chiefly of Korea which I ventured without permission to send to your kind care. It was addressed to you, or to me to your care, and consigned by Lane & Crawford of Shanghai.... I am a little anxious about it, but hope that it arrived all right. When one begins photography late in life negatives become unduly precious, and mine have cost me much risk.... I am going to have 50 of these that I have with me collotyped and published. So many people want copies!*³⁷

Given that this correspondence was written in response to her publisher's letter, received only after her return to Shanghai 'from the journey of five months in the Chinese Far West',³⁸ Bird had already sent an album of her negatives home, presumably earlier in the year before her departure from Shanghai. These negatives were deeply valued, but by sending them to her publisher the commercial aim was clear. Bird wished for the photographs to illustrate her planned book.

As Bird indicated in her correspondence with Murray, she had already enacted plans for the publication of a small collotype volume of photographs. With evident pride and excitement suggested in her exclamation mark, Bird noted the potential customers

35 Isabella Bird to John Murray, Chengtu, Sze'chuan [Chengdu, Sichuan], China, April 11, [18]96, National Library of Scotland, MS.42028, f.21.

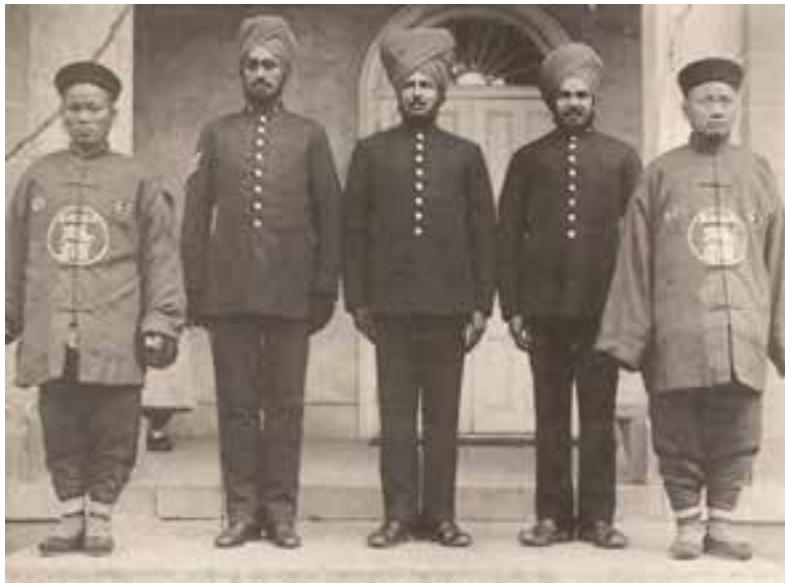
36 'A Remarkable Lady Explorer' (reference 27).

37 Isabella Bird to John Murray, Azabu Tokyo, July 6 [18]96, National Library of Scotland, MS.42028, ff.22-25.

38 Bird to Murray (reference 37), ff.22-25.

lining up for her work. Soon thereafter, sixty of her photographs appeared in a small, landscape format volume bound in traditional Japanese style. This rare publication, undoubtedly issued in a small edition, declared on its cover 'Views in the Far East. Photographed by Isabella L. Bishop, F.R.G.S. Collotyped by S. Kajima, Tokyo.' This publication was the first to reproduce examples of her photography and, however modest its production, constitutes a key source for her work.³⁹ It is typical of the small-scale photographic books produced primarily for the foreign market in Tokyo and Yokohama in the 1890s. The talented photographer and publisher Kajima Seibei (1866-1924), proprietor of the periodical *Shashin sowa*, was involved in many such publications.⁴⁰ Bird and Kajima almost certainly came into contact with one another through the auspices of the Photographic Society of Japan (*Nihon shashin kyōkai*), a prominent club for Japanese and non-Japanese amateur and professional photographers which met regularly in Yokohama or Tokyo.⁴¹ His involvement in the publication indicates that Bird was well connected to the photographic circles of 1890s Tokyo.

Figure 10
Isabella Bird Bishop, *In China. Hankow British Police*, 1895-96, collotype print, 10.9 x 14.9 cm, reproduced from *Views in the Far East*, Tokyo: self published [1896], plate 55. Trustees of the National Library of Scotland.



As the title suggests, *Views in the Far East* presents a selection of the photographer's work from throughout her travels in East Asia and concentrates primarily on topographical and architectural subjects. However, Bird's ability for making good use of strong tonal contrasts and in situ architectural settings is demonstrated by the inclusion of several figure studies (fig.9). Each photograph is reproduced individually on the recto side of each leaf without text. Only a small printed number at the bottom right directs the reader to the list of titles provided at the front of the volume. Organised according to country, the volume begins with twelve collotypes of Korea, followed by eleven collotypes of Japan, and concludes with thirty-seven collotypes of China. The latter country's predominance, especially with regard to the inland journey along the Yangtze, emphasises the significance ascribed to this section of her travels both by the photographer and her contemporaries. Signs of recent events or modern developments were largely expurgated from the volume in preference for scenic views, ancient architecture, or traditional social groups. Only on occasion, such as in the group of Indian policemen posed between a pair of guards in Hankow [Hankou], is there any indication of the British imperial presence in East Asia (fig. 10). Whereas Bird's

39 *Views in the Far East and Chinese Pictures: Notes on Photographs Made in China* are only available at present in a full reprint edition in Japanese. See Kanasaka Kiyonori (ed. and trans.), *Izabera Bādo kyokuto no tabi 1*, ToyoBunko 739. Tokyo: Heibonsha 2005.
40 On Kajima, see Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, ed., *Nihon no*

shashinka: kindai shashinshi wo irodotta hito to denki sakuhinshu mokuroku, Tokyo: Nichigai asoshieetsu 2005, 118.

41 For more on the Photographic Society of Japan, see Luke Gartlan, 'Samuel Cocking and the Rise of Japanese Photography', *History of Photography* 33, no. 2, May 2009, 161-164.

portfolio of Korea had included several direct references to the Sino-Japanese War, such subjects are carefully expurgated from the publication in favour of panoramic views and group portraits of her travelling party.

Views in the Far East is a modest volume that differs from her later publications in its lack of descriptive text, but it nonetheless signalled the author's intention to promote her photographs as integral to her publications. On Bird's return to Britain in 1897, she made widespread use of her photographs in all her publications. For her lecture before members of the Royal Geographical Society, she had forty-five lantern slides made from her photographs and displayed another two hundred on exhibition screens for the members.⁴² Her photographs illustrated the article based on this lecture in the society's proceedings.⁴³ Two years later, more than a hundred of her photographs illustrated *The Yangtze Valley and Beyond*, and she followed this with a small volume of sixty photographs entitled *Chinese Pictures: Notes on Photographs Made in China* (1900). Of a scope similar to *Views in the Far East*, it differed in its focus on a single country and its inclusion of descriptive paragraphs facing each reproduction. This volume also differed in its themes, primarily focussing on domestic modes of conveyance and architectural subjects. In their totality, Bird's diverse range of publications – an edition of collotypes, monumental illustrated travel books, lecture lantern slides, society exhibitions, and small volume publications – indicate the central role of photography in her public activities.

The photographs and letters surveyed in this article constitute a pivotal archive of a British woman photographer in late nineteenth-century East Asia. That this case study also concerns a renowned travel writer further underscores the significance of these materials. However, Bird's Victorian celebrity is not the primary reason to draw attention to her photographs. Her letters demonstrate the centrality of photography to her professional aspirations and as a travel occupation with its own conditions and requirements. Photography served to bolster her status as a professional travel writer and explorer, and legitimised the veracity of her narratives. Her photographs comprise but one example of the work of a wider cohort of Western women photographers—whether amateur or professional, short term tourists or local residents—whose activities remain largely absent from current histories of the medium.

42 Isabella Bird Bishop to John Murray, The Elms, Huntingdon, April 28 [18]97. National Library of Scotland, MS.42028, f.32-33.

43 Isabella Bird Bishop, 'A Journey in Western Sze-Chuan', *The Geographical Journal* 10, no. 1 (July 1897): 1950.

Charles-Louis Du Pin: A French Photographer in Japan

Sebastian Dobson On 24 January 1861, the only two French passengers on board the British steamer Cadiz disembarked in Yokohama. With little in common apart from their nationality, a shared interest in photography and their recent experiences with the Anglo-French Expedition to China, the journalist Antoine Fauchery and Colonel Charles-Louis Du Pin, head of the Service topographique of the French army in China, made a strange pair. The former was a restless Bohemian writer who had lived in Australia and practiced a variety of trades, including photography, while the latter was a hardened veteran of five campaigns with the French army, already twice-decorated with the *Légion d'honneur*. Although they had briefly worked together in China in the Service topographique, their respective experiences of the Second Opium War were very different. Fauchery boasted that he had passed through the entire campaign without once firing his revolver, and in Beijing he had been a detached observer of the sack of the Summer Palace by Allied troops, claiming afterwards that he had been the only person present to walk away from the scene of pillage and destruction empty-handed.¹ Du Pin, on the other hand, had been conspicuous in the fighting against the Chinese army during the allied advance on Beijing and an enthusiastic participant in the looting at the Summer Palace, appropriating around fifty imperial art treasures for his personal collection.²

Each had different reasons for visiting Japan: Fauchery was responding to a long-cherished desire to see this recently-opened country, while Du Pin had been assigned there by the commander-in-chief of French land forces in China, General Montauban, to produce a map of Japan. Fauchery's plans were perhaps the more ambitious: he already anticipated a stay there of at least one year, during which he would devote his efforts to studying Japanese and deepening his understanding of the land and its people, at the end of which he would produce a literary work supplemented with photographs.³ Sadly, Fauchery would die just over three months after his arrival in Japan, and in a further twist of fate, it would fall instead to Du Pin to present the French public with a portfolio of photographs taken in China and Japan, and, several years later, a book on Japan.

In the archives of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University of London is a curious survival of Du Pin's four-month visit to Japan in 1861: a manuscript version of his 1868 book *Le Japon*, bearing the title 'Voyage au Japon' and proudly identifying the author as 'Staff Colonel Du Pin, Head of the Topographical Section in China'.⁴ Accompanying Du Pin's handwritten text are thirty-five photographs which he took in Japan, consisting of seven salt prints in various sizes and twenty-eight half-stereograph prints on albumen paper. Du Pin's statement of authorship dates the creation of this manuscript at some point between his departure from Japan in May 1861 and his removal from the French General Staff in February 1862. This article attempts to offer an examination of Du Pin's photographic work in Japan

1 Alfred Bousquet, 'La vie et la mort d'un journaliste', *L'Illustration*, *Journal Universel* 38, no. 964, 17 August 1861, 110-111.

2 Untitled notice in *Revue anecdotique des excentricités contemporaines*, nouvelle série, 5, 1862, 86-90.

3 Bousquet 1861 (reference 1), 111.

4 'Voyage au Japon, par le Colonel d'état-major Du Pin, Chef du service topographique en Chine', Special Collections, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 63179. Apart from a few later additions, the text corresponds almost exactly to Colonel Du Pin, *Le Japon: mœurs, coutumes, description, géographie, rapports avec les Européens*, Paris: Arthus Bertrand, [1868].



Figure 1

Colonel Du Pin (left) and his contre-guérilla band in Mexico. Untitled engraving from Arthur Storch [pseud. Franz Julius Schneeberger], *Mexiko, oder Republik und Kaiserreich. Politisch-socialer Roman aus der Gegenwart*, vol. 2, Pest-Vienna-Leipzig: A. Hartleben 1868, 129.

based party on the SOAS manuscript and partly on an equally remarkable survival in the form of a contemporary pedestal stereoscope in the collection of Serge Kakou containing forty-two glass stereographs of China and Japan by Du Pin.⁵

The Photographer

Charles-Louis Désiré Du Pin was born on 28 December 1814 in Lasgraisses, a village in the Tarn district of southwestern France.⁶ His father, who died when Charles-Louis was still ten years old, was mayor of the local commune, while his mother came from the Albigenian aristocracy. The young Du Pin was educated in Albi at a Jesuit college, where he distinguished himself as much for his brilliant grades as for his rebellious aptitude towards authority, but rather oddly he chose to follow a military career.⁷ After a promising start at the prestigious École Polytechnique, Du Pin was appointed to the general staff in 1839, where his aptitude for topographical work quickly earned him a place at the *Depôt de Guerre*, the military forebear of the present-day National Geographical Institute of France. For the next four years, Du Pin mapped various regions of France as part of a national military survey, while his frequent appeals to be transferred to North Africa on active service were refused until March 1843, when he was finally attached to the army in Algeria. Du Pin quickly distinguished himself in battle, earning the first of three separate awards of the *Légion d'honneur* which he was to receive throughout his military career. He spent a total of five years in Algeria, engaged in frequent expeditions against local tribes-

men, as well as in surveying and mapping the southern part of France's new African possession. Du Pin's assignment to less adventurous duties in metropolitan France in 1848 brought him a full captaincy and, three years later, a promotion to major, but also revealed how temperamentally unsuited he was now becoming to the relative inactivity of peacetime soldiering (one future subordinate later compared him to 'a musketeer from Dumas' novel').⁸ After repeated requests to be sent back to North Africa, he finally rejoined the army in Algeria in 1853, serving with further distinction in the Kabylie campaign. In the summer of 1854, he was reassigned to the Army of the Orient during the Crimean War (1854-56). In 1859, he served in the Italian campaign against Austria and at the end of that year was appointed head of the *Service topographique* of the French Expeditionary Force to China.

Du Pin's temperament – described by one contemporary as 'exuberant, capricious and whimsical' – probably accounts for the frequently recurring pattern in his career whereby

⁵ Another significant group of Du Pin's stereographs, originally from the former collection of Ferrier and Soulier, is held in the Roger-Viollet photographic agency in Paris. See Régine Thiriez, *Barbarian Lens: Western Photographers of the Qianlong Emperor's European Palaces*, Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach, 1998, 6-7.

⁶ The correct spelling of Du Pin's surname has caused confusion to historians, many of whom have accepted the official appellation of 'Dupin'. An undated memorandum in Du Pin's army dossier attests that the confusion began when

the surname 'de Dupin' was incorrectly entered on his birth registration and then 'corrected' to 'Dupin' in subsequent documentation. In the long succession of commanding officers who contributed their official assessments of Du Pin to his service record, an interesting split seems to emerge between those who accepted his preferred version of the surname (and were often favorably disposed towards him) and those who insisted on using the official spelling (and were usually not). In 1862, General de Castellane even ordered Du Pin to amend his visiting cards

the distinctions he earned on active service were invariably blemished by the black marks he began accumulating upon his return to regular duties.⁹ Chief among Du Pin's 'barrack-room weaknesses' ('défauts soldatesques') was a fondness for gambling.¹⁰ Indulgent superiors occasionally transferred Du Pin to duties that placed him away from the temptations of the gaming table – and the demands of his creditors – but his career stalled nonetheless. In 1856, after only a few months in a new post in Lyon, he had accumulated so many gambling debts that his divisional commander thought it wise to transfer him to an equivalent position in Corsica.¹¹ Du Pin's exile in Bastia only came to an end in 1859 with the outbreak of war against Austria, and further salvation from the perils of peacetime came towards the end of the year when Du Pin joined the French expeditionary force to China.

Du Pin was passed over as chief of general staff by the commander-in-chief, General Montauban, and was appointed instead head of the *Service topographique* of the expeditionary corps. Du Pin took a broad interpretation of his duties, often undertaking bold reconnaissance expeditions in advance of the main Anglo-French operations against the Chinese army, and he regularly distinguished himself in the action which accompanied the advance of the allied armies from the Gulf of Pechili to the gates of Beijing. His involvement in the sacking of the Yuanmingyuan on 7 October 1860 was conspicuous but hardly exceptional, and the collection of Chinese imperial treasures he acquired almost seems modest in comparison with the two hundred crates of loot that General Montauban was rumoured to have sent home from China.¹²

Du Pin's career following his return to Paris in the summer of 1861 was soon marked by disgrace and disillusionment. On the recommendation of Montauban, he spent the rest of the year on a temporary assignment to the *Dépôt de la Guerre*, where he continued working on his map of Japan. Du Pin also put the finishing touches to an account of the China expedition which he published early the following year under the name 'Paul Varin'.¹³ In the meantime, on 11 January 1862, he received word of his new appointment to the 4th Army Corps in Lyon as Assistant Chief of General Staff, and was given six weeks' grace in order to complete his map.

Although the true identity of the author of *La Campagne de Chine* was not immediately discovered, Paul Varin's disclosures were indiscrete enough to land Colonel Du Pin in hot water. 'This work,' complained the Minister of War to the Emperor Louis Napoleon, 'in which are to be found exaggerated eulogies to Mr. Dupin (sic) ... contains information and several topographical plans which apparently the author could only have procured with the complicity of persons attached to the general staff of General Montauban.'¹⁴ Du Pin was quickly identified as the source and, as a punishment 'for having been seriously deficient in the obligations of discretion and caution imposed upon every officer, and especially upon an officer of the general staff', he was ordered to report immediately to his new post in Lyon.

so that his surname matched that given in the annual army list. Du Pin eventually secured a final judgment in his favour in 1865. General Marey-Monge to General Schramm, 19 December 1850; General de Castellane to Marshal Randon, 15 February 1862, 'Jugement du tribunal de première instance à Gaillac', 15 November 1865, in 'Dossier Individuel: de Dupin (sic), Charles, Louis, Désiré', Service historique de la Défense (SHD), Château de Vincennes, GR 5YE 18301.

7 Gérard Mignard, 'Charles-Louis Du Pin (1814-1868): "Un intellectuel baroudeur"

né à Lasgrais', *Revue du Tarn*, vol. 168, Winter 1997, 535-36; Commandant Henry Lachouque, *Les Vagabonds de la Gloire*, Paris: Éditions du Panache 1946, 173-241.

8 Général François-Charles Du Barail, *Mes souvenirs. Tome Deuxième, 1851-1864*, Paris: E. Plon, Nourrit & Cie, 1898, 485.

9 Du Barail 1898 (reference 8), 491.

10 Du Barail 1898 (reference 8), 375-76.

The impending assignment to Lyon, where a mass of unpaid gambling debts awaited him from his previous posting, probably prompted Du Pin to find a quick way of raising money before he left Paris, and he duly consigned his collection of over 300 Chinese and Japanese objets d'art for sale at the Drouot auction house. With an astonishing lack of discretion, the posters announcing the sale of these 'objets d'art et de curiosité' clearly identified the provenance of many of the lots as the Summer Palace, and the owner of this self-proclaimed 'musée japonais et chinois' as Colonel Du Pin.

This was too much. The Minister of War took swift action in response to this perceived impugnation of the honour of the officer corps of the French army (it was Du Pin's blatant involvement in commercial activities, rather than the ethics of looting the Yuanmingyuan, which was the main issue here) and Du Pin was stripped of his position and placed on the inactive service list in February 1862.¹⁵ Rehabilitation of a sort came during 1862-67 with the French Intervention in Mexico, where Du Pin was given command of a *contre-guérilla* force and a roving commission to stamp out local resistance to the imposition of Emperor Maximilian's rule.¹⁶ Du Pin's controversial use of terror tactics made him one of the most notorious figures in the 'Mexican Adventure' but also earned his reintegration into the French army in 1867 (fig. 1). He died in the military hospital at Montpellier on 3 October 1868 after a sudden attack of meningitis.

