

Japanese and Chinese Women across Media: Contexts and Issues

Preface by Mio Wakita and Lianming Wang

Crossing the artistic, temporal, and national boundaries of artistic media, this volume probes the under-researched issue of the transcultural flows and transformations of material and visual culture between East Asia and Europe from the eighteenth century to early-twentieth century. The common trajectory within this volume focuses on female imagery, serving as a connecting aspect and a starting point for in-depth discussions.

The contributions in this volume emerged from the academic alliance with the Porzellansammlung of the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, State Art Collection Dresden (SKD).¹ Within the framework of the project “Formative Decades: Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Chinese Narrative Porcelains Collected and Re-manufactured by August the Strong, Dresden-Meissen” (2015-16), organized by Prof. Dr. Sarah E. Fraser, and funded by Heidelberg University’s Field of Focus 3 “Cultural Dynamics in Globalised Worlds,” the Institute of East Asian Art History has held a series of field trips to Dresden, project-related seminars, and workshops with Heidelberg students and international scholars, with the aim of engaging with artefacts from the SKD collection beyond classroom discussions.² The essays in the *Dresden Europa Welt* catalogue explore how femininity was visually conceived, constructed, and consumed in exported porcelain, prints, and early photography from China and Japan. Whereas many Dresden essays share a gendered approach with a distinct interest in power asymmetries within and beyond the visual field as a lynchpin, the essay collection in the present volume mostly take a slightly different approach, dealing with representational aspects of visual construction of femininity across different media.

Image of Japanese Femininity: A Transcultural, Transmedial Perspective

Prints, porcelain, and photography have belonged to the group of coveted objects traded between Europe and Japan between the eighteenth and early-twentieth centuries—despite their range of uses, the particularities of their collection formations, and their divergent materiality. For all their material diversity, the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden collection of Japanese porcelain, prints, and photography share a

¹ A cooperation agreement between the Institute of East Asian Art History, Heidelberg University, and the Porzellansammlung, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden was enacted on August 6, 2014.

² This volume contains a concentration of China-related papers, reflecting the research strengths of our contributors—most of whom are graduate students at the Institute of East Asian Art History, Heidelberg University specializing in Chinese and Global art history. For Japan-related discussions on selected pieces from the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden collections, please refer to Chapter Five “Women Cross Media: Photography, Porcelain and Prints from Japan and China” from the *Dresden Europa Welt* exhibition catalogue also authored by Heidelberg faculty and students. This publication was developed from the same institutional collaboration with the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (SKD). The Dresden curators were Agnes Matthias and Cora Würmell; *Dresden Europa Welt*. Exh. cat. Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (Dresden: Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, 2017).

cultural biography as a symbolic object of the “Other.” In this context, female imagery, furthermore, represents one of the key aspects connecting these three artistic media. As the subject matter most frequently featured in objects exported between Japan to the West, the image of the Japanese woman highlights complex layers of connectivity within the transcultural networks and flows of images from the early modern to the modern periods. Representation of Japanese femininity, in addition, demonstrates the commodified status of women and also confirms the transgressive nature of female figures in their visual efficacy in both local and transcultural contexts.

Gendered Materiality and Visual Commodification: Female Imagery on Japanese Export Porcelain and *ukiyo-e* Woodblock Prints in Dialogue

Between 1657 and 1683, China suffered turbulence within its territories and the production of porcelain in Jingdezhen kilns went into decline. During this interval, Japanese kilns in the modern-day city of Arita on the island of Kyūshū in Southern Japan supplied the porcelain market for the Dutch East India Company (*Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*, VOC), producing imitations of Chinese export porcelain and later sold as so-called Kakiemon-style porcelain. Beginning in 1659, when Zacharias Wagner, the Leipzig-born *opperhoofd* at the Dutch factory on Dejima Island, ordered a large quantity of porcelain for the VOC, a huge volume of Japanese export porcelain was shipped for both Asian and European markets.³

The kiln led by Sakaida Kakiemon 酒井田柿右衛門 (1596-1666) in Arita, who is said to have introduced enameling to Arita in the mid-seventeenth century, produced polychrome porcelain in the Genroku era (1688-1704) during the Edo period (1603-1868) from 1670 through 1690.⁴ With its milk-white body (*nigoshide*) and finely-executed designs in gold and translucent enamels of blue, black, green, lilac, orange-red, and yellow, Kakiemon-style porcelain was cherished and consumed by social elites in Europe as a luxury good of socio-cultural and political distinction (**fig. A**).⁵ For unknown reasons, yet possibly due to changes in kiln management or the departure of skilled workers, production of Kakiemon-style porcelain ceased by the mid-1690s. In the following decades, a new style of polychrome Japanese porcelain called Imari ware 伊万里 emerged for the export market. It had crowded designs and was boldly decorated, using underglaze cobalt blue, overglaze red enamel, and gold. This porcelain style (brocade or *kinrande* style 金襴手) was especially praised by Augustus the Strong for its incomparable design; this type of ware is listed under the category “*Japanisch Porcelain*” in the first chapter of the