Du Pin and Photography

A frequently overlooked part of Du Pin's hectic career is his activity as an amateur photographer.¹⁷ It is still unclear where he received his photographic training, and the earliest reference we have to Du Pin's connection with photography is in 1860 during the China expedition, when he operated a so-called 'Photographic Mission' under the auspices of his *Service topographique*. We know very little about its activities except that Antoine Fauchery was assigned to the unit for an unspecified period of time. According to Du Pin, Fauchery was 'temporarily attached to my section in order to assist me in taking photographs'.¹⁸ In a letter sent from Yantai on 11 July, General Montauban informed the Minister of War that 'I will commission Mr. Fauchery, whom your Excellency has recommended to me, to photograph some very picturesque points de vue, and I hope to send you some dessins by the next post.'¹⁹ However, three months later, Montauban was complaining in a lengthy report from Beijing that 'my greatest regret is not to have had a photographer with the expedition who could reproduce that which words are powerless to express.'²⁰

Whatever photographic work was produced within the *Service topographique* was distinctly low-key. We have no record of Fauchery actually taking any photographs in China or Japan, and only one instance is recorded during the entire campaign of Du Pin practicing pho-

11 General de Castellane to Marshal Randon, 15 February 1862, SHD, GR 5YE 18301.

12 Mignard 1997 (reference 7), 545.

13 Paul Varin: *Expédition de Chine*, Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1862; Henri Cordier, *Bibliotheca Sinica. Dictionnaire bibliographique des ouvrages relatifs à l'empire chinois (Supplément)*, Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1895, 2017.

14 Marshal Randon to Louis Napoleon III, 19 February 1862, SHD, GR 5YE 18301.

15 Mignard 1997 (reference 7), 545-49.

16 On Du Pin's service in Mexico, see Mignard 1997 (reference 7), 549-61, Lachouque 1946 (reference 7), 208-239, and Philippe Guyot, 'La contre-guérilla du Colonel Du Pin au Mexique. Une approche du concept de forces spéciales', *Cahiers du CEHD* [Centre d'études d'histoire de la défense], no. 32, 2001, 15-25.

17 See Christian Polak: 'Les premiers photographes français au Japon avant la Restauration Meiji de 1868', *France Japon Éco*, no. 107, Summer 2006, 62-71;



figure 2

Charles-Louis Du Pin, Mr Duchesne de Bellcourt, Chargé d'affaires de la France au Japon, salt print from a collodion negative, 1861, 20.1 x 15.2 cm. Special Collections, School of Oriental & African Studies, University of London.



Figure 3

Charles-Louis Du Pin, Canal creusé par les Japonais et entourant Hoko-hama, albumen print from a collodion negative, 1861, 8.7 x 7.1 cm. Special Collections, School of Oriental & African Studies, University of London.

tography, fortuitously provided by a member of Montauban's staff in a private letter describing the day's events on 24 October 1860:

In the afternoon, I accompany Colonel Dupin onto the ramparts where he is going to take photographs. We go some distance, and I benefit by taking centre-stage ('Nous allons assez loin, j'y gagne de faire premier plan').²¹

The fact that Montauban had been bemoaning the lack of a photographer with his force only four days earlier (not to mention the fact that the treaty-signing between the French and Chinese representatives took place the following day without a photographer being present to memorialize the event) makes Du Pin's photographic excursion to the city walls of Beijing all the more mysterious.

Certainly Du Pin did not keep his work to himself; before his departure from China in January 1861 he entrusted an album of photographic views of Beijing to the British commander-in-chief, General Sir James Hope Grant, with a request that it be forwarded to Queen Victoria; one can only assume that he made a similar gesture to the French imperial family. Even in advance of his return to France in the summer of 1861, it seems that his photographs from East Asia were being exhibited in Paris. Among the exhibits at the Fourth Exhibition of the Société Française de la Photographie held in May of that year was a group of photographs credited to 'Le colonel du Pin (Expédition de Chine)'.²² By the end of August, Ferrier and Soulier, the foremost manufacturer of stereoscopic views in Paris, had issued Du Pin's Chinese and Japanese views in a portfolio of around sixty stereographs printed on glass and paper. Du Pin was mentioned by name as the creator of the portfolio by the critic Ernest Lacan, and the group of glass stereographs in the collection of Serge Kakou is contained in a contemporary pedestal stereoscope, bearing an engraved ivory plaque on the side which reads:

LA CHINE & LE JAPON

par

Le Colonel du Pin

---:---

PESME PHOTOGRAPHE 20 CHÉE D'ANTIN.²³

Du Pin in Japan

By the time Du Pin departed from Shanghai for Japan on 10 January 1861, his career seemed to have entered an upward trajectory. His promotion during the China campaign to colonel had been formally approved only the week before, and his new commission from Montauban to update the maps of Japan held in the *Dépôt de guerre* seemed to offer a welcome postponement

Terry Bennett: *History of Photography in China 1842-1860*, London: Quaritch 2009, 96-102.

18 '[Fauchery] avait été momentanément attaché à mon service pour m'aider à faire de la photographie.' Du Pin 1868 (reference 4), 6.

19 Comte Maurice d'Hérison, *L'Expédition de Chine, d'après la correspondance confidentielle du G[énéral] Cousin de Montauban, Comte de Palikao*, Paris: E. Plon & Cie., 1883, 115.

20 D'Hérison 1883 (reference 19), 209.

21 Armand Lucy, *Lettres intimes sur la campagne de Chine en 1860: Souvenirs de voyage*, Marseille: Jules Barile 1861, 165.

22 Société française de la photographie (ed.), *Catalogues des expositions organisées par la Société Française de la Photographie 1857-1876*, (Tome 1, 1857-1864), Paris: Guy Durier & Jean-Michel Place 1985, 43. Du Pin also exhibited some unspecified portraits at the Society's Fifth Exhibition in May 1863.

to the difficult transition to peacetime. However, Montauban was under no delusions as to Du Pin's shortcomings. In a confidential report, he informed the Minister of War:

*Monsieur Dupin (sic) possesses the qualities of audacity and initiative, but he has faults which tarnish them... The character of this senior officer is not good; he speaks ill of his superiors and can barely get along with his comrades; he has unbounded ambition which draws him into ill-conceived actions. His candour is questionable...*²⁴

Within a matter of weeks of Du Pin's arrival in Japan, Montauban had cause to regret his decision. During the past year, the French *chargé-d'affaires* in Edo, Duchesne de Bellecourt (fig.2), had been requesting an appropriate display of French military strength in Japan, and the assassination of Hendrik Heusken, the Dutch interpreter at the United States Legation in Edo, in January brought renewed appeals. Much to Montauban's annoyance, Bellecourt soon found an ally in his bellicose posturing in the newly-arrived Du Pin, and Montauban took prompt action to defuse the situation, reporting his decision to Paris on 20 February:

*In order to avoid any appearance of hostility on our side, I have ordered Colonel Dupin (sic), whom I had sent to Edo to make a map of the place, to return immediately to Shanghai: I am doing this all the more readily since this senior officer is much given to interfering in matters outside his province, and because he wrote me (if you will excuse the expression) a long-winded political screed ('une longue tartine politique') on events in Japan in support of the request made by the French minister.*²⁵

It is not clear if Du Pin's recall was countermanded, delayed or disregarded, but in any event he remained in Japan until 11 May.

Du Pin and Fauchery arrived in Japan at a difficult time. On 26 January, as a gesture of protest at Heusken's murder, most of the foreign envoys relocated their legations from Edo to Yokohama, and Duchesne de Bellecourt and his British colleague, Sir Rutherford Alcock, were working on a concerted Anglo-French response to the shogunate. French prestige in Japan was not at a high ebb, all the more so since it depended on British support. For want of an available French naval vessel, Bellecourt and his staff had had to leave Edo on board HMS Encounter, while the single French warship belatedly sent from Chinese waters to 'gain respect for our flag' ('pour y faire respecter nos couleurs nationales') ran into a storm. The Dordogne limped into Yokohama on 6 February in no fit state to go to sea, obliging the French legation to take passage on a British warship for a second time when it returned to Edo the following month.²⁶ Du Pin and Fauchery shifted as best they could in the crowded foreign settlement, and the small number of photographic views of Yokohama which feature in Du Pin's portfolio seem to testify to the limited camera opportunities offered there (fig. 3). In the meantime, Fauchery

23 I am indebted to Serge Kakou for letting me examine this portfolio, which is almost certainly the largest extant group of Ferrier & Soulier's stereo glass positive views of China and Japan. The connection between Du Pin and the photographer Paul-Émile Pesme (1824-1870) requires further investigation and may throw light on Du Pin's photographic training. One intriguing aspect of Pesme's career was his previous association with a little-known photographer called Varin, with whom he

had collaborated in a business partnership from 1856 until the autumn of 1859.

Du Pin's adoption of Varin's surname in his nom *de plume* may be significant.

24 Quoted in Mignard 1997 [reference 7], 546.

25 D'Hérisson 1883 [reference 19], 301.

26 Du Pin 1868 [reference 4], 68.

27 Du Pin 1868 [reference 4], 112.



Figure 4

Charles-Louis Du Pin, *Légation Française dans le temple de Sai-kai-dji*, albumen print from a collodion negative, 1861, 8.7 x 7.1 cm. Special Collections, School of Oriental & African Studies, University of London.



Figure 5

Charles-Louis Du Pin, *Vue d'une partie de la ville d'Yédo (prise de la terrasse de la légation Française)*, albumen print from a collodion negative, 1861, 8.3 x 7.3 cm. Special Collections, School of Oriental & African Studies, University of London.

fell ill with dysentery; this eventually proved fatal and almost certainly confined him to Yokohama until his death several weeks later.

Du Pin, on the other hand, joined Bellecourt and his staff on 2 March on their journey back to Edo, where he stayed for several weeks as a guest of the French legation in its quarters in the temple of Saikaji (fig. 4). For the tiny foreign community in Edo, which was restricted entirely to personnel attached to the foreign legations, life in the city was constrained. Du Pin found that any journey outside the legation required an escort of shogunal officials, or *yakunin*, and that much of the city was out of bounds. Saikaji had the advantage of a commanding location on top of the northernmost hill in the Takanawa district, and from the temple terrace, Du Pin could survey – and photograph – the southern part of the city (fig. 5), including the coastal defenses in Edo Bay and, with the aid of ‘an excellent field-glass’, observe the Japanese gun batteries at shooting practice.²⁷ A short distance away, the British legation occupied the more picturesque location of Tōzenji, where Du Pin and his compatriots were frequent guests. Du Pin’s appreciation of the location was expressed both in the large number of photographs he took there (fig. 6 and 7) as well as in prose:

Arriving from Yokohama, one first encounters the English Legation; it occupies part of the buildings attached to the temple of Tōzenji, situated at the bottom of a small vale, which, a few hundred paces distant, opens onto the shore of the bay. An immense garden, where rare species of magnificent trees are to be found, surrounds the dwellings, which are most satisfactory. A long, wide house, by which one reaches the legation, gives a princely appearance to this residence. Just close by is a daimyo cemetery, the gravestones of which, cut to an almost uniform model, recall ancient Greek architecture. The general effect of the cemetery is most picturesque.²⁸

On the other hand, Du Pin dismissed the Dutch legation at nearby Chōōji, located almost midway between Saikaji and Tōzenji, in a single short sentence, and does not appear to have even visited it, let alone photographed it.²⁹

Whatever shortcomings Saikaji had as a residence, the hospitality offered there by Bellecourt was ‘splendide et affectueuse’ and, according to Du Pin, the routine at the French Legation ‘did not permit us any thoughts of boredom.’³⁰ Every morning, Japanese curio dealers were admitted to the terrace of the legation, and Du Pin and his compatriots would begin the day perusing their wares (fig. 8). The foreigners were ‘dazzled’ by these ‘most remarkable products of Japanese art’ which were being offered for ‘an infinitesimal price such as one only finds in Japan, and which, in the whole of Japan, one only finds in Edo.’³¹ Du Pin used these opportunities to add Japanese art objects to the already significant collection of Chinese treasures which he had looted from the Summer Palace only a few months before. Sections of

28 Du Pin 1868 [reference 4], 98.

29 ‘Un peu plus loin, à mi-pente d’un coteau, se trouve la légation hollandaise.’ Du Pin 1868 [reference 4], 99. One of Du Pin’s stereographs, later reversed in the negative and mis-captioned ‘1721 Shang-Hai. Jardin à thé (Chine)’ in the Ferrier & Soulier portfolio, has been subsequently identified as ‘Choyo-Temple, Tokyo’ in Terry Bennett, *History of Photography in China: Western Photographers 1861-1879*,

London, Quaritch 2010, ix. In the SOAS group, however, Du Pin gives ‘Légation Anglaise’ as the location for this view. The same location at Tozenji was photographed a few years later by Felice Beato. Minato kuritsu kyodo shiryokan, *Edo no gaikoku koshikan. Kaikoku hyakugoku-shunen ki’nen shiryosho (Foreign Legations in Edo)*, Tokyo: Minato kuritsu kyodo shiryokan 2005, 47.

30 Du Pin 1868 [reference 4], 100.



*Allée par laquelle on arrive
à la légation Anglaise, à Yédo, auprès
du temple de Taijendje.*

Figure 6

Charles-Louis Du Pin, *Allée par laquelle on arrive à la légation Anglaise, à Yédo, auprès du temple de Taijendje*, albumen print from a collodion negative, 1861, 8.3 x 7.3 cm. Special Collections, School of Oriental & African Studies, University of London.

his book are devoted to Japanese bronzes, carved ivory and swords (with digressions on ‘the appropriate manner in which to cut open one’s stomach’ and the respective merits of the French army sabre and its Japanese equivalent). Japanese art, with its ‘noble simplicity, purity of line [and] conscientious workmanship’, he found in pleasing contrast to what he had seen in China.³² For Du Pin, this was an example of how fundamentally the two countries differed:

*The Chinese, the product of an exhausted civilization, is nothing more than a slave to routine, often to an absurd degree, rejecting progress with the obstinacy of one born blind who cannot even imagine what light is; the Japanese, on the other hand, noble, proud, maintaining all the vigour of youth, aspires instinctively to reach the same height as the other peoples of the world. The Chinese slumbers stupidly in the memory of his past. The Japanese dreams only of the future.*³³

This ‘bimbelotage’ took up most of the morning, and was followed by lunch, either at the French legation or, in a congenial display of Anglo-French unity, as guests of the British. The afternoon was spent riding through ‘some as yet unexplored section of the city’ accompanied by an ever-present escort of *yakunin*, while Du Pin and his unidentified companions spent the evenings alone in the safety of their respective legations, recent events having shown how unsafe it was for foreigners to venture out at night.³⁴

Somehow, Du Pin found the time to attend to his cartographic commission from Montauban. Through his own efforts, and partly with the help of his compatriot, the merchant Louis Bourret in Yokohama (fig. 9), Du Pin procured several Japanese maps and was impressed at how the Japanese appeared to have ‘fairly advanced notions of topography’ and how closely they matched equivalent maps of the country produced in Europe.³⁵

Constraint was the prevailing theme of Du Pin’s stay in Edo. Although he had a commanding view of Edo Bay and the southern part of the city from his vantage point on the terrace at Saikaiji, Du Pin was equally aware of what he could not see. He often heard the noise of regular musketry and artillery fire, sometimes lasting as long as an hour, coming from the nearby residence of the Satsuma clan. By Du Pin’s reckoning, a sizeable and well-trained force was being drilled there, but he had to accept the fact that he would never be allowed to see it.³⁶

The Portfolio

Du Pin’s photographs at this time testify to the limited geographic range of his excursions in Edo, or at least those he undertook with his camera. The area encompassed by his photographs

31 Du Pin 1868 [reference 4], 100.

32 Du Pin 1868 [reference 4], 100-101.

33 Du Pin 1868 [reference 4], 101.

34 Du Pin 1868 [reference 4], 108

35 Du Pin 1868 [reference 4], 124.



Figure 7
Charles-Louis Du Pin, *Légation anglaise - vue du cimetière de Daimios*, albumen print from a collodion negative, 1861, 8.8 x 7.2 cm. Special Collections, School of Oriental & African Studies, University of London.

crosses a short stretch of the western shore of Edo Bay between Takanawa and Mita, forming a more or less straight line from Tōzenji to Saikaiji which then diverts north to Tsunazaka (in present-day Tokyo, the same area is served by two stations on the JR Yamanote Line). Du Pin referred only once in print to his photographic excursions across the city and acknowledged his debt to the members of his Japanese escort:

I was often occupied with photographic work; the yakunin of my escort, to whom I would show the results I had obtained, would place themselves at my disposal and serve as assistants. Some of them would go and look for water for me, while others set up my [dark room] tent; they would disperse the local populace who, with their importunate curiosity, could have impeded my operations.³⁷

The yakunin occasionally appeared in Du Pin's photographs, both as figures in a landscape and as the subjects of portraits (fig. 7, 10), and one suspects their assistance was vital not only in clearing obtrusive townspeople from his field of vision but also in finding other Japanese sitters.

A photographic excursion with his escort to one of the Edo residences of the powerful Satsuma clan – and the possible location of the mysterious military manoeuvres he often heard – offered Du Pin further excitement (fig. 11).

One day I was at work in front of the palace of the prince of Satsuma; I had already obtained a negative which I was in the middle of fixing in my tent when the yakunin warned me that the prince had ordered several of his horsemen to mount in order to attack me; it seems that this prince was far from desirous to see me take a souvenir of his splendid abode home with me to Europe. With the greatest speed, I packed up my apparatus, and, since it was futile to make any display of bravura which would have led to a bloody conflict in which I and my escort would have undoubtedly come off worse, we galloped off in sufficient time to escape the pursuit of our enemies.³⁸

Stirring stuff, but perhaps we should not take all of Du Pin's accounts of his brushes with danger at face value. There is a curious echo here of Du Pin's adventures in China. On 6 October 1860, on the instructions of his commander-in-chief, Du Pin had undertaken a mounted reconnaissance of the enemy positions outside Beijing with a detachment of North African irregular cavalry. According to Montauban:

Half an hour had barely passed before Colonel Dupin (sic) rode back at full tilt with the Spahis, saying that a party of around 2,000 horsemen had pursued them. The Spahis, whom I questioned myself, told me that they had seen nothing, and I am still seeking an explanation for this event.³⁹



Figure 8
Charles-Louis Du Pin, *Marchands de bibelots à la légation Française à Yédo*, albumen print from a collodion negative, 1861, 8.4 x 7.4 cm. Special Collections, School of Oriental & African Studies, University of London.

³⁶ Du Pin 1868 (reference 4), 112–13.

³⁷ Du Pin 1868 (reference 4), 176.

³⁸ Du Pin 1868 (reference 4), 176–77, quoted in Polak 2006, 66.



Figure 9
Charles-Louis Du Pin, Mr Bourret négociant à Yokohama, salt print from a collodion negative, 1861, 8.1 x 7.5 cm. Special Collections, School of Oriental & African Studies, University of London.

Possibly, Du Pin's imagination could sometimes get the better of him on his reconnaissance expeditions. This episode is in marked contrast to the cool, but nonetheless polite, reception which Felice Beato received from the Satsuma retainers when he visited the same spot over two years later.⁴⁰ Another possible explanation is that Du Pin's escort simply concocted a story of imminent danger

in order to curtail his photographic excursions across Edo.

Du Pin's relative isolation was also apparent in the limited number of photographic portraits he took. The technical limitations posed by taking stereoscopic photographs with a single-lensed camera demanded a significant degree of control over the sitter when taking portraits, and the few portraits Du Pin took – just under one quarter of the portfolio in his manuscript – give every indication of having been taken in the same location. This controlled environment, displaying a mixture of Japanese architecture and European fixtures – and in a few cases Du Pin's darkroom tent – may well be the French Legation compound at Saikaiji. While Du Pin's European sitters, consisting of his compatriots in Edo (fig. 2, 9) and two British naval officers (fig. 12), were photographed in a single exposure in a regular format, Du Pin's more exotic – and marketable – Japanese sitters had to undergo two exposures in an improvised stereoscopic format, a procedure which presented its own problems. One portrait, showing two Japanese merchants, revealed the shortcomings of this method when it was published in Paris several months later as part of Ferrier & Soulier's portfolio (fig. 13, 14). The critic Ernest Lacan singled out this portrait, at the same time mistaking the social rank of the sitters, when reviewing Du Pin's offerings from China and Japan:

Although executed by an amateur, these pictures are very interesting. One of them, which has not succeeded, presents a very amusing effect. It represents two mandarins seated side by side. The Colonel operated with a single camera, and, while he was shifting the apparatus after taking the first image, the two personages moved – one raised his head, the other bent his head down sideways. If you look at these portraits in the stereoscope, and alternately and rapidly open and shut both your eyes, the heads appear to move as if the mandarins are beating time. The illusion is complete. I should not be astonished to see certain photographers, who seek the new rather than the beautiful, take up this idea, and represent moving photographs, by means of a screen arranged in the interior of the apparatus. I relinquish them my idea, without even intending to claim priority.⁴¹

It is strange to think that Du Pin and his fidgety sitters in Edo unwittingly inspired one of the foremost photographic commentators of the day to consider the possibility of motion pictures! Du Pin was more successful in producing something close to a true stereoscopic portrait with



Figure 10
Charles-Louis Du Pin, Yacounines de la garde de Mr. de Bellecourt et faisant partie de la garde du Taïcoun, albumen print from a collodion negative, 1861, 8.4 x 7.4 cm. Special Collections, School of Oriental & African Studies, University of London.

39 Romain Cousin de Montauban (ed.), *L'Expédition de Chine de 1860. Souvenirs du Général Cousin de Montauban, Comte de Palikao*, Paris: Librairie Plon 1932, 307.

40 Aimé Humbert, *Japan and the Japanese Illustrated*, trans. F. C. Hoey, London: R. Bentley & Sons 1874, 178–79.



Figure 11

Charles-Louis Du Pin, *Caserne extérieure du prince de Satsouma*, albumen print from a collodion negative, 1861, 8.8 x 7.3 cm. Special Collections, School of Oriental & African Studies, University of London.



Figure 12

Charles-Louis Du Pin, *Mr Dew capitaine de vaisseau commandant le vapeur de guerre anglaise l'Encounter*, salt print from a collodion negative, 1861, 16.7 x 10.4 cm. Special Collections, School of Oriental & African Studies, University of London.

his only female sitter (fig. 15). Du Pin's initial identification of her in his manuscript as '*Femme japonaise en tenue et coiffure negligées*' – later toned down to '*Femme Japonaise à Yédo*' in the published portfolio – is both curious and telling. Implying casual intimacy and coquettishness in his choice of adjective as much as lack of attention in her attire and hairdressing, Du Pin was apparently presenting this particular '*Japonaise*' as a specimen of Japanese womanhood to be viewed alongside his observations on the subject:

Women.

The women are remarkably pretty; among many of them one encounters the pink and white complexions that distinguish the European races. Their black eyes, often very large, possess a liveliness and a voluptuous sweetness which are most remarkable; their skin is delicate and soft; their feet and hands are of a daintiness and an elegance which would arouse the jealousy of the ladies of our upper aristocracy. Their countenances, possessing an expression that is always intelligent, and often saucy, recall our own grisettes in Paris. The richness and firmness of their shapes, some suggestion of which is given by a simple, very neat costume which they wear with coquettish nonchalance, completes my portrait of these little Japonaises, whom, with their smiling faces and languorous bearing, one could justly call the houris of the Far East.⁴²

Du Pin's references to the highly sexualized female inhabitants of Bohemian subculture (*grisettes*) and Orientalist fantasy (*houris*) seem to invite his audience to survey the sitter with the same appreciative eye.

An Off-Duty Photographer?

What are we to make of this portfolio? It is very tempting to overstate the connection between Du Pin's photographic activity in East Asia and his duties as the head of the *Service topographique* with the French army in China. There is the coincidence that, on 19 February 1861, the French War Ministry ordered that selected officers receive instruction in photography and that a cadre of *officiers photographes* be established for future military operations. Credit for this measure is usually given to the Parisian photographer Disdéri, who submitted a memorandum on the subject that same month, but it appears that Montauban's earlier complaint from Beijing about the lack of photographers with his force also played some part in the decision.⁴³ For the next few months, the use of photography by the army was taken up in the French popular press and the question was still being discussed in military circles when Du Pin returned to Paris in the summer of 1861.⁴⁴

Du Pin's own experience probably disqualified him from approaching the question impartially. As a veteran of numerous reconnaissance expeditions into hostile territories, not least in Algeria, Du Pin would have had little sympathy with the claims put forward by one impassioned advocate of military photography:

41 Ernest Lacan, letter dated 26 August 1861, *British Journal of Photography*, 2 September 1861, 314, quoted in Bennett 2009 (reference 17), 97. The same letter appears as 'Photography in Paris', *Humphrey's Journal of the Daguerreotype and*

Photographic Arts 13, no. 11, 1 October 1861, 170-71. Interestingly, this photograph appears in later editions with the caption altered to 'Mandarins Japonais'.

42 Du Pin 1868 (reference 4), 37.



Figure 13
Charles-Louis Du Pin, *Négociant Japonais*,
albumen print from a collodion negative, 1861,
8.8 x 7.1 cm. Special Collections, School of
Oriental & African Studies, University of London.
Note the darkroom tent in the background.

Photography offers the means by which a rapid and precise reconnaissance can be made of every position raised by the enemy, of his fortifications, his batteries, his entrenched camps and so on – and by which one can review them at a distance, a great advantage – without endangering the life of the soldier.

It offers the means by which one can quietly study in one's tent, sheltered from enemy bullets, those battlefields, every fold of which, every quirk of the terrain, has such major importance for the maneuvering of the combatants.

It offers the means by which one can take the particulars, not only of things, but of men and of facts, by which military reports, bulletins, history itself, can be verified and completed.

Photography will save French blood...⁴⁵

Du Pin's career as a military topographer had been built instead on a more traditional approach which was advanced by at least one opponent of the scheme:

From the historic and artistic points of view, the utility of this measure is beyond question, however, from the military point of view, it does not have the same importance. 'A reconnaissance undertaken by officers of the general staff will always inspire more confidence in a general' (quotationmarks mine).

In effect, photography can represent the exact view of a terrain, but it does not yield its nature and all its irregularities; above all, it cannot give any indication of the distances involved.⁴⁶



Figure 14
Charles-Louis Du Pin, No 48. *Yedo. Marchands Japonais*, 1861, stereo glass positive from a collodion negative, 8.3 x 17.1 cm. Collection of Serge Kakou, Paris.

43 Annie-Laure Wanaverbecq, 'La photographie et l'armée' in: Annie-Laure Wanaverbecq, *Felice Beato en Chine. Photographier la guerre en 1860*, Paris: Somogy éditions d'art and Lille: Musée d'Histoire naturelle et d'Ethnographie 2005, 34-39;

A. Pujol, 'Correspondence particulière [Paris, 2 February 1861]', *Journal de Toulouse*, vol. 57, no. 35, 4 February 1861, [2].

44 Ferdinand De Lacombe, 'De l'usage de la photographie dans l'armée', *Le Spectateur Militaire*, 35, July-September 1861, [144]-151.



Figure 15

Charles-Louis Du Pin, *Femme Japonaise tenue et coiffure negligées*, 1861, albumen print from a collodion negative, 8.7 x 7.0 cm. Special Collections, School of Oriental & African Studies, University of London.

Far from creating a portfolio of topographical or even military relevance, Du Pin seems to have operated with the intention of taking photographs simply for his own pleasure and eventual profit. We know that his stereographs were taken with a single-lensed camera, thereby necessitating the extra effort of manipulating his camera in order to take the same subject from two different angles (and that, not always successfully).⁴⁷ The fact that he was willing to undertake such unwieldy manipulations could be taken as evidence of his intention to present his portfolio of views of China, and later Japan, in a more marketable stereoscopic format. Photography was simply one of the commercial ventures which Du Pin undertook after his return from the Far East in 1861 and, compared with his literary outing as Paul Varin and his sale of the combined fruits of his looting in China and his bimbeltage in Japan, it was certainly the least damaging to his reputation.

45 L. Chaumontel, 'La Photographie à la guerre', in *L'Illustration, Journal Universel* (Paris), vol. 37, no. 949, 4 May 1861, 287.

46 A. Pujol, 'Correspondence particulière [Paris, 27 March 1861]', *Journal de Toulouse*, vol. 57, no. 88, 29 March 1861, [3].

47 The fact that Du Pin did not take 'true' stereographs may explain their later appearance as single-view glass lantern slides.

Wilhelm Burger's Photographs of Japan: New Attributions of his Glass Negative Collection in the Austrian National Library

Tani Akiyoshi and Peter Pantzer

In 1888, the Historiographical Institute of the University of Tokyo was entrusted with the duty to collect and document materials from ancient to modern times, both in Japan and overseas, for the pursuit of research on the history of Japan. Ever since, the Institute has published hundreds of volumes of source materials from collections and archives, both private and public, from inside and outside of Japan.¹ Attached to the Institute is a Centre for the Study of Visual Sources, established in order to analyse portraits, picture scrolls, illustrated prints and, by no means least, photographs.²

As part of this project, a team of researchers from Tokyo University visited the Picture Archives and Graphics Department of the Austrian National Library in order to investigate their holdings of early photographs of Japan. The National Library contains an impressive collection of glass negatives by Wilhelm Burger (1844-1920). This collection includes 866 plates in total, of which 133 derive from the Japanese leg of the photographer's expedition.³ Knowledge has expanded, methods have improved, and interest in the importance of visual material has grown. We are indebted to Wilhelm Burger for the best known photographic collection in Vienna documenting Japan at a crucial turning point in its history – that is, when feudal institutions disappeared and modernization began. In the course of the Austro-Hungarian Expedition to the Far East in 1869 and 1870, Burger produced one of the most significant portfolios of early photographs of Japan.⁴

Figure 1

Ueno Hikoma (attributed), *Gruppenbild einer japanischen Familie* (Group Photo of a Japanese Family), c. 1869, retouched wet collodion glass negative, 8.5 x 11.0 cm. Burger Collection, Austrian National Library, Picture Archives and Graphic Department, WB 639 C.



This research project is by no means complete and our brief progress report is a prologue to research to be continued over the next few years.⁵ The members of the research team include Assistant Professor Tanaka Satomi (Nihon University), Professor Hoya Toru, Assistant Professor Hakoishi Hiroshi and Tani Akiyoshi (all from Tokyo University), and the external co-investigators Emeritus Professor Peter Pantzer (Bonn University) and Dr. Miyata Nana.

Our research on this collection of glass negatives has been less concerned with the appearance of furnishings in the background of some photographs, since other scholars have already noted these features. In comparison with the studio work of two well-known Japanese photographers, Burger's negatives include the very same studio props and furnishings. However, another intriguing issue is the overall difference in the glass plates' appearance with regard to

1 <<http://www.hi.u-tokyo.ac.jp/index.html>> [22.02.2011]. Besides documenting and publishing sources, the Historiographical Institute also serves as a post-graduate level teaching institution.

2 <http://www.hi.u-tokyo.ac.jp/english/about_hi/csvs_gazo-center-e.html> [22.02.2011].

3 This collection was part of a large stock of negatives kept in the *Österreichische Lichtbildstelle*, a semi-commercial institution attached to the Austrian Chancellery.

The complete portfolio entered the Library in 1939 and filing was completed by 1941 (shelfmark WB 1-866, cf. Hans Pauer, *Das Bildarchiv der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek*, Vienna 1947, 59, 107; and Uwe Schögl (ed.), *Im Blickpunkt: Die Fotosammlung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek*, Vienna 2002, 20-25).

4 This collection was first introduced to Japanese readers in 1973-74. See Peter Pantzer, 'Uiiin de mitsukatta Meiji shonen no Nihon no shashin' [The Discovery of Photographs from the First Years of the Meiji Era in Vienna], *Yomiuri Shinbun*, 25



Figure 2

Shimooka Renjō (attributed), *Japanische Familie* (Japanese Family), c. 1869, wet collodion glass negative, 8.0 x 10.5 cm. Burger Collection, Austrian National Library, Picture Archives and Graphic Department, WB640 C.

Figure 1 is a wet collodion glass negative attributed to Ueno Hikoma with a thick milky white tone. Figure 2 shows a wet collodion glass negative attributed to Shimooka Renjō with a deep black tone.

tint, colour, coating and other material details. Why do an individual photographer's plates look so different? There is considerable variation in the tints and shading of the glass negatives between landscape subjects, portraits and genre scenes. In a word, the state of the negatives is not uniform. One would never realize this fact by examining the prints alone; the possibility of comparing such a large number of negatives from Burger's visit to Japan provides the researcher with a rare and fascinating opportunity.

There are almost no negatives from this early period of photography left in Japan. Thus, one is not able to directly compare Burger's plates with those of a Japanese photographer of the period. Nevertheless, one cannot but compare his work to that of the Japanese pioneer photographers Ueno Hikoma (1838-1904) and Shimooka Renjō (1823-1914).⁶ Ueno was based in Nagasaki while Shimooka conducted his business in Yokohama and the Austrian flotilla dropped anchor at both harbours during its visit to Japan. If one brings all the facts together, one discovers the presence of these two figures in Burger's negatives.

At this stage of research, we propose to attribute those negatives with thick grey colouring to Ueno Hikoma and those with thick black colouring to Shimooka Renjō (fig. 1, 2). There are additional hints to distinguish their negatives. Ueno's plates were varnished on the image side in the closing phase of production. This served a protective function and enabled the negative to be retouched with greater ease. In contrast, Shimooka's negatives have no trace of varnish. Wherever parts of the image flaked off (and this is quite often the case), Burger made skilful corrections to the damaged negative by hand. There are 133 plates dealing with Japan among Burger's glass negatives taken during his travels with the Austro-Hungarian expedition.⁷ Of this group, this study argues that 27 plates should be ascribed to the studio of Ueno Hikoma in Nagasaki and 44 plates to Shimooka Renjō in Yokohama; in short, about half of all the glass plates related to Japan are not by Burger.

Both Japanese photographers had already had direct contact with Western photographers. Shimooka Renjō had entered the world of photography by 1860, and did so from the traditional career path of a painter. He had acquired practical knowledge of photography from an American named John Wilson who gave him advice and the necessary equipment in exchange for his paintings.⁸ Similarly, Ueno Hikoma met Pierre Rossier (1829-?), a professional cameraman from Switzerland who spent some time in Nagasaki in 1859 and 1860.⁹ Ueno Hikoma is also known for the first publication on the technique of photography in Japan, entitled *Seimikyoku hikkei* [Essential Handbook for Learning Chemistry and Physics] (1862). This illustrated treatise was also, in part, based on his acquaintance with a Dutch medical doctor in Nagasaki.¹⁰

In order to examine the respective techniques of Ueno and Burger, we can fortunately compare two original wet collodion process glass negatives by the two photographers.

October 1973 [evening edition], 7; and Peter Pantzer 'Meiji 2-nen no Nihon retto. Osutoria no shashinshi satsue' [Japan in Meiji Year 2 as seen by an Austrian Photographer], *Sandē Mainichi*, vol. 53, no. 1, 1 January 1974, 3-10, and vol. 53, no. 4, 27 January 1974, 7-11.

5 A preliminary report has been recently published by Tanaka Satomi and Tani Akiyoshi, 'Wilhelm Burger (Uiruhurumu Burugo) no garasu shashin genban ni kansuru chosa hokoku - Meiji 2-nen (1869) Osutoria-Hangari-teikoku higashi-

ajia enseitai tsuiko shashinka no katsudo' [Report on Wilhelm Burger's Glass Negatives - A Photographer and his Achievements during the Austro-Hungarian Expedition to East Asia in 1869], *Tokyo daigaku shiryō hensanjo fuzoku gazo shiryō kaiseki senta tsushin*, Tokyo [Center for the Study of Visual Sources, Historiographical Institute, The University of Tokyo], no. 52, January 2011, 1-11.

6 Both photographers are mentioned in almost every Western-language publication on early Japanese photography. Though many books on the life and work of



Figure 3
Ueno Hikoma, *Portrait Photograph of Two Men*
[Shōzō shashin dansei futari], c. 1867-68,
10.5 x 8.2 cm, wet collodion glass negative.
Courtesy Nagasaki Museum of History and
Culture.

One example is preserved in the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography and depicts the famous proponent of imperial restoration, Sakamoto Ryōma (1836-1867). The other example is in the collection of the Nagasaki City Museum and was examined by the research team in 2003. The photograph depicts two samurai and, based on the paraphernalia of his studio, is clearly the work of Ueno (fig. 3). This negative bears the same marks and has the same coating as the glass negatives attributed to him in the Burger collection in Vienna. Unfortunately, we have yet to discover a negative by Shimooka Renjō.

A Closer Examination of Burger's Glass Negatives

To this day, nearly all of Burger's glass negatives from Japan have remained in almost perfect condition. For business reasons, the photographer may have carefully preserved his glass plates in

order to sell prints of his past efforts to future customers. This collection of negatives now provides a welcome source for the investigation of his working methods, such as the plate size and chemicals used, and as a means of establishing authorship. Since ready-made negatives were not yet commercially available, each glass plate had to be prepared by the photographer himself.

One may wonder at the large number of photographs taken during the photographer's comparatively short visit to Japan. And, there is also the question of the use of studio props, which the photographer would never have brought all the way from Trieste to Yokohama. There is a simple explanation for this. Why should a travelling photographer not cooperate with a local colleague and use his studio if this helps produce faster, if not better, results? Burger's biographer Gert Rosenberg points to this fact: 'Burger had to establish communication with resident photographers and made use of their studio'.¹¹ Both specialists – the visiting photographer from Austria as well as his job-sharing partner in Japan – had sufficient mutual interests, by way of their profession, to encourage their association. Nevertheless, a number of questions remain unanswered. With whom exactly did Burger cooperate in Japan? Given that he signed and published all the photographs in this collection as his own work, to what extent can we trust Burger's self-proclaimed authorship?

To examine these matters, let us consider the impressive box collection of 56 albumen prints, apparently presented to the Austrian imperial court, and the many smaller commercially-sold photographs in the Austrian National Library.¹² In his earlier monograph on Wilhelm Burger, the photographic historian Gert Rosenberg attributed all the negatives

these men are available in Japanese, no extensive monograph has been published in a Western language.

7 Inv.Nos.: WB 559 – WB 610, WB 612 – WB 622, WB 637 – WB 687, WB 689 – WB 700 and WB 854 – WB 860.

8 Saito Takio, 'Shimooka Renjo (1823-1914)', in: Yokoe Fuminori et al. (eds.), *Shashin torai no koro/ The Advent of Photography in Japan*, Tokyo: Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography 1997, 173-177.

9 Since no friendship and commerce treaty had been concluded at that time between Japan and Switzerland, Rossier appeared in Japan under French national jurisdiction. He remained in East Asia from 1858 to 1862 and later opened a photographic studio in Fribourg, Switzerland. He is considered to have been the first professional photographer active in Japan.

10 In fact, Jan Karel van den Broek (1814-1865) and Johannes L. C. Pompe van Meerdervoort (1829-1908), both in the service of the Dutch East Indian Company



Figure 4

Photographer unknown, *Kaiser von Japan* [Shogun Tokugawa Yoshinobu], c. 1866–67, wet collodion glass negative, negative copy, 22.1 x 16.5 cm. Burger Collection, Austrian National Library, Picture Archive WB 653 C. Nothing is known about the whereabouts of the original glass negative.

from Japan (and other countries) to the Austrian photographer.¹³ However, an uncritical acceptance of the descriptions on the negatives – whether hand-written or printed – is not advisable. Here, some historical knowledge of the period in Japan would have been beneficial. Burger could not have taken some of the photographs since the topics or sitters were not available or accessible to him during his visit to Japan. Would Burger have named the portrait of Shogun Tokugawa Yoshinobu *Kaiser von Japan* (fig. 4)? If Burger had taken the photograph himself, would he have falsely identified an execution site in Yokohama as a site in the capital Edo, recently renamed Tokyo?¹⁴ Although actually showing courtesans from a pleasure quarter, Burger's hand-written notation identifies two women in gorgeous kimonos as *Zwei japanische Fürstinnen* (Two Japanese Princesses).¹⁵ Such faulty captions are difficult to understand unless the pictures were acquired second-hand by the photographer.

The commander of the Austro-Hungarian expedition, Vice-Admiral Anton von Petz (1819–1885), also served as Envoy Plenipotentiary with the mission to conclude treaties of friendship, navigation and commerce with Japan, China, and Siam. Wilhelm Burger was entrusted with the position of official photographer to the expedition.¹⁶ Burger and his apprentice Michael Moser (1853–1912) embarked aboard the *Erzherzog Friedrich*, which anchored in Nagasaki from September 5 to 19. The expedition's other ship, the frigate *Donau*, remained behind in Shanghai and only anchored in Nagasaki from September 16 to 19. Thereafter, the two vessels sailed onwards to Hyōgo (Kobe), remaining there three days from September 24 to 27. Recently, it has been suggested that Burger and Moser may not have spent much time on the outward journey in Nagasaki, but were detained on a commission to photograph Chinese *objets d'art* in Shanghai. As a consequence, they may only have spent a few days on the outward journey in Nagasaki.¹⁷ Their stay in Yokohama was also quite short, because the treaty with Japan required only a brief period of negotiation and was signed at a ceremony in Tokyo on 18 October.¹⁸ The extension of the squadron's stay in Yokohama was primarily due to logistical reasons and to allow the professional members of the expedition to gather data in their specific fields. Nevertheless, this was still too brief a visit for Burger to gain really promising results, especially since he fell seriously ill soon after his arrival in Yokohama and had to be hospitalized.¹⁹

Commander Petz had no other choice but to offer Burger the chance to remain in Japan for a few more months to recover from his illness and not return to Vienna empty-handed. Besides portraying the land and its people, Burger had been ordered to photograph all kinds of art and craft objects including bronzes, as well as lacquer and porcelain articles. This was an important commission from the Austrian Museum for Art and Industry for the museum's study collection.²⁰ Burger thus spent the winter in Japan together with his apprentice

stationed in Nagasaki, played significant roles in the introduction of photography to Japan. See Herman Moeshart, Een miskend geneesheer: *Dr. J. K. van den Broek en de overdracht van kennis van westerse technologie in Japan, 1853–1857*, Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw 2003.

11 Gert Rosenberg, *Wilhelm Burger: Ein Welt- und Forschungsreisender mit der Kamera 1844–1920*, Vienna and Munich: Brandstätter 1984, 29.

12 Wilhelm Burger, *K. K. Expedition nach Ost-Asien*, two boxes, Austrian National

Library, Picture Archives and Graphic Department, Inv. No. III 19.282 – III 19.337.

13 Gert Rosenberg published two articles and a well-illustrated monograph on Wilhelm Burger. See Gert Rosenberg, 'Wilhelm Burger: Ein Wiener Fotograf auf Welt- und Forschungsreisen und Pionier des Trockenverfahrens', *Fotogeschichte: Beiträge zur Geschichte und Ästhetik der Fotografie*, vol. 2, no. 3, 1982, 3–22; Gert Rosenberg, 'Expeditionsphotographie: Reise in eine ferne Vergangenheit', *Parnass: Die österreichische Kunst- und Kulturzeitschrift*, vol. 3, no. 6, November–December



Figure 5
Ueno Hikoma (attributed), *Paar aus Korea*
(Korean Pair), wet collodion glass negative,
c. 1867, 18.0 x 13.2 cm. Burger Collection,
Austrian National Library, Picture Archives and
Graphic Department WB 638 C.

Michael Moser before returning to Austria in the early spring of the following year. This was his duty. The young Moser on the other hand seems to have fallen in love with Japan. Enterprising and independent, he started his own business in Japan, worked for some time as a staff photographer for the fortnightly journal *The Far East*, and remained in the country for about a decade.²¹

Investigating Burger's Technique

The most important aspect of this research project concerns Burger's technique, since this is the real clue to distinguishing his work from that of other photographers. We have already mentioned that all the plates in his collection, whether ascribed to Burger, Ueno, or Shimooka, were processed with the wet collodion technique. Apart from the rarely used – and already largely obsolete – daguerreotype process, this was the only technique practised in Japan at the end of the Edo period (1600-1867).

However, Burger arrived in Japan with another innovative process in his kit. He brought the so-called dry collodion or tannin method, allowing him to prepare plates well before use and store the negatives after exposure for later development. This was a very handy procedure when working abroad, far from one's habitual studio at home. Burger was certainly one of the first foreigners to have brought this process to Japan.

The wet collodion technique consumed much time in the preparation of the plate, the application of chemicals, the exposure of the sensitised plate, and immediate processing in the

indispensable darkroom. The photographer and his apprentice had to deal with several stages and the use of sensitive materials in the demanding process. Technical knowledge was often much more characteristic of a photographer's individual qualities than his 'eye'. He was more a chemist, a workman, than an artist. His signature is more often inscribed on the negatives, as a mark of ownership, than on the prints sold to customers. The photographer's particular qualities, or chemical fingerprint, are evident in the use of specific components, whether sulphuric acid iron solution or gallic acid solution, and the technical processes which produced the negative and positive print. Due to the cost and difficulty of obtaining replacement supplies, the fear of failure was tremendous.

1983, 32-43; and Rosenberg, Wilhelm Burger: *Ein Welt- und Forschungsreisender mit der Kamera 1844-1920*, Vienna and Munich: Brandstätter 1984.

14 Negative Inv. No.: WB 653 D resp. WB 570 (albumen print III 19.297); see Rosenberg 1984 (reference 11), 131.

15 Inv.No.: WB 600 B; see Rosenberg 1984 (reference 11), 29.

16 For a detailed study of this expedition, see Peter Pantzer, *Japan und Österreich-Ungarn: Die diplomatischen, wirtschaftlichen und kulturellen Beziehungen von ihrer*

Aufnahme bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg, Vienna 1973 [Beiträge zur Japanologie, Vol. 11], translated into Japanese as *Nihon Osutoria kankei shi* [History of Japanese-Austrian Relations], Tokyo: Sozisha 1984.

17 Luke Gartlan, 'Photography and the Imperial Austrian Expedition in Nagasaki (1869-70).', *Koshashin kenkyu* [Studies in Old Photographs] (Nagasaki University Library), no. 3, May 2009, 72-77.

18 Pantzer 1984 (reference 16), 27-33.



Figure 6
Ueno Hikoma (print by Wilhelm Burger). *Corea.*
Tracht der Eingeborenen (Korea. Men in Native
Dress), c. 1867, albumen print, 16.1 x 12.3 cm.
Burger Collection, Austrian National Library,
Picture Archives and Graphic Department
Vues III 19337.

glass negative. This photograph depicts two Korean men, and is described in an album in the Austrian National Library as *Corea. Tracht der Eingeborenen* (Korea, Men in Native Dress) (III 19.337). This description is completely accurate, but does not tell the full story. Rather, Ueno Hikoma should be credited with this photograph of two Korean prisoners in Nagasaki. Burger must have liked the picture of this exotic pair from a country still closed to foreign trade. However, Burger did not want to 'sell' this double portrait as a depiction of prisoners. If one examines Ueno's negative carefully, these subtle changes become apparent. Burger had adapted the plate to his needs and concealed the chain between the legs of these two men. With a little careful retouching, Ueno's negative could be turned into a Burger (fig. 5, 6).

We also have to consider the photographers' equipment. In the 1860s, enlarging a photograph was a complicated and awkward procedure. In order to print a photograph, the glass plate negative was usually applied directly to the paper with the use of specific tools. For larger prints, it was therefore necessary to prepare larger glass plates. The camera also had to concur with the respective size of the glass negative. Of course, the lens used was limited by the size of the camera. Based on the negatives in the Austrian National Library, the plates Burger used in Japan had an average size 150 x 200 mm, with a maximum of 278 x 356 mm.

Among the research team, Tanaka Satomi of Nihon University is especially interested in these issues. For Tanaka, the surface of a negative bears the photographer's signature. The 'corrections' apparent on the surface of a glass negative are part of a photographer's technical repertoire necessary to produce a suitable print. This became clear in the examination of the *carte de visite*-size glass plates. Most plates of this size are of Japanese origin and did not derive from Burger's equipment. The structure and colouring of these negatives are quite different, although Burger at times adapted the negatives in accordance with his needs. We cannot go into further details here, but intend to publish a thorough account of these features in a later report. For a conclusive answer, it will also be necessary to examine extant negatives by Burger's apprentice Michael Moser since he may well have also handled the glass negatives in the collection of the Austrian National Library.

In this interim report, we will present the example that Rosenberg used as the cover of his monograph to illustrate our claims. Although a document of historical importance, Burger's claim to authorship is disputed by the technical aspects of the

19 See Rosenberg 1984 [reference 11], 25.

20 Today, the *Austrian Museum for Applied Art* (*Österreichisches Museum für Angewandte Kunst*); this museum still possesses a large portfolio of Burger's albumen prints of these arts and crafts. For two illustrated examples, see Rosenberg 1984 [reference 11], 27.

21 Michael Moser returned to Austria for good in 1880. He had previously returned briefly to Austria in 1873/74 as a member of the Japanese commission to the Vienna World Exposition. See Johann Linortner, 'Michael Moser: Ein Altausseer als Fotograf in Japan', *Da schau her: Beiträge aus dem Kulturleben des Bezirkes Liezen*, Liezen, vol. 8, no. 4, October 1987, 13-17.

So far, we can draw the following conclusions. Burger prepared his negatives well in advance and worked primarily with large-sized plates especially suitable for landscape work. As far as carte de visite-size plates are concerned, he acquired most of them in Japan from local photographers; this was not least due to the fact that it must have been time consuming and linguistically troublesome to gather all the depicted persons, scholars, samurai, children, and ladies high and low, as shown in the images and as evident in the work of Ueno and Shimooka. This also excludes the possibility that Burger might have rented the studios from his Japanese colleagues.

Burger and Gower: A Photographic Encounter?

Without question, Burger's collection of negatives includes images which he could not have made himself. As an example, we will consider the photograph entitled *Nagasaki Bay and the English Consulate* (WB 677 D, Vues III 19314) (fig. 7). Although Burger had visited Nagasaki, this panoramic view of the harbour dates from the early 1860s. Similarly, Burger could not have taken the photograph of an execution site at Yoshida Bridge in Yokohama. Not only does he falsely identify the scene as *Execution site in Edo*, but the decapitated head on display is that of Mamiya Hajime, who assassinated two English officers in 1864 (fig. 9). We would propose that both of these glass negatives should be attributed to the photographer Abel Gower.²² A close examination of the glass negative of the execution site proves that the plate is original and not copied but that parts of the surface have been altered. Burger deliberately removed the clouds by retouching the negative. Since the wet collodion process was still in general use, Burger would have found it troublesome to bring a huge camera for this purpose. The size of the negative is 141 x 206 mm.

Gower's view of Nagasaki Bay from Ōura looks toward Mount Kompira in the background with the English consulate located in the temple of Myōko-ji in the foreground. Boats float in the harbour which had opened only a few years earlier to trade with the Western treaty powers. The Yokohama Archives of History possess a photographic print from the same negative, which bears Gower's signature on the back. This image is not perfect due to evident signs of pollution and exfoliation in the bottom left. These problems also apply to another print of this photograph in the Polsbroek collection in the Netherlands (Maritime Museum, Amsterdam). Gower's signature is again on the back of the photograph and the evident damage to the photograph resembles the copy print in Vienna. From this, we can deduce that both prints were contact printed directly from the original glass negative in the Burger collection. The Austrian National Library therefore possesses the only known original glass negative by Gower taken in the early 1860s in Nagasaki. During his post with the English Legation in Edo, Gower travelled overland from Nagasaki to Edo in June and July 1861 with the British envoy

²² There is an albumen print in an album entitled *Edo to Nagasaki no fukei* (Views from Edo and Nagasaki), dated 1865, in the possession of Christian Polak (Tokyo). Although long attributed to Felice Beato, Gower is a much more credible source for this photograph.

Figure 7
Abel Gower (attributed) (print by Wilhelm Burger), Japan. *Ansicht von Nagasaki*. [Nagasaki. View from Ōura to Deshima and Mount Konpira], c. 1861, printed 1870, albumen print, 14.1 x 20.6 cm. Burger Collection, Austrian National Picture Archives and Graphic Department Vues III 19314.



Rutherford Alcock (1809-1897) and the *Illustrated London News* artist Charles Wirgman (1832-1891).²³ He took this view of Nagasaki harbour on this visit. Although an amateur, Gower was an accomplished exponent of wet-plate photography. Alcock mentioned in his correspondence that Gower had taken many fabulous photographs during their visit to Nagasaki and Osaka.²⁴

Gower's mastery of photographic technique is also corroborated by Sugiura Baitan (1826-1900), the last Japanese Governor of Hakodate, in his chronicle *Hakodate bugyō nikki* (Diary of a Governor of Hakodate). According to this source, Gower presented photographs to the Japanese governor, or bugyō, on his arrival in Hakodate as British consul to the port.²⁵ Although Gower was based in Hakodate between 1867 and 1872, he travelled widely in his diplomatic capacity and must have met members of the Austrian expedition during the autumn of 1869. British officials were very supportive of the Austrian mission. The British Minister to Japan, Sir Harry Parkes (1828-1885) actively encouraged the treaty negotiations between the

23 For an account of their journey, see Rutherford Alcock, *The Capital of the Tycoon: A Narrative of a Three Years' Residence in Japan*, London: Longman & Co. 1863, vol. 2, 64-150. Sir Rutherford Alcock was the first British Minister to Japan from 1859-1865, and thereafter Minister to China. Charles Wirgman, a journalist active in East Asia from 1857, settled in Yokohama in 1861. A gifted artist, he was particularly famous for his humorous depictions of Japanese life and edited his own satirical magazine *The Japan Punch* between 1862 and 1887.

24 PRO.32/22/50, The National Archives, Kew, London.

25 Sugiura Baitan, *Sugiura Baitan Hakodate bugyō nikki: Keio ninen Keio yonen*, vol. 2, Tokyo: Sugiura Baitan Nikki Kankokai and Hatsubaimoto Mizumi Shobo 1991. This diary covers the period Keio 2-4 (1866-1868). Bugyō is the Japanese title for a governor. They were directly invested by the government in Edo and were based in the newly opened ports of Nagasaki, Hyogo, Yokohama and Hakodate. Their tasks included all kinds of foreign affair matters.



Figure 8
Abel Gower (attributed), *Japan??* [Yokohama.
Execution site at Yoshida Bridge], 1865, wet
collodion glass negative, 16.4 x 21.5 cm. Burger
Collection, Austrian National Library, Picture
Archives and Graphic Department WB 570 D.

Austrian and Japanese officials.²⁶ Given the significance of these events, Gower was certainly also involved and may well have met Burger. Their mutual enthusiasm for photography would have been a natural topic of conversation.

There are three early albums in the photographic collection of Dirk de Graeff van Polsbroek (1833-1916). He was in consular service in Japan from 1858, and served as Dutch Minister to Japan from 1863 to 1870. Of these albums, one contains Gower's photograph *Nagasaki Bay and the English Consulate*. This album provides further corroboration for dating this photograph with the early 1860s. There is also a photographic portrait, in all likelihood of Gower, by the Swiss photographer Pierre Rossier. In 2009, Tani Akiyoshi was able to examine the surface of both prints by Gower and Rossier in the Polsbroek collection. With the use of a substance microscope, he could discern the lack of a binder layer and the use of a paper fibre common to both prints. Gower's and Rossier's use of salt paper and single layer structure established their application of the very same technique.

This investigation has established that both photographers made use of single-layer paper. In comparison, another print of the same view in the Burger portfolio in the British Library made use of two-layer paper. Both prints originate from the same negative, but were produced under different circumstances. Whereas Gower utilized the single-layer technique of the early 1860s, Burger made use of a technique that was widespread later in the decade during his visit to Japan.

The Question of Authorship

A photographer's technology and individuality is best reflected in the original negative plate he prepared and used. His art is the language of his time. Photographic materials such as glass negatives, preserved today in archives and libraries, provide important evidence for

²⁶ Sir Harry Parkes began his diplomatic career in China and was British Minister to Japan from 1865 to 1883. He died in Peking [Beijing] while still serving as British Envoy to China.

Figure 9
 Abel Gower (attributed) (print by Wilhelm
 Burger), *Japan??* [Yokohama. Execution site at
 Yoshida Bridge], 1865, albumen print,
 14 x 19,3 cm, printed 1870. Burger Collection,
 Austrian National Library, Picture Archives and
 Graphic Department Vues III 19297.
 Burger's albumen print is incorrectly captioned
 Japan. *Hinrichtungsplatz in Jedo* [Japan. Execution
 site in Edo].



the reconstruction of his historical activities. Such research, however, is often replete with misleading directions and dead ends.

The research team from the Historiographical Institute of Tokyo University is not the first to have investigated the Burger collection, and not the first to wonder about the fact that quite a few photographs do not bear Burger's stamp of authorship. On first thought, Burger might have rented the studio of a local photographer to overcome technical problems and to make use of existing furnishings for the sittings. However, this would have demanded considerable preparation in order to assemble the many sitters for each session. This possibility has thus to be excluded. By looking at the carpets, chairs and other props in a photograph, we certainly enter the working space of either Ueno Hikoma in Nagasaki or Shimooka Renjō in Yokohama. Such reflections, however, cannot help to solve the problem of authorship.

Having examined Burger's negatives, another approach suggests itself. The photographic materials, as well as the technological knowledge of their composition, provide vital evidence for the photographic researcher. Just one examination is sufficient to realise the difference between plates in the collection and there is an obvious explanation for these differences. Burger used – most probably for the first time in Japan – the dry collodion technique while, as a result of their less modern training, Japanese photographers still made use of the wet collodion technique. Our research has made significant progress as a result of this discovery. Although the means by which Burger obtained Ueno's and Shimooka's negatives remains uncertain, his purchase of the photographs and copyright appears the most likely explanation. This was not unusual. In 1877, Felice Beato sold his complete stock and studio premises

to the Austrian Baron Raimund von Stillfried.²⁷ Whereas Beato's photographs had been previously been sold as his own work, Stillfried claimed credit for them from the very next day.

In comparison, Burger's business relationship with Ueno and Shimooka appears to have been much less problematic. Despite their technical limitations, Ueno and Shimooka still assisted the foreign photographer in acquiring otherwise difficult to obtain objects and scenes and in saving time. So far in our research, we have not found a single photograph attributed to Ueno or Shimooka in a Japanese collection that is identical with one of the negatives in Burger's collection. Both photographers were specialists in studio-based individual or group portraiture. Some pictures are very similar; nevertheless, with small differences. Ueno and Shimooka therefore must have taken one negative for themselves and a separate one for their Austrian customer. Though executed by a Japanese photographer, Burger's negatives can therefore be considered not only original, but also an 'original' in so far as these slight differences resulted in distinct, but closely related, variant prints sold in Austria and Japan. Burger's holdings include two portraits of a Buddhist priest (WB 573-574 B). Although Nagasaki University attributes this image to Beato, we believe this work should be attributed to Gower. In short, the trafficking of negatives between photographers, both amateur and professional, appears to have been more widespread than believed.

As we have seen, the paths and crossings of historic photographs are manifold. The historian must not forget that photography is not just an art, but developed as a reprographic technology. However significant the aesthetic value of photographs, it is no less important to pay attention to the material aspect of archives. Burger's collection of glass negatives is a wonderful example of the benefits of this approach.

27 Felice Beato (1832-1909) was a pioneering photographer in Japan and operated his studio in Yokohama from 1863 to 1877. Raimund von Stillfried (1839-1911) lived and worked in Japan as a commercial photographer from 1871 to 1881. See Luke Gartlan, 'A Chronology of Baron Raimund von Stillfried-Rathenicz (1839-1911)'

in: John Clark, *Japanese Exchanges in Art, 1850s to 1930s, with Britain, Continental Europe, and the USA*, Sydney: Power Publications 2001, 121-188; and Luke Gartlan, *With Argus Eyes: The Early Life and Work of Baron Raimund von Stillfried-Rathenicz (1839-1911)*, Phil.Diss., University of Melbourne 2004.

Reading Japan through the Photograph Albums of Abdulhamid II

Banu Kaygusuz This article examines five photograph albums of Japan in the collection of Abdulhamid II, and the photographic reading of Japan.¹ The aim is to investigate both the means and the motivations for the acquisition of these albums by the Ottoman court. The physical characteristics of these albums, and the organization of their content, provide significant information on the cultural exchanges between nineteenth-century Japan and the Ottoman Empire. These albums include a diverse range of subjects relevant to this history, including photographs associated with the *Ertuğrul* incident, in which an Ottoman naval frigate sank off the Japanese coast in 1890. Other subjects of Japan in these albums include scenic views, historical monuments and shrines, staged depictions of daily life, and portraits of women. This article emphasizes the reciprocal interchanges between the expectations of audiences, the preferences of photographers, and entrepreneurial and governmental patrons.

The five albums of Japan in the *Yıldız* photography collection of Abdulhamid II highlight the cultural associations between these two empires in the nineteenth century. In order to compose a narrative of the acquisition of these photograph albums into the collection of Abdulhamid II, a comprehensive study is required of Japanese-Ottoman relations in the nineteenth century. Although beyond the scope of this article, the research conducted in the Ottoman Archives on the history of Japanese-Ottoman interactions contributed to the formation of various arguments on the provenance of these photographs. The archival documents revealed a detailed chronology of Japanese-Ottoman relations evident in a profuse exchange of orders, medals and decorations,² during the courtesy visits of political and military figures, and the royal family members of Japan to the Ottoman capital Dersa'âdet. Imperial orders, medals and decorations were central aspects of the reciprocal gift-giving systems of the Hamidian period,³ into which photography was incorporated. It played a key role in the symbolic power of the court and the legitimation of its policies. Following the visit of Prince Komatsu Akihito to Istanbul in October 1887, a striking example of imperial gift exchange was the presentation of Japan's highest order, the Supreme Order of the Chrysanthemum, to

1 I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to Professor Selçuk Esenbel, who encouraged and supported me in my studies of the history of Japan, and specifically of the photography collection of Abdulhamid II relating to Japan.

2 For a comprehensive history of the orders, medals and decorations bestowed by the Ottoman Empire, see Edhem Eldem, *Pride and Privilege: A History of Ottoman Orders, Medals and Decorations*, Istanbul: Ottoman Bank Archives and Research Centre 2004. For the Hamidian period, see especially, 252-359.

3 For an analysis of the imperial gifts of the Hamidian regime, see Nadir Özbek, 'Imperial Gifts and Sultanic Legitimation During the Reign of Sultan Abdulhamid II, 1876-1909' in: Mine Ener, Amy Singer and Michael Bonner (eds.), *Poverty and Charity in Middle Eastern Contexts*, New York: State University of New York Press 2003, 203-220.

4 BOA (the Ottoman Archives of the Prime Ministry, Turkey), Y.A.HUS 216/57, 16 Zilhicce 1305 / 24 August 1888. Earlier in the same year, on January 4, 1888, Abdulhamid II had received the Collar of the Order. Emperor Meiji had established the Grand Cordon of the Order in 1876. James W. Peterson, Barry C. Weaver and Michael A. Quigley, *Orders and Medals of Japan and Associated States*, San Ramon, California: Orders and Medals Society of America 2000; Sato Masanori, *Kunsho to Hosho*, Tokyo: Jijigahosha 2007.

5 BOA, İ.DH 1146/89354, 12 Zilkade 1306 / 10 July 1889. The High Order of Di-

stinction presented to Emperor Meiji by Sultan Abdulhamid II was also mentioned in the correspondence of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan in 1890. *Kanpo tsusho hokoku ran sairoku*, Gaimusho Kirokukyoku, Tokyo: Fuji Shuppan 1988, vol. 13, 1890.

6 According to documents in the Ottoman archives, Prince Komatsu presented a rifle to Abdulhamid II in 1887 and two vases in 1894. However, the documents also record a group of miscellaneous gifts that could not be identified. BOA, Y.PRK.HR 10/46, 14 Muharrem 1305 / 2 October 1887; BOA, Y.A.HUS 291/3, 16 Saban 1311 / 22 February 1894; BOA, I.HUS 21/1311/S-062, 18 Saban 1311 / 24 February 1894; BOA, Y.PRK.TSF 3/92, 27 Saban 1311 / 5 March 1894.

7 BOA, Y.PRK.TSF 2/52, 14 June 1890.

8 BOA, Y.A.HUS 239/16, 5 Safer 1308 / 20 September 1890; BOA, Y.A.HUS 239/21, 6 Safer 1308 / 21 September 1890. For a detailed account of the incident, see 1890 *Ertugrul Faciası: Bir Dostlugun Dogusu*, Ankara: Turhan Kitabevi 1992.

9 Kaigunsho Suirōbu, *Gunkan Hiei torukokoku kokai hokoku*, Tokyo: Suirōbu 1892, 2; and Kaigunsho Suirōbu, *Gunkan Kongo torukokoku kokai hokoku*, Tokyo: Suirōbu 1891, 1.

10 For the banquet, see BOA, Y.PRK.MYD 10/9, 26 Cemaziyülevvel 1308 / 7 January 1891. For the draft of Captain Tanaka Tsunatsune, see BOA, Y.PRK.TSF 3/6, 21

Abdulhamid II in August 1888.⁴ An imperial decree of July 10, 1889, declared that Sultan Abdulhamid II had dispatched the *Ertuğrul* frigate to Japan on a commission to present Emperor Meiji with the High Order of Distinction.⁵ This diplomatic practice of the reciprocal granting of orders is to be understood within the framework of their respective efforts to seek out new allies in the international arena for the sake of their mutual economic and political interests.

Like imperial orders and decorations, photographs were attributed the symbolic value of imperial gifts. The five photograph albums of the *Yıldız* collection have been traced in the diplomatic archives to the respective imperial visits to Dersa'âdet and Tokyo. During Prince Komatsu Akihito's first visit to Dersa'âdet in October 1887, and again on his second visit to the Ottoman capital in March 1894, he appears to have presented no photographs or photograph albums to Sultan Abdulhamid II.⁶ On his official audience with Emperor Meiji in Tokyo in 1890, Rear Admiral Ali Osman Pasha, captain of the imperial frigate *Ertuğrul*, appears not to have received any photographs as imperial gifts.⁷ On September 18, 1890, the *Ertuğrul* sank in a typhoon off the coast of present-day Wakayama prefecture near Kushimoto on its return journey to the Ottoman Empire.⁸ Three weeks later on October 5, 1890, the survivors of this disaster set off for Istanbul from Tokyo aboard the Japanese cruisers *Hiei* and *Kongō*, accompanied by a group of Japanese officials.⁹ One of these officials was the commander of the *Hiei*, Captain Tanaka Tsunatsune. Captain Tanaka not only gave the official speech on behalf of the Japanese delegation at the banquet held in honour of the crews of the *Hiei* and *Kongō* in Gümüşsuyu Imperial Military Garrison in Istanbul on January 7, 1891,¹⁰ but also forged a personal connection to Yıldız Palace. In a letter of 1893, Tanaka gratefully acknowledged the sultan's bestowal of the second class Osmânî order granted to him in January 1891,¹¹ and, with the aid of Yamada Torajirō (1866-1957),¹² sent gifts to the Palace as a sign of his gratitude. Yamada first visited Istanbul in 1892 and returned for his second visit the following year.¹³ This correspondence continued for the next two years and, in August 1895, Rear Admiral Tanaka was bestowed the first class Mecîdî order.¹⁴ It is noteworthy that there was no record of photographs among the gifts of Tanaka Tsunatsune presented to Abdulmacid II. Although the provenance of the Japanese albums in the *Yıldız* photography collection of Abdulhamid II ultimately proved elusive, it nonetheless suggested the diplomatic channels by which these photographs may have come to the Ottoman Empire. The archival search provide fertile in placing these photograph albums in a wider perspective of the visual exchanges between the Ottoman Empire and Meiji-period Japan.

There are several other possible avenues for the sultan's acquisition of the Japanese photograph albums. In August 1896, a chest full of artwork arrived in the Ottoman Empire from Japan.¹⁵ Given that a considerable sum was paid to the *Crédit Lyonnais* for customs duty,¹⁶

Cemaziyülevvel 1308 / 2 January 1891.

11 BOA, I.DH 1208/94561, 21 Cemaziyülevvel 1308 / 11 January 1891.

12 For Tanaka's personal letter, see BOA, Y.MTV 87/19, 4 Cemaziyülevvel 1311 / 13 November 1893.

13 For further information on Yamada Torajiro, see Selçuk Esenbel, 'Seikimatsu Isutanburu no Nihonjin: Yamada Torajiro no Shogai to *Toruko Gakan*' in: Ikei Masaru and Sakamoto Tsutomu (eds.), *Kindai Nihon to Toruko seiki*, Tokyo: Keiso Shobo

1999, 71-100; Selçuk Esenbel, 'A fin de siècle Japanese Romantic in Istanbul: The Life of Yamada Torajiro and his *Toruko Gakan*', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol. 59, part 2, 1996, 237-252; Matsutani Hironao, 'Yamada Torajiro: Nihon - Toruko Yuku Shinzen' in: *Isutanbu wo aishita hitobito*, Tokyo: Chuko Shins-ho 1998, 65-88; Nagaba Hiroshi, 'Meiji ga unda nekketsukan: Yamada Torajiro' in *Kindai toruko kenbunroku*, Tokyo: Keio Gijuku Daigaku Shuppankai 2000, 67-89; and *Joshufu*, Special Issue 1, *Torajiro Hashiru: Nihon to Toruko wo Musunda*



Figure 1
Ogawa Kazuma, *The Orchestra or Playing at Musical Instruments*, 1892, hand coloured albumen print, 27 x 21 cm, Istanbul University Library.

Grande Rue, near Yıldız Palace.¹⁸ Two months later, Sultan Abdulhamid II selected items for acquisition from the Nakamura store, and payment was made by the Sultan's Private Treasury in June 1897.¹⁹ Among the various Japanese items purchased from the store by Abdulhamid II, no photographs or photograph albums were registered. Likewise, the *Annual Return of Foreign Trade of the Empire of Japan* reported that the domestic products exported to Turkey between 1885 and 1895 included toys and ceramics, possibly destined for the Nakamura souvenir shop in Istanbul.²⁰ Unfortunately, photography was not listed among the export items, suggesting that Abdulhamid II did not purchase the five photograph albums of Japan preserved in the Yıldız collection.

However, this analysis has not as yet taken account of Yamada Torajirō's keen interest in the collecting of photographs. Three months after his first departure from Yokohama for Istanbul, Yamada reached Port Said on March 18, 1890.²¹ During his brief stay in Cairo, Yamada became acquainted with Abdul-Kadir Pasha, who presented him with an album of

these works of art were shipped as commercial commodities rather than diplomatic gifts. It is very likely that the entrepreneurial Yamada Torajirō, then resident in Istanbul, brought these Japanese objects to the Ottoman capital for sale in his newly established business. Yamada Torajirō visited Japan for a few months in 1896, but soon returned to Istanbul and, together with Nakamura Eiichi, opened a souvenir shop located at *Grande Rue de Péra*.¹⁷ Did the imported Japanese artworks exhibited for sale in the Nakamura store of Yamada and Nakamura contain any photographs or photograph albums? In May 1897, Yamada Torajirō submitted a detailed inventory of the goods offered by the souvenir store, located in the Beyoğlu district of Istanbul at no. 81 on the

Kaidanji, vol. 14, 2003, 40.

14 BOA, Y.MTV 111/ 52, 27 Cemaziyülahir 1312 / 25 December 1894; BOA, I.TAL 83/1313/S-52, 16 Safer 1313 / 7 August 1895.

15 BOA, Y.PRK.ZB 18/25, 12 Rebiyülevvel 1314 / 21 August 1896.

16 BOA, Y.PRK.MYD 17/14, 29 Zilhicce 1313 / 11 June 1896. The Crédit Lyonnais, which opened a branch in Istanbul in 1877, received two hundred liras. On the Crédit Lyonnais, see Jacques Thobie, 'European Banks in the Middle East' in: Rondo

E. Cameron and Valeri Ivanovich Bovykin (eds.), *International Banking, 1870-1914*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press 1991, 406-442.

17 Esenbel, 1996 (reference 13) 237-252; and *Joshufu, Torajiro Hashiru*, 40.

18 BOA, Y.PRK.SGE 7/54, 27 Zilhicce 1314 / 29 May 1897.

19 BOA, Y.MTV 161/199, 29 Muharrem 1315 / 29 June 1897.

20 *Dai Nippon gaikoku boeki nenpyo*, Tokyo: Okurasho 1885-1895.

21 Sanshotei Shujin, *Shingetsu Yamada Torajiro*, Osaka: Iwasaki Teruhiko 1952, 9.



Figure 2
Kusakabe Kinbei, *Tamadare Tea House at Yumoto*,
c. 1890, hand coloured albumen print, 27 x 21 cm,
Istanbul University Library.

Cairo photographs.²² These were probably works by Antonio Beato or Kevork Abdullah. On his return to Istanbul in 1899, Yamada brought back various gifts from Meiji aristocrats and members of the imperial family who had had an audience with Abdulhamid II in Istanbul.²³ General Count Terauchi Masatake (1852-1919) sent a gift of interest to this paper.²⁴ It was a photograph album of the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, which had been prepared by the photographer Ogawa Kazuma and his former trainees in the Land Survey Department under the commission of the Japanese Army General Staff Office.²⁵ These volumes of photographs, entitled *The Japan-China War*, are not among the five Japanese albums of Abdulhamid II in the *Yıldız* collection.²⁶ Nor were they the only photographs brought to the Ottoman Empire by Yamada Torajirō.

Documents in the Ottoman Archives support the thesis that Yamada Torajirō presented at least some of the photographs of Japan to Abdulhamid II. On April 6, 1892, Yamada presented the sultan with an image of a battle which took place “three hundred years ago” in Japan. He also offered armor and a sword, purportedly used in this battle, as well as donations gathered in Japan for the survivors of the *Ertuğrul*.²⁷ A list of Yamada’s antique objects and photographs was submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on April 7, 1892,²⁸ and these gifts were presented to the Ministry of Military Schools on May 4, 1892.²⁹ The striking point about these documents, and about documents concerning photography in general, are the references to photographers as painters and to photographs as images. Yamada probably presented a landscape photograph of a site in Gifu prefecture in central Japan, believed to be the location of the Battle of Sekigahara of 1600.³⁰ Such views are included in the photograph collection of Abdulhamid II. According to a document dated May 4, 1892, Yamada also presented other photographs to the sultan by means of Abdulhalim Noda *Efendi*.³¹ Noda Shōtarō (1868-1904),

22 Yamada Torajiro, *Toruko gakan*, Tokyo: Hakubunkan 1911, 6; Sanshotei Shujin, *Shingetsu Yamada Torajiro*, Osaka: Iwasaki Teruhiko 1952, 11.

23 Yamada 1911 [reference 22] 11, cited by Selçuk Esenbel, ‘*A fin de siècle*,’ 243.

24 Yamada, 1911 [reference 22] 10-11.

25 Japan Center for Asian Historical Records, *Résumé, Ogawa Kazuma, from birth to his life as a photographer*, The Army Ministry of Japan circa 1905, 18-20.

26 Inoue Jukichi, *The Japan-China War: Compiled from Official and other Sources*,

with plates by K.Ogawa, Yokohama: Kelly & Walsh 1895, 3 volumes.

27 BOA, Y.PRK.ASK 80/107, 8 Ramazan 1309 / 6 April 1892.

28 BOA, Y.MTV 61/19, 9 Ramazan 1309 / 7 April 1892.

29 BOA, Y.MTV 62/19, 7 Seval 1309 / 4 May 1892.

30 On the Battle of Sekigahara and its consequences, see John Whitney Hall, ‘The bakuhan system’ in: John W. Hall (ed.), *The Cambridge history of Japan*, Vol. 5, *Early Modern Japan*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press 1991,



Figure 3
Abdullah Frères, album cover of
Les Corvettes Japonaise Hiyei et Kongo, 1891,
44 x 33 cm, Istanbul University Library.

a journalist who arrived in Istanbul aboard either the *Hiei* or *Kongō*, published a series of articles on the *Ertuğrul* incident and the Ottoman Empire in the daily newspaper *Jiji Shinpō* between 1890 and 1893.³² At the time of Yamada's arrival in Istanbul, Noda was learning Turkish at the Imperial Military School.³³

Abdulhamid II certainly welcomed the photographic gifts from Japan. In June 1892, Yamada was awarded a fourth class *Mecîdî* order after the submission of his gifts to the palace.³⁴ In another document dated January 11, 1910, various items, which originally entered the imperial collection via Yamada Torajirō, were listed either as gifts presented to the sultan or imported commodities acquired by the palace.³⁵ Among the purchased objects were fifty

photographs of the Mikado,³⁶ or Emperor Meiji, and ten photographs of Japanese shrines and temples.³⁷ Although the number of photographs listed in this document does not correspond with the available holdings today, Yamada Torajirō was a major contributor to the Hamidian collection of Japanese photographs.

Another concern of this study is to identify the photographers responsible for the Japanese albums in *Yıldız* Palace. Every photograph produced throughout



Figure 4
Album cover, 40 x 33 cm, c. 1890,
Istanbul University Library.

their careers reflected their personal and professional relations with the political and commercial centres of authority. In 1891, photographs of the visit to Istanbul of the Japanese cruisers *Hiei* and *Kongō* were compiled into an album entitled *Les Corvettes Japonaise Hiyei et Kongo, Photographes de S.M.I. Le Sultan*.³⁸ The album cover, official palace correspondence, and the invoice dated February 28, 1891, all confirm that the renowned photographers Abdullah Frères received this commission from Abdulhamid II (fig. 1).³⁹ Another document submitted

128-182; and Harold Bolitho, 'The han' in: John W. Hall (ed.), *The Cambridge history of Japan, Vol. 5, Early Modern Japan*, Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press 1991, 183-234.

31 BOA, Y.MTV 62/19, 7 Sevval 1309 / 4 May 1892.

32 Misawa Nobuo, 'Reports about the Ottoman Empire carried on Jiji Shinpo (1890-1893): Achievements of *Shotaro Noda*, the first Japanese journalist who was sent to the Islamic World,' *Bulletin of the Faculty of Sociology*, Toyo University, vol. 73, no.

41-2, February 25, 2004, 109-146.

33 BOA, Y.MTV 62/19, 7 Sevval 1309 / 4 May 1892.

34 BOA, S.DH 1277/100452, 23 Zilkade 1309 / 18 June 1892.

35 BOA, Y.PRK.BSK 81/115, 29 Zilhicce 1327 / 11 January 1910.

36 The term "Mikado" literally means the gate of the imperial palace, and indicates the Japanese emperor who resides and possesses the palace. For earlier usage of



Figure 5

Wooden album cover with lacquer coating,
40 x 33 cm, c. 1885-1890,
Istanbul University Library.



Figure 6

Wooden album cover with lacquer coating,
40 x 33 cm, c. 1885-1890,
Istanbul University Library.

to the Palace from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on December 13, 1893, concerns a memorial erected at the *Ertuğrul* cemetery in Wakayama prefecture. According to this report, “Monsieur” Shibata Kōichirō, a photographer of Wakayama prefecture, photographed three “pictures” of the “commemorative grave-stone” in Ōshima village.⁴⁰ The document has one photograph attached, which bears the colophon of Shibata’s studio. The two other photographs missing from this document were included in the album of Abdullah Frères, which commemorates the Japanese naval visit to Istanbul in response to the *Ertuğrul* incident.

With the aim of identifying more of the photographers, the Japanese-related photographs in the *Yıldız* collection were inventoried based on their captions.⁴¹ These photographs were then compared with other collections of Japanese photographs. In Keio University Library, a photograph entitled *The Orchestra* was found in the book *Illustrations of Japanese Life* by Ogawa Kazuma.⁴² The *Yıldız* collection includes a print of the same photograph captioned *Playing at Musical Instruments*, which depicts a group of Japanese women in kimono playing traditional Japanese instruments (fig. 2). Another photographer identified by virtue of a photograph captioned *Tamadare Tea House at Yumoto*, in the Nagasaki University Library collection, was Kusakabe Kinbei, who depicted a scene of the mountain resort of Hakone (fig.3).⁴³

The physical characteristics of Japanese albums can also suggest the source of the photographs as well as the political and commercial aspirations of their producers. The photographic album *Les Corvettes Japonaise Hiyei et Kongo* by Abdullah Frères contains twenty-five sepia photographs (fig. 1). On the velvet cover, the French-language caption identifies the title, photographic studio, and year, framed within an embroidered gold leaf composition of flowers. The imperial monogram on the cover affirms that the album was the result of the court patronage of Abdulhamid II. Although the photographs in the album are not captioned, some bear the brand name of Abdullah Frères.

the title “Mikado”, see Asakawa Kanichi, *The Early Institutional Life of Japan*, New York: Paragon 1963.

37 BOA, Y.PRK.BSK 81/115, 29 Zilhicce 1327 / 11 January 1910.

38 Abdullah Frères, *Les Corvettes Japonaise Hiyei et Kongo, Photographes de S.M.I. Le Sultan*, Constantinople 1891.

39 BOA, Y.MTV 48/76, 19 Recep 1308 / 28 February 1891; BOA, Y.MTV 53/72, 17

Muharrem 1309 / 23 August 1891.

40 BOA, Y.A.HUS 286/33, 4 Cemaziyülahir 1311 / 13 December 1893.

41 There is a partial list of the Japanese-related photographs in the Rare Book Department of Istanbul University Library, where the original photographs are preserved today.

42 Ogawa Kazuma, *Illustrations of Japanese Life*, Tokyo: K. Ogawa 1896.



Figure 7
Tamamura Kōzaburō, *Wood Carvings in Yomei-mon at Nikkō*, c. 1890, hand coloured albumen print, 25 x 20 cm, Istanbul University Library.

Another album from the Hamidian collection has neither title nor captions. With the Ottoman coat of arms on its front cover, and a moon and star imprint on the back cover, this album consists of eighty-one sepia photographs. Although the album contains photographs of Japan, the cover embellishment and the assorted formats of its content suggests that it was compiled on an ad hoc basis from photographs imported into the Ottoman Empire.

Figure 8
Kusakabe Kinbei, *Grand Hotel Yokohama*, c. 1890, hand coloured albumen print, 25 x 20 cm, Istanbul University Library.



Other albums are more representative of Yokohama souvenir photography. In one case, the black lacquer cover, inlaid with gold and ivory, is decorated with a rural scene of a Japanese lady holding her *wagasa* aboard a *jinrikisha* with Mount Fuji in the background (fig. 4). This album contains one hundred hand-coloured photographs with captions in English. Two further albums in the collection of Abdulhamid II have similar formats, consisting of fifty hand-coloured photographs captioned both in English and Ottoman Turkish. Both of these albums have wooden covers coated with lacquer. The former was decorated with a scene of Mount Fuji, which was regarded as sacred, and the latter with a pair of cranes, symbolizing long life in Japan (fig. 5, 6).

The subjects depicted in these five albums of the *Yıldız* collection not only emphasise the close relations between Japan and the Ottoman Empire after the *Ertuğrul* incident, but also reveal the efforts of photographers in Japan to present a vivid embodiment of Japanese life for Western tourists and expatri-



Figure 9

Ogawa Kazuma, *Geisha of Tokyo or Tōkyō hyaku bijin (One Hundred Beauties of Tokyo)*, 1892, collotype print, 27 x 21 cm, Istanbul University Library.

ates in Japan. The albums, apart from that produced by Abdullah Frères, consist of many different subjects. The Yıldız collection contains photographs of Nikkō by Tamamura Kōzaburō (fig. 7), which were also published in Frank Brinkley's ten-volume work *Japan, Described and Illustrated by the Japanese* in 1897. There are also photographs of Yokohama's foreign concession by Kusakabe Kinbei (fig. 8). In addition to the domestic market for ready-made portraits of famous Kabuki actors and geisha,⁴⁴ there was also a foreign demand for portraits of Japanese women, many examples of which survive in the photographic albums of Yıldız Palace. Among these portraits, one example can also be found in an illustrated book entitled *Types of Japan, Celebrated Geyscha of Tokyo*, photographed and published by Ogawa Kazuma (fig. 9).⁴⁵ Composed of collotypes, each of a famous Tokyo geisha in formal dress, this work was republished in 1895 and 1902 with distinct titles in English and Japanese. The English-language title, *Geisha of Tokyo*, promised the exotic image sought by Western tourists, while the Japanese title, *Tōkyō hyaku bijin* (One Hundred Beauties of Tokyo) was more geared to Japanese market interests.⁴⁶

In Japan the Nōbi earthquake of 1891 became a subject of interest in the implementation of dry-plate printing techniques as a means of documentation. In December 1891, Ogawa Kazuma accompanied the British seismologist John Milne (1850-1913) and engineer William K. Burton (1856-1899), both professors at the Imperial University of Tokyo, on a tour of the earthquake region, and photographed the devastated Nōbi plain in Gifu prefecture.⁴⁷ Five photographs in the Yıldız collection depict scenes of the affected earthquake area in central Japan (fig. 10). They were included in the illustrated book *The Great Earthquake of Japan, 1891*, published by Ogawa Kazuma in 1892.⁴⁸ Interestingly, documents in the Ottoman Archives reveal that Abdulhamid II, and consequently the Ottoman State, took an active interest in the Nōbi earthquake of November 6, 1891.⁴⁹ They inquired of the Japanese government of the extent of the earthquake damage and, in general, remained engaged in close diplomatic ties with the distant country, especially in the wake of the *Ertuğrul* incident.

To return to the album of Abdullah Frères, these twenty-five photographs document the interior and exterior of the two Japanese cruisers *Hiei* and *Kongō* during the Japanese crews' visit to the Ottoman Empire in 1891 (fig. 11-12). This album also includes photographs

43 Nagasaki University Library Digital Collection, 'Japanese Old Photographs in Bakumatsu-Meiji Period,' <<http://oldphoto.lb.nagasaki-u.ac.jp/>> [2008].

44 Kinoshita Naoyuki, 'The Early Years of Japanese Photography' in: Anne Wilkes Tucker, Dana Friis-Hansen, Kaneko Ryuichi, Takeba Joe (eds.), *The History of Japanese Photography*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press 2003, 16.

45 Ogawa Kazuma, *Types of Japan, Celebrated Geyscha of Tokyo in Collotype and From Photographic Negatives Taken by Him*, Tokyo: K. Ogawa 1892.

46 Anne Wilkes Tucker, 'Introduction' in: Anne Wilkes Tucker, Dana Friis-Hansen, Kaneko Ryuichi, Takeba Joe (eds.), *The History of Japanese Photography*, New Haven; London: Yale University Press 2003, 8.

Figure 10

Ogawa Kazuma, *The Nōbi Earthquake of 1891, Kasamatsu Village in Gifu Prefecture*, hand coloured albumen print, 1891, 25 x 20 cm, Istanbul University Library.



Figure 11

Abdullah Frères, *The visit of the Japanese cruisers Hiei and Kongō*, January 1891, albumen print, 26 x 20 cm, Istanbul University Library.



of the dining hall of the Gümüşsuyu Imperial Military Garrison in Istanbul on the night of the banquet held in honour of the naval visitors on January 7, 1891 (fig. 13). The Hamidian collection also contains thirty photographs of a commemorative event, held near Kushimoto in Wakayama prefecture, for the loss of the *Ertuğrul*. All of these photographs bear the seal of the Kobe-based photographer Nakamura Jōji. The provenance of this album once again high-



lights the significance of photography in diplomatic exchange between Japan and the Ottoman Empire. In November 1899, according to his book *Toruko gakan*, Yamada Torajirō received this photograph album of the gravestone commemoration from Okura Hisashi (1852-1906), then governor of Wakayama prefecture. On December 3, Yamada presented these photographs among many other gifts to İbrahim Pasha, Minister for General Protocol at Yıldız Palace, for submission to Sultan Abdulhamid II.⁵⁰ The photographs were dispatched and presented to the Ottoman court by social intermediaries, as well as through official channels.

This study has analyzed the self-representations of “modern” Japan through the photograph albums presented to the Ottoman court. Through the juxtaposition of the photographs of

47 Japan Center for Asian Historical Records, *Résumé, Ogawa Kazuma, from birth to his life as a photographer*, The Army Ministry of Japan, circa 1905, 14.

48 John Milne and William K. Burton, *The Great Earthquake of Japan, 1891*, with 29 plates by K. Ogawa, 1st ed., 1892.

49 BOA, I.DH 1252/98196, 7 Rebiyülahir 1309 / 9 November 1891; BOA, HR.TO 65/42, 12 November 1891; and BOA, Y.A.HUS 253/61, 11 Rebiyülahir 1309 / 13 November 1891.

50 Yamada 1911 (reference 22), 11; Esenbel, 1996 (reference 13), 243.



Figure 12

Abdullah Frères, *The Japanese Naval Officers in Istanbul*, January 1891, albumen print, 26 x 20 cm, Istanbul University Library.

Japan in the collection of Abdulhamid II with other photographs in different collections, I have identified the photographers of the five albums as Abdullah Frères of Constantinople, Kusakabe Kinbei and Tamamuro Kōzaburō of Yokohama, Ogawa Kazuma of Tokyo, Shibata Kōichirō of Wakayama, and Nakamura Jōji of Kobe. Furthermore, I have argued that Yamada Torajirō brought the photographs of Japan to the Ottoman Empire during his journeys between the two countries. These photograph albums of Japan reveal the role of photography in the politics of diplomatic exchange, and the contribution of court photographers, such as the Abdullah brothers and Ogawa Kazuma, in the production of sanctioned images for the sultan.



Figure 13

Abdullah Frères, *The crew of Hiei and Kongō, Gümüşsuyu Imperial Military Garrison*, 7 January 1891, albumen print, 26 x 20 cm, Istanbul University Library.

William Pryor Floyd's Views of Hong Kong

Régine Thiriez On 8 August 1868, the Hong Kong newspaper *The China Mail* published a three-column article entitled 'Photographs of Hongkong, &c.' This detailed review examined a series of photographs recently released by William Pryor Floyd from his studio in the heart of Colonial Hong Kong



Figure 1
Map of Victoria, 1865, 18.2 x 22.7 cm,
reprinted from W. F. Meyers, *The Treaty Ports
of China and Japan*, Hong Kong: A. Shortrede &
Co., 1867, 10-11. Royal Asiatic Society of Great
Britain and Ireland.

(fig. 1). The local press review of photographs was not a first, which testifies to the interest they generally raised in the local community. In 1868, *The China Mail* and *The Daily Press* both reviewed photographic series by Floyd and John Thomson. However, the length and detail granted to the discussion of Floyd's work was exceptional and commensurate with the size of his portfolio. The review indicates that the portfolio included about 135 prints of Hong Kong.¹

The two essential types of shots of Hong Kong at the time were panoramic views from the slopes of The Peak, and the western part of the town – now Central. The latter is an inventory of monumental architecture, both official and privately owned. Queen's Road was the spine of this particular world; it was the street in Hong Kong. In this altogether small area, it cut its way, parallel to the shore, through the narrow piece of land between The Peak and the harbour. Careful framing consistently ensured that the street appeared much larger than it really was.

While photographers produced and advertised their portfolios, the customer made the ultimate selection. Early albums therefore reflect the contemporary buyers' vision of Hong Kong. Within this frame, compiling a group of albums from the period from between 1860 and 1874 provides a multiple image, almost frozen in time, where a number of topics stand out, such as the Praya along the harbour, or the Landing Place at Pedder's Wharf with Dent & Co.'s premises and the Clock Tower. The favourite colonial buildings include the Cathedral on the

¹ The numbering used by Floyd for the series freely combined Canton, Hong Kong and Macao, and seems to have soon been abandoned in favour of a new system where each place stood on its own. Likewise, particular landscapes were treated as geographical/topographical groups, in sequence from central Victoria and the

harbour to the city outskirts and further afield. The views of Macao, Canton, and Beijing included in the review are not discussed here. The series also included Amoy (Xiamen), Swatow (Shantou) and Foochow (Fuzhou), which the review did not mention.



Figure 2
William Pryor Floyd, *Chinese town, West Point, H.K.*
(no. 19), c. 1870, albumen paper print from a
glass negative, 20 x 25 cm. Wellcome Library,
London.



Figure 3
Milton Miller, *Queen's Road from Battery Point with
the Clock Tower under construction, Hong Kong*,
c. 1862, albumen paper print from a glass
negative, 18.7 x 13.4 cm. Royal Asiatic Society of
Great Britain and Ireland.

Parade Ground, Government House on The Peak slope, and City Hall, built in the mid-1860s. Beyond the Western city, all photographers showed the all-important Race Course and its grandstand, as well as the nearby cemeteries of the various foreign communities. Other popular subjects were Jardine, Matheson & Co.'s compound at East Point, and the Western residences at Pokfulam. The harbour appeared in numerous views, either as the main subject,

or more often as the backdrop in panoramas of the city of Victoria from The Peak slopes. Much less common were views of Kowloon, a territory across the harbour acquired in 1860 and still awaiting colonial development eight years later. Likewise, Chinese life and buildings were, with few exceptions, almost totally ignored.² Floyd's excellent panorama over the Chinese town at West Point is a rare non-Western example among his numerous panoramic views of Hong Kong (fig. 2).

The review of Floyd's series began with comments on the photographer's new lens, which enabled 'a view of over 100 degrees', a much wider field of vision than had previously been available in Hong Kong. Floyd, who liked to stress his technical competence, had advertised it for several months in the local press. Changing subjects, the reviewer then stated: 'The collecting of photographs has long since become a popular and interesting source of amusement'. He went on:

² John Thomson was a significant exception to this trend. For his beautiful photographs of Chinese life and customs taken in both Hong Kong and Kowloon,

as well as Floyd's views, see *The First Photographs of Hong Kong 1858-1875*, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2010 (catalogue of a local exhibition curated by the author).



Figure 4
William Pryor Floyd, *View from Pedder Wharf, the former Dent & Co.'s building and Clock Tower*, Hong Kong, c. 1870, albumen paper print from a glass negative, 20 x 25 cm. Wellcome Library, London.

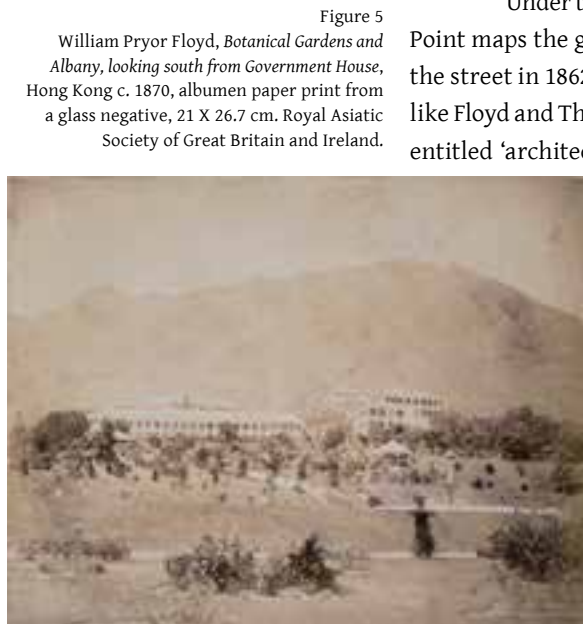


Figure 5
William Pryor Floyd, *Botanical Gardens and Albany, looking south from Government House*, Hong Kong c. 1870, albumen paper print from a glass negative, 21 X 26.7 cm. Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland.

China [is] [...] almost without exception regarded by European and American residents as the scene of but a temporary, although sometimes lengthened, residence. Hence there is a common desire to obtain memorials of a locality in which some of the best years of our life have been passed.[...] [Residents want] a guide in recalling scenes associated with so many feelings of pleasure and pain, happiness and disappointment, while the efforts to secure a fortune or a competency have been in progress. [...] [T]he photographs under review [...] are the best we have ever inspected of Colonial Scenery.

Such feelings belonged with a long-term resident of China. And, evidently, the value of photographs of Hong Kong as personal records of the years spent working hard far from home and family, and always under difficult circumstances, was already well established.

The review praises the photographer's artistic composition and 'the [selection of judicious] points of view [...], so as to both please the artistic eye and yet give the most familiar view of the scene represented'. An image of junks is highly rated, perhaps because junks, being exotic but familiar, had long been identified with China by the general Western public.

Under the section heading 'general views', the panorama of Queen's Road from Battery Point maps the general features of both city and harbour. Milton Miller had already recorded the street in 1862 when the Clock Tower was still under construction and later photographers, like Floyd and Thomson, kept illustrating this spectacular urban landscape (fig. 3).³ The section entitled 'architectural sketches' discusses private buildings built by the flourishing Western community, including the so-called New Hotel (soon to be known as the Hongkong Hotel). This was a former property of Dent & Co., one of the three great 'Hong's' or commercial houses which had moved to Hong Kong from Canton (fig. 4). The firm went bankrupt in 1867, and the photograph was taken the following year after the hotel had opened. Other colonial buildings included Government House and the well-known St John's Cathedral, often shown with the commercial house of Augustine Heard & Co (fig. 5).

The article 'deplored' the poor rendering of water made hazy by the movement of the waves, and also the dark or black colours of the water. Indeed, water was always a weakness of Floyd's, especially in comparison to the work of Milton Miller and John Thomson. Most affected were the waterside views of the famous line of luxurious buildings along the shorefront. According to the reviewer, Floyd had decided to avoid 'introducing water foregrounds'. And in effect, when taken from a distance, the sea views are excellent.

³ For Floyd's popular photographs of Hong Kong, see <http://dsr.nii.ac.jp/toyobunko/Lb-69/V-1/>; accessed on 14 March 2011, no. 10-51.



Figure 6
William Pryor Floyd, *Farming in Tokawan, Kowloon*,
c. 1870, albumen paper print from a
glass negative, 18 x 25 cm. Courtesy of
Dennis George Crow.

The still-famous Race Course at Happy Valley (*Wong-nei-cheong*) was the next topic of discussion. Both for social events and photography, the course had great importance to residents. It was, during race week, a general meeting place for Western and Chinese people from all levels of society.

With regard to the photograph of the grandstand and its enclosure during the 1868 races, the reviewer declared: 'many well known faces can be distinctly made out amongst the crowd, and considering the immense difficulty of getting so many persons still at the same instant, his success has been remarkable.' Unfortunately for modern viewers, neither the reviewer nor, to our knowledge, the photographer cared to identify the people seen by the grandstand, who were simply too well known locally to need identifying. However another subject important for foreigners spread near the racecourse: 'Next to [the steward's Bungalow] is the [Protestant] Cemetery [...] – the last resting place of too many of our friends. There are but few residents who cannot, on some score, claim acquaintance with this beautifully picturesque, but sadly-to-be remembered spot.' In short, the burial of friends and family members was part of expatriate life in Hong Kong. Incidentally, the photograph was declared excellent because the wind had not disturbed the foliage.

Figure 7
William Pryor Floyd, *Jardine & Matheson's works*,
east side of East Point, c. 1870, albumen paper
print from a glass negative, 20 x 25 cm.
Wellcome Library, London.



The subject of photograph no. 97 in the series was a beach across the harbour in Kowloon. The reviewer deemed it 'dreary [...] a most faithful likeness of the south portion' of the peninsula. Tastes change over time: by modern standards, this is one of the most atmospheric views in the portfolio. In any case, Floyd and most of his contemporaries ignored Kowloon. This was of course not a good topic for commercial photography, since, showing nothing of the colony in progress, it was not attractive to studio customers. Only John Thomson did justice to its rural charm between the years 1868 and 1872, with Floyd making a few rare attempts to capture the region's agricultural lifestyle (fig. 6).⁴

Of all the photographs in the portfolio, the greatest attention was reserved for No. 113 – East Point, a two-plate panorama hailed as 'the photograph par excellence of the collection'. In the twenty-five lines dedicated to this panorama, the reviewer managed to avoid mentioning that this impressive compound housed the headquarters of Jardine, Matheson & Co., one of the most powerful companies in the British Empire. Initially acquired in 1841, the property had been enlarged over the years to the point that, according to Floyd's label, the distillery produced

⁴ Thomson's views of Chinese country life in the colony were often taken from Kowloon. See *Illustrations of China and its People*, London: Sampson, Low, 1873-1874.



Figure 8
William Pryor Floyd, *Photographic Studios at and around no. 62 Queen's Road*, c. 1868, albumen paper print from a glass negative, 26.7 x 20.6 cm. Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland.

every open port of China would form one of the most interesting collections of pictures possible.' Unfortunately, he was not heard. In the treaty ports, such work would only have been conducted privately by commercial photographers, a commercial risk that none was willing or able to take. Floyd's undertaking is therefore out of the norm in many different ways.

The article followed with: 'Even in Hongkong the Chinese element peeps out here and there, Europeanized as natives are as regards their architectural arrangements.' This suggests a city built according to Western, and preferably English, traditions. In fact, the photographic albums of the 1860s and 1870s demonstrate that in each treaty port photographers identified specific types of urban landscapes. For example, Shanghai had a Western Bund, Western concessions with Chinese shops, and a Chinese walled town with its own tea garden. Ningbo

'about 80,000 gallons of spirit per annum'. The adjacent 'Sugar Refinery is largely engaged in supplying the American and Home markets.' Both plants made use of local raw materials to manufacture their products. The promontory was often photographed, although seldom from this specific location (fig. 7).

Having discussed the content of the portfolio, the reviewer criticised the absence of views from The Peak or 'the Lyeemon Pass, Stanley and Aberdeen'.⁵ In his subsequent work, Floyd expanded his portfolio and updated his stock with new views which took account of the colony's visual alterations. However, he does not seem to have seriously addressed these missing subjects.

In his conclusion, the reviewer stated with evident colonial pride: 'We cannot but congratulate the Colony upon the issue of these useful mementoes of its scenery and architecture. An album like this of

⁵ The iconic view of The Peak as a central and dominant subject in majesty was not mentioned because the view had not yet entered the photographic repertoire.



Figure 9
Anonymous, Handwritten mailing list of photographs
by Floyd, including views of the typhoon disaster,
c. 1874, 22.7 x 18.7 cm. Royal Asiatic Society of
Great Britain and Ireland.

(Zhijiang) was a maze of canals and bridges, with strong evidence of Western missionary presence. Canton was primarily Chinese, with a few signs of Western occupation and 'modernization' around the Western island of Shammian, whereas Beijing was recorded as a museum for Eternal China. As for Hong Kong, it was a British colony with a large number of Chinese residents.

Floyd and the Hong Kong Photographic Scene

William Pryor Floyd was active in the Pearl River Delta for nearly nine years from 1866 to 1874, making him the longest active foreign photographer in the area. He had, however, previously been employed in Shanghai as an assistant in the studio of Richard Shannon in 1865.⁶ After a start in Macao in 1866, he moved to Hong Kong, opening a first studio at No. 62 Queen's Road in April 1867. This was a thriving commercial district, and this particular area seems to have become in a few years the centre of the photographic industry in Hong Kong (fig. 8). It was close to the point of disembarkation for passengers and crews (see fig. 4), who constituted the photographic studios' main source of income. The location was crucial to the latter's commercial success.

Floyd excelled as a portraitist, and numerous *carte-de-visite* portraits of the diverse communities of Hong Kong bear his imprint. He also produced scenes of local Chinese life, then a popular genre of photography. However, the depiction of Hong Kong's topography and architecture in a large, coherent portfolio constitutes his major contribution to photography in China. Earlier photographers, including Charles Leander Weed, Milton Miller, and S. W. Halsey, had taken excellent views of the colony, but Floyd can be credited with making such work a major genre of Hong Kong photography.

Hong Kong was ideally designed for panoramas, taken either from the harbour or the slopes of The Peak. The origins of this photographic format can be traced to the last stage of the Second Opium War (1857-1860), when Hong Kong was a meeting point for allied British and French armies and navies on their way to North China. Felice Beato's multi-plate panoramic views of Victoria and Kowloon, taken in March 1860, are, after nearly two decades of sporadic activities, the starting point of a sustained photographic market in Hong Kong.⁷

The first permanent commercial studio in China was established by the Frenchman Louis Legrand in Shanghai in 1856-1857.⁸ However, it was not until May 1860 that the American partnership of Weed and Howard founded the first commercial studio in Hong Kong. A few months later, the business passed to their colleague Milton Miller, who remained active in Hong Kong and Canton until about 1864. Successive photographers, including Charles Parker,

⁶ *Chronicle and Directory for China, Japan... for 1865*, Hong Kong: Shortrede, 1865.

⁷ See David Harris, *Of Battle and Beauty: Felice Beato's Photographs of China*, Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1999.

⁸ See Régine Thiriez, 'Ligelang: A French Photographer in 1850s Shanghai,' *Orientations*, November 2001, 49-54.



Figure 10
William Pryor Floyd, *Westward Panoramic View
of the Docks and Harbour*, c. 1873, albumen
paperprint from a glass negative, 20 x 25 cm.
Wellcome Library, London.

S.W. Halsey, and J.J.A. Silveira, opened their own studios. Weed returned to Hong Kong in 1866 with his brother and sister, before once again moving to Shanghai. Floyd acquired Silveira's studio in 1867. This time of relative monopoly, where Western photographers came more or less in succession, ended with the arrival of Thomson from Singapore in the spring of 1868. An intense period of competition ensued between Western-owned studios in Hong Kong, which ultimately ended leaving the Chinese in control of the industry. Nonetheless, this period represented the heyday of foreign commercial photography in the colony. William Pryor Floyd competed with the newly arrived photographers John Thomson (1868-1872), Emil Riisfeldt (1872-1873), and Henry Everitt (1874-1877), as well as a significant number of known and unknown Chinese studios. Among the latter group, Ye-Chung (Yizheng), Pun-Lun (Binlun), Hing-Qua (Yat Shing), and later Afong (Li Huafang) all actively targeted Western customers by advertising their systematically lower prices in the local European-language press.

In any case, photography in China during the late nineteenth century remained essentially a Western mode of expression. Whether Western or Chinese, photographers recorded China according to Western iconographic traditions. The first generation of Chinese studios largely ignored topographical views and scenes of Chinese life, in preference to studio portraiture.⁹

⁹ Régine Thiriez, 'Photography and Portraiture in Nineteenth-Century China,' *East Asian History*, no. 17/18, June/December 1999, 77-102.

The name of Afong confuses crediting issues. Numerous albums bear his large label inside the cover, and the photographs naturally end up being credited to this studio. However, careful cross-referencing shows many views of Hong Kong to be by Floyd, including an album of the 1874 Typhoon (fig. 9). It seems that Afong marketed prints by photographers no longer in Hong Kong, without crediting them. Often captioned by large numbered labels of uniform layout (which makes them look like a coherent group), they in fact combine the works of various photographers, including Floyd. Afong was indeed a photographer. Nevertheless, what was produced by his studio, or only copied, urgently needs to be properly sorted out.

Floyd's succinct and characteristic labels are found in the lower right corner of his photographs. Later, he added the same captions on the negative (fig. 2, 4, 7 and 10). In other rare instances, a descriptive text was also attached to some prints, such as for figure 2, Chinese town, West Point, H.K. (no. 19):

Two of the most important native institutions in the colony are given in this view - viz., the Chinese Hospital and the Chinese Theatre. The roof and belfry of the German Mission Church can be seen over the former, while just beyond the church lies a large open space, which the Government has wisely enclosed as a native recreation ground. This part of the ground is named Possession Point. The Theatre may be distinguished by the inscription on the nearest face, visible over the intervening houses. The total native population of Hong Kong is about 120,000 souls.

Whoever created the early views and whatever their current location, photographs can be classified according to two essential criteria: time and place. Photographs record successive changes to the urban and physical landscape, which enable their arrangement in chronological order. In addition, photographs of the various engineering and building projects can provide a reasonably comprehensive overview of a particular area. Through such methods, it is possible to elucidate the early development of topographical photography in Hong Kong (fig. 10).

Altogether, the review discussed above is a valuable record, although it expresses an opinion without necessarily describing the image or its details. Descriptions are rarely sufficient to identify the specific image described, and sometimes not even the subject. Unfortunately, the 'distinctiveness of foliage' does not help us identify the specific view of the *Chinese Village at East Point*, or the village itself. Rather than justifying his appreciation of Floyd's work, the reviewer encourages his readers to visit the studio, form their own opinion, and perhaps make a purchase. As indicated in conclusion to the review: 'the sets are mounted in large well-bound albums, if desired, at a moderate price.' This agrees with Floyd advertising large discounts for his albums of fifty or twenty-four prints. Photography in nineteenth-century Hong Kong was a serious business indeed.

,China: Insights'. Mainstream Documentary in the People's Republic

Allan. D. Coleman

Media theorist Marshall McLuhan spoke of his approach to cultural inquiry in terms of “probes.” By definition a cross-section, but hardly extensive enough to constitute a survey, the exhibition *China: Insights'* constitutes a probe into the condition of contemporary mainstream documentary photography in the People's Republic of China.

This sampling brings together the work of seven contemporary photographers from the People's Republic of China: Chen Yuanzhong, Hua'Er, Jia Yuchuan, Li Nan, Yang Yankang, Yu Haibo, and Zhang Xinmin. While earning their livings as either freelance or staff photographers (or, in one case, as a freelance writer), each has undertaken the creation of a long-term documentation of one or more aspects of Chinese culture that he or she believes reflects something urgent about China now — whether something emerging or something vanishing.

Unlike the commissioned or staff work that some of them produce occupationally, these projects are neither state-sponsored nor state-endorsed. Self-subsidized at the outset, and often self-sustained through to completion, they represent the photographers' personal and professional commitments to investigating social and cultural situations, issues and contexts that, independently, each of them has decided merits photographic inquiry and preservation so that this work constitutes a form of citizenly bearing witness to one's own culture in one's own time that binds its makers, as photographers, to their counterparts around the world.

This does not mean that, individually or collectively, these longitudinal studies represent underground, dissident, or (in the former Soviet Union sense) “samizdat” activity on the part of these picture-makers. None of it has required furtive production, and the photographers do not feel secretive about possessing it or jeopardized for having generated it. This first substantial presentation of their projects in the West has involved no smuggling out of contraband material. Indeed, some of these series have already achieved publication and/or exhibition in China; various of these projects have received mainland awards and other forms of public recognition.

From a western perspective, we can approach this work on several levels. Most obviously, as informationally oriented imagery, it offers us a diverse set of core samples of life in rural and urban China at the end of the twentieth century and the outset of the twenty-first, an historical moment at which China stands poised to play a major role in the world's future. On this sociological level, these works allow us entry into a variety of Chinese microcultures. Some of them — such as the rural Catholic village explored by Yang Yankang and the agricultural, matrilineal society to which Hua'Er has devoted herself — seem fixed in time past; others — Yu Haibo's club kids, Zhang Xinmin's former farmers and rural workers seeking a toehold in the city — reflect the ferment of the emerging global economy and China's determination to play a leading role therein.



Figure 1

Yang Yankang, *The Little Angel* in the church's ceremonial procession, worried that his wings might fall off. FengXiang countryside, Shanxi, China, 1999. From the series *Faith of a Village*. Gelatin-silver print, 16x20".

1 This text was written for the still-unpublished catalogue of a touring exhibition curated by this author in collaboration with Gu Zheng, Director of the Dept. of Visual Culture, Fudan University, Shanghai. Organized by the Foundation for the Exhibition of Photography (FEP), the tour of *China: Insights* began in April 2008 and has included the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma; the Light Factory Museum of Photography and Film, Charlotte, North

Carolina; the May Gallery, Webster University, St. Louis, Missouri; the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, Cedar Rapids, Iowa; and the Montgomery Art Center, Pomona College Museum of Art, Claremont, California. The Pomona presentation, ongoing as of this writing, will include an April 2011 symposium sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts. Future showings will include the Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida, Nov. 11, 2011-Jan. 15, 2012.

Sociologically, too, these works in aggregate speak to the rapid modernization and urbanization that the Chinese government has set as the nation's course, and along which the Middle Kingdom proceeds at often startling speed. The PRC's population remains overwhelmingly rural, with 900 million out of 1.4 billion still in the agrarian sector. Yet, while Beijing strives steadily to improve living and working conditions in the countryside, the energy (including the imagination of the populace at large) flows strongly toward the metropolitan centers.

Few in China today aspire to live as farmers, though hundreds of millions have become habituated to that way of life. Mass media have of course played their role in glamorizing the bright lights of the big city. But long before the internet, long before television, long before even movies and radio, and even before newspapers and magazines and printed books, getting your child into the city-based higher-education system and then into a profession or the civil service in the urban centers signified upward mobility in China, just as it has elsewhere in the world. This set of excerpts mirrors that trajectory with its structure, moving from the rural, agricultural environment to the urban and industrial, while its component parts attend to the consequences — negative as well as positive — of this development.

The works collected here also function, in aggregate, as a cross-section of mainstream documentary practice in the PRC today.

Unlike the West, where autonomous, self-funded social-documentary work goes back at least to the late 1800s and the work of Peter Henry Emerson and John Thomson, China has no equivalent tradition of the self-appointed photographer as volunteer cultural documentarian or the freelance photojournalist as chronicler (and sometimes critic) of social conditions and individual or group behaviors. Nor has China had its own counterpart to the photographic survey projects sponsored by either private patronage or city, regional, or national governments that became comparatively commonplace in the West from the 1850s onward.

In the West, amateur photography of all kinds — from family-album snapshooting to camera-club pictorialism — flourished without needing any government approval. From the Russian Revolution on, the various regimes in the Soviet Union identified photography as central to revolutionary practice and promoted it as the medium of the people, actively encouraging photography as a hobby, endorsing and supporting a formal and informal network of camera clubs. Neither dynastic China nor the PRC during its first decades enabled so widespread an amateur use of photography. Certainly, Communist China did not make film and cameras and darkroom equipment and film-processing available at bargain rates to the population at large, as did the Soviet Union.²

² Most could not have afforded it, in any case. Television sets did not become numerous until after the Cultural Revolution ended, and of course all programming was not just subject to state approval but was state-produced. As of 1965, only 26,000 TV sets had been produced and sold in the entire country, the majority of them bought by government offices or CCP headquarters in villages. The „four musts“ propounded under Mao — the four items the CCP felt every household

should have — were a bicycle, radio, watch, and sewing machine. Not until the 1980s, after Deng Xiaoping took over, did the family essentials become the „eight bigs“: color television, refrigerator, stereo, camera, motorcycle, suite of furniture, washing machine, and electric fan. Only then can we say that lens culture — of which photographic culture is a subset — became entrenched in Chinese daily life.

Figure 2
Hua'Er, New Year's Eve dinner in the Azhe-Apo family, Li Jia Zui Village, Yunnan, China, 2004.
From the series *Mother to Daughter*. Epson color print, 16x20". Strict rules of hierarchy and protocol govern the Naxi family, such as those concerning seating position. Males sit on the upper part of the fireplace, while female members and children sit on the lower part of it with the old granny.



Nor did the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) nurture in the same ways a serious cohort of professionals whose access to materials, equipment, instruction, and information could approximate those of their equivalents elsewhere.³ Only in the past quarter-century, during the gradual post-Mao liberalization, have mainland China's professional photographers enjoyed relative freedom to follow their noses, develop projects on their own initiative, range widely across the country on their own recognizance, and operate without the constraints of censorship or red tape imposed as heavily as previous regimes had done. And only during this period have equipment and materials on a par with those available to western photographers become commonplace.⁴ Thus, to these photographers and their audiences alike, such work as this exhibition gathers represents a relatively new and unexplored form, a breakthrough into previously uncharted territory.

This is especially the case because comparable work from the West did not circulate widely here — and still does not. Thus the Chinese general public, and even the segment thereof with a particular interest in photography, does not have readily available substantial exposure to the earlier models of Emerson and Thomson, Eugène Atget, Lewis Hine, Walker Evans, Margaret Bourke-White, W. Eugene Smith, Robert Frank — or, in our own day, Sebastião Salgado, Susan

And the birth of all the photographers in this exhibition predates that development by a decade or more.

3 The first photo-education program in an art-school context opened at the PRC's oldest art school, the Luxun Academy of Fine Arts in Shenyang, Liaoning Province in 1986, just a quarter-century ago. Photojournalism programs as such, long a

staple in the West, also represent a new development on the Chinese mainland. Photography otherwise was largely learned by apprenticeship.

4 With the PRC as the world's shopfloor, in fact, much of the photographic equipment now used in the West — ranging from digital cameras to computers — gets manufactured in mainland China. As a fringe benefit, versions of these tools priced for the domestic market often appear in stores across the country of its production.

Meiselas, Eugene Richards, Gilles Peress — against which to gauge the work gathered here and other Chinese work in this form. For that matter, the photographers themselves have, for the most part, only a fragmentary awareness of their western equivalents. I'll return to this subject shortly.

The work at hand has emerged organically out of Chinese visual culture during a specific period of time. While not entirely unaffected by western styles and methods, that visual culture was to a considerable extent insulated from western influence by China's political isolationism as a matter of both dynastic and Communist Party policy, amplified by a deep, historic strain of Chinese xenophobia. Add to that mix the still strict limitations on travel abroad, plus stringent censorship regulations pertaining to all foreign material up through the Maoist regime, and one begins to grasp the severely restricted access Chinese photographers have had to non-Chinese material until relatively recently.⁵

These seven photographers range in age from mid-thirties to mid-fifties. Thus, they mostly came of age in their chosen medium during a period in which western ways were to be avoided, not emulated. That they — and their teachers and mentors, and of course their peers in the medium — reinvented the wheel of classic documentary form as we know it does not detract from what they have accomplished.⁶ Nor does it make the Chinese audience that comes afresh to work in this form by their fellow citizens less sophisticated than western audiences. Mainstream documentary in the U.S. and elsewhere still plays to packed houses — certainly a more dependable draw than even the most critically celebrated postmodern documentary photographers.⁷ We would do well to consider the possibility that all those people know something that postmodernism's advocates don't.

In the history of western photography, the form that we call independent documentary arrives simultaneously with the medium's birth. For example, David Octavius Hill and Robert

Adamson's calotypes of the founders of the Free Church of Scotland (1843-48), though intended simply as studies toward a group painting, constitute a historically invaluable archive of portraits of a particular group of influential people with a collective purpose.

Certainly by the time we get to Thomson's *Street Life in London* (1877-78),⁸ Emerson's *Life and Landscape on the Norfolk Broads* (1886), J. Craig Annan's *Old Closes and Streets of Glasgow* (1900), Eugène Atget's Paris images, and Edward S. Curtis's *The North American Indian* (initiated in 1907), we have not only a continuous tradition going back half a century but also a wide diversity of styles and approaches in operation simultaneously. By the mid-1930s, that spectrum has expanded even further, with Brassai, Berenice Abbott, Walker Evans, Doris Ulmann, Bill Brandt, Henri Cartier-Bresson, W. Eugene Smith,

Figure 3

Zhang Xinmin, *The hands and feet of wall cleaner Zhong Jia Ca*, Shenzhen, China, 1997.
From the series *Country to City*.
Gelatin-silver print, 16x20".



⁵ This has loosened remarkably over the past several decades. While many western books and periodicals cannot officially be published in Chinese editions or imported to the mainland for sale, the borders have become quite porous. The author has never had his luggage inspected more than cursorily on ten entries into the PRC 2005-10, and has brought in dozens of books.

⁶ I should add that no standard, widely circulated Chinese version of the history

of photography — nor any standard version of the history of Chinese photography, for that matter — exists, in the sense that in the West we have works by Beaumont Newhall, Helmut Gernsheim, Naomi Rosenblum, and others offering international summaries, plus countless national and regional histories. Thus, that sense of working out of a tradition does not exist in the same way in the PRC as it does elsewhere.



Figure 4
Chen Yuanzhong, *Prostitute, police raid*,
Shenzhen, 1998. From the series *Young Pros*,
Oldest Profession. Gelatin-silver print, 16x20".

made attention to other subjects irrelevant. Exhibition opportunities were few; images circulated primarily in newspapers, magazines and books, most of them cheaply printed. All publishing outlets were affiliated with one or another faction in the ongoing struggles for power. The combination of poor reproduction quality, strict editorial control over content, and use of imagery for primarily ideological purposes had a homogenizing effect on Chinese documentary and photojournalism of that period. Whatever its value as a chronicle of its time, it all looks the same.

That condition intensified once the CCP came to power in 1949. The photography of the time, most of it either photojournalistic or propagandistic (or both), was closely censored and consciously avoided any evidence of individual stylistic choice. Indeed, recognizable style and a personalized way of seeing became anathematized in all media, subsumed under the conformist, doctrinaire demands of the theory and practice of so-called social realism. Photography manifesting any independence of thought or motive, or noticeable western influence, was not only unpublishable, it was punishable. In the context of a citizenry trained to spy on its members and report any deviation, such work became unthinkable. Moreover, the inferior quality of reproduction in most Chinese books and periodicals would have rendered illegible anything stylistically distinctive about most photographs.

Intriguingly, we can date the sudden resurgence of independent documentary exactly: April 5, 1976. Shock and anger over the CCP's brutal repression of the spontaneous commemora-

Dorothea Lange, Manuel Alvarez Bravo, and hundreds of others carving their own paths through the territory of self-initiated and self-sustained documentary projects. The variety of methods and attitudes grows exponentially from then on.

Independent documentary in China — that is, documentary photography by mainland Chinese photographers not produced under government sponsorship — has neither the long tradition nor the continuity of its western counterpart. Aside from a few exemplary projects dating from the late 1930s, such as those of Zhuang Xueben and Sha Fei, independent documentary vanishes entirely from the Chinese photography scene for four decades. First, it got interrupted by the war with Japan. Photographers' understandable concentration on that conflict (and on the concurrent struggle between the Chinese Communist Party and the Kuomintang)

7 At the opening of one of Sebastião Salgado's projects, *Exiles* at the George Eastman House in Rochester, New York, in the year 2000, people lined up around a very big block on East Avenue, waiting to get in. According to the International Center of Photography in New York City, there were no lines around the block eager to see the ICP's summer 2000 retrospective of the work of Martha Rosler — one of those who claim to have „reinvented“ documentary in San Diego circa 1974, and a consistent critic of traditional documentary practice. That Salgado — a trained

economist turned photographer from Brazil — could pull a far larger audience in a small city in upstate New York than Rosler (who graduated with an MFA from the University of California, San Diego) could draw in midtown Manhattan surely tells us something.

8 Notably, Thomson also traveled and photographed widely in what was then called the Orient, publishing several volumes of images from his expeditions, including *Through China with a Camera*, 1898.



Figure 5
Jia Yuchuan, *Transvestites on rooftop making up for a performance*, Shenzhen, China, 2004. From the series *Bending Gender*. Epson color print, 16x20".

tion of Premier Zhou Enlai (who had died in January of that year), prompted photographers — some professional, some amateur — to record those events, conserve the resulting imagery, and circulate it clandestinely. This resulted in the genesis of what became known as the April 5 Movement in Chinese photography, the seedbed of Chinese documentary photography today.

China since Mao has alternately relaxed and tightened its strictures on both private and public communication. But the gradual loosening that followed the even more terrifying clampdown in the wake of the 1989 Tiananmen tragedy may have let this cat permanently out of the bag. Be that as it may, photographers of the generation that came of age in the 1990s or had already entered the field by then took increasing exposure to western ideas and techniques and influences for granted, and have come to their chosen medium prepared — in person, and through their imagery — to join the international image community.

Collectively, the photographers represented in *China: Insights* have numerous publications, exhibitions, and awards to their credit, but little of their work has appeared outside mainland China, and nowhere at this length. None of these projects has yet been seen in the West.

Six of the seven — Chen Yuanzhong, Hua'Er, Jia Yuchuan, Yang Yankang, Yu Haibo, and Zhang Xinmin — base themselves in Shenzhen. Just across the border from Hong Kong in south-east China's Guangdong Province, Shenzhen was the first of the Special Economic Zones (SEZ) established by China in the post-Mao era, created as magnets for entrepreneurs and educated people in all fields. Already a world-renowned center for printing, publishing, and information technology, among other industries, Shenzhen was a fishing and farming community with a population of roughly 30,000 in 1980. Today, it is a booming twenty-first-century metropolis whose population exceeds 13 million, with an average age of 30. As such, Shenzhen serves as a microcosm reflecting many of the dramatic shifts in contemporary China.

Not surprisingly, this city's professional opportunities draw photographers — including many of the best — to it. Aside from Beijing, no other city in the PRC has a greater function

as a media center. None of the photographers included in this exhibition have Shenzhen as their birthplace, though the majority reside here.

While some of them focus on aspects of life in their adoptive home city, others look at situations outside of Shenzhen. Their themes include rural Catholicism, matrilineal culture in an agrarian setting, the population shift from country to city, prostitution, gender and identity, typologies of urban citizenry, and the emergence of a thriving pop music/club scene as an index of internationalization. They approach their subjects employing methods ranging from classic modernist documentary to more formally experimental styles.

This exhibition includes the following chapters, equally divided among the seven participating photographers:

- *Faith of a Village* (fig. 1): The freelance editorial and commercial photographer Yang Yankang has pursued several long-term, self-funded projects. These include studies of Tibetan life and the project excerpted here, a scrutiny of life in a small Catholic village in the Yellow River area of Shaanxi Province of North China. Yang has visited this area repeatedly over the past decade, familiarizing himself with the ways in which these people's religious convictions — presently tolerated, previously oppressed — weave through their daily lives. (Yang, born in Guizhou Province in 1954, is a member of the French picture agency VU. In 2001 and 2002, he was named one of the ten best photographers in China by *She Ying Zhi You* magazine.)
- *Mother to Daughter* (fig. 2): As an independent anthropologist, Hua'Er has concentrated her attention on a matrilineal culture of long standing, a rare phenomenon in Chinese society. Located in Lijiazui, a village situated between Tibet, Yunnan Province, and Sichuan Province in southwest China, this clan-based matriarchal social structure removes men from any direct involvement with their own children, shifting their familial roles to emphasis on their relationships as uncles to their sisters' children. The marginalization of men and the empowerment of women are the main themes of Hua'Er's study. (Hua'Er supports herself as a freelance writer on assorted subjects, and as a gallery director in Beijing.)
- *Country to City* (fig. 3): In China's booming economy, escape from the drudgery of peasant life to the metropolis and the dream it represents of upward mobility has become increasingly possible, but undependable. Zhang Xinmin, long-time staff photographer for a Shenzhen newspaper, has persistently tracked the transition from country to city of working-class Chinese, most of them former farmers and agricultural workers, revealing the details of their individual struggles for survival and success in this new environment. (Born in 1952, Zhang is now Visual Supervisor for the *Shekou News*, a daily in Shenzhen, a position he assumed in 1994.)
- *Young Pros, Oldest Profession* (fig. 4): Easily policed in the countryside, prostitution becomes a fact of life in urban settings everywhere. In a city like Shenzhen, where residency permits re-

quire legal employment, prostitutes and pimps (and their customers) play a risky age-old game of cat and mouse with the authorities. Here, Chen Yuanzhong follows the trail of this illicit trade from the streets and the daily life of sex workers through police raids, the court system, prison, and efforts at rehabilitation. (Born in 1970, Chen is Picture Director for the Shenzhen Evening News. In 1998 he was selected for participation in the month-long Joop Swart Master Class at World Press Photo in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.)

- *Bending Gender* (fig. 5): Urbanization has brought to China's citified population personal and social options not readily available in rural contexts, including the creation of such microcultures as the transvestite-transsexual community of Shenzhen that Jia Yuchuan observes sympathetically in this series. His pictures investigate his subjects' private lives, their process of self-transformation, and their self-presentation in public. (Born in Chongqing Municipality in 1961, Jia graduated from the Journalism Department of Wuhan University in 1999, and now works as a staff photographer for a Shenzhen newspaper group. He has won several national awards for news photography.)

- *Urban Identities* (fig. 6): Like August Sander, Li Nan concerns himself with social types in China's cities. And like Neal Slavin, he seeks meaning in the ways that people present themselves publicly in groups. In this series of formal, posed group portraits Li surveys clusters of city dwellers — from chicken pluckers to Party officials, and from construction workers to opera singers — consciously registering their appearances for posterity in his images. (Born in Jinan City, Shan-

dong Province in 1961, Li Nan is a staff photographer for the Dazhong Daily. He has won many awards both inside and outside China, including first prize in the "Art" category from World Press Photo in 1996.)

- *Night Moves* (fig. 7): Staff photographer for the Shenzhen Economic Daily, Yu Haibo also pursues his own photographic interests when not on the job. In this suite of dramatic color images he explores the contemporary pop music scene in Shenzhen, with its rock musicians, club kids, mosh pits, and riotous environments — an increasingly common feature of urban culture worldwide. (Born in Henan in 1962, Yu won the China Photojournalists' Golden Eye Prize and the second prize in the "Arts and Entertainment" category from the 2005 World Press Photo Awards in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.)

As these examples indicate, mainstream documentary photography is alive and well across mainland China. Shaped predominantly by their upbringing and education within Chinese visual culture, this form's current practitioners consider it a vital and effective instrument through which to communicate to their fellow citizens — and, with increasing frequency, to the world outside China's borders.

Figure 6
Li Nan, Regional Chinese-opera performers,
Tengzhou, China, 2002. From the series
Urban Identities. Gelatin-silver print, 16x20".



9 For example, see Susan Sontag reporting on Chinese reaction to Michelangelo Antonioni's 1972 film about China, *Chung Kuo*, in the essay "The Image World" in *On Photography*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux 1977, 169-75.

10 "Control instruction and you will control style." Boime, Albert, *The Academy and French Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, New York: Phaidon 1971,

11 Indeed, dissident photographers like Boris Mikhailov built substantial projects out of such "found" vernacular imagery. Soviet and eastern-bloc equipment and materials did not exist in the often bewildering diversity of western equivalents, nor did they always match the quality thereof. But some of them did (especially the silver-rich papers for black & white printing). Generally speaking, they were widely available and inexpensively priced.



Figure 7
Yu Haibo, *Club Kid, New Year's Eve, Shenzhen, China, 2000*. From the series *Night Moves*.
Epson color print, 16x20".

It comes closer to the situation in the former Soviet Union: strict delimitation of what went in and what went out, tight control over what got publicly disseminated within the system, careful supervision of instruction.¹⁰

Yet the comparison proves immediately inexact. In the PRC, a scarcity of photographic equipment and materials was the norm, with little official encouragement of casual, amateur, or snapshot photography among the populace; in the Soviet Union, as previously noted, amateur photography always enjoyed governmental support, and photographic equipment and materials were made widely and commonly available (though not always up to western standards, or in as diverse a toolkit).¹¹ While formal education in photography in the U.S.S.R. had narrow guidelines and a closely censored set of teaching materials, informal education — apprenticeship, the camera-club system — operated more loosely.¹² Moreover, during the post-Stalin era a greater variety of material from the West — as well as from such eastern-bloc nations with strong photo scenes as Czechoslovakia and Hungary — circulated there than has ever been made officially accessible in the PRC.

Also, though its revolution took place decades after the Russian Revolution, China's art, and particularly Chinese photography, never passed through the modernist phase so central to western art history and also (albeit much more briefly) to the Soviet and eastern-bloc art environments. Chinese photography does not have its counterparts to Stieglitz, Modotti, Strand and Weston, nor to Rodchenko, Klutis, and Drtikol. Nor did the kinds of mass-audience illustrated newspapers and magazines that flourished for half a century in the West (*Picture*

As mentioned previously, Chinese visual culture — and, as a subset thereof, Chinese photographic culture — does not analogize readily with the ever more homogeneous visual cultures most familiar to westerners. The first error to avoid is the assumption that some superficial resemblances indicate that Chinese photographers merely ape western models. The second is the concept that Chinese viewers at any and all levels read photographs in the same way as western viewers.⁹

Usually suspect and sometimes demonized, western influence on visual culture in China bears no resemblance to the two-way traffic between the U.S., the United Kingdom, Latin America, and Western and Northern Europe. Nor does it equate to the strong — but largely unidirectional — flow between Europe and the U.S., at the sending end, and Africa at the receiving end.

12 To take a familiar instance, in 1959, Carl Sandburg traveled with Edward Steichen on a State Department tour to open *The Family of Man* exhibition in the Soviet Union where it toured accompanied by an edition of its catalogue. Neither show nor book ever appeared in mainland China, though both versions of the project included photographs of China by several westerners (primarily Dmitri Kessel of Life), plus three images by Chinese photographers Chien Hao, Li Shu, and an unidentified photojournalist. Its impact on Chinese photography, still hard

to specify, thus came belatedly. See note 16.

13 Nowadays, such mainland periodicals as *Chinese Photography* run extensive excerpts from documentary projects by Chinese photographers and also westerners, as well as other kinds of work by photographers from China and elsewhere.

14 The same holds true for the photographic component of Chinese visual culture. See Richard H. Solomon, *A Revolution Is Not A Dinner Party: A Feast of Images of the Maoist Transformation of China*, New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday 1975.

Post, Life, Look, et al) and briefly in the *Soviet Union (U.S.S.R. in Construction)*, with their extended picture stories and experiments in image-text relationships and layout style, have equivalents in China until recently.¹³

Very little writing on contemporary Chinese photography has appeared in English.¹⁴ Much of what exists comes from western curators who base their exhibition selections on currently fashionable western assumptions and theories. Most of the rest consists of western reviewers' responses to the small amount of Chinese material that has filtered through such gatekeepers to the West. Few think to ask Chinese photographers, Chinese viewers, or Chinese curators, critics, and historians how this material functions and is understood within Chinese culture today.¹⁵

To put a finer point on it, no one has informed either Chinese photographers or their audiences that documentary photography in the classic tradition has become "discredited" by western postmodern theory and practice. Nor, from the evidence, would they care. Thus work in this form is mainstream in the PRC today, vigorously pursued by serious photographers and eagerly viewed by China's rapidly expanding audience for photography. Yet such work is largely ignored in most western commentary.

Mainstream documentary photography, in the classic tradition still active in the West, functions as a central aspect of photographic activity in the PRC.¹⁶ Since such work is not considered particularly trendy in the West, few western commentators have paid much attention to this wealth of material. They have not looked at the presentational environment — books, periodicals, exhibitions — through which it reaches its audiences, nor at the formal and informal educational contexts that encourage the production of such image series and image-text works. This work has not emerged in conscious, active dialogue with or imitation of its western counterparts (little-known in the PRC even today). It has evolved organically and autonomously. China has its own visual culture, in which documentary photography plays an increasingly visible role. Discussion of this situation is thus both timely and necessary.¹⁷

Regardless of size, no sampling can do more than suggest the breadth of what present-day Chinese documentary photographers consider worthy of attention. Nor can it do more than hint at the complexity of China at the dawn of its new era. Necessarily, then, this one raises more questions than it answers. But it shows us China today through Chinese eyes, and what we see through those eyes pertains not only to contemporary photography and visual culture but also to such diverse disciplines as visual anthropology, sociology, urban studies, economics, geopolitics, women's studies, Asian studies, and of course contemporary photography and visual culture. Each of these projects stands as a symbolic open door into this rich and intricate nation and culture. Individually and collectively, they invite us to step in.

15 *Houston Fotofest International*, the U.S. biennial, proved a notable exception. Working closely with a number of knowledgeable figures from the mainland, Fotofest brought 1100 images by dozens of photographers — including many working in the documentary mode — to its 2008 edition, spotlighting these in the festival's main section, *Photography from China, 1934-2008*. See the Fotofest catalogue by the same name (Houston: Fotofest, Inc. 2008), and its contextualizing essays by Gu Zheng and Fotofest co-director Wendy Watriss.

16 See, for example, the show and catalogue *Humanism in China: A Contemporary*

Record of Photography, organized by the Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, and first shown there in 2003, then in the Shanghai Art Museum in 2004. It made its debut in the West at the Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main, Germany, May 20-August 27, 2006. This is a 50-year survey including 590 images by more than 100 photographers; it explicitly „takes as its inspiration Edward Steichen's landmark show."

17 Gu Zheng's unpublished curatorial essay for the *China: Insights* project offers more on this subject.

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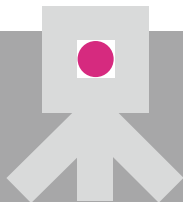
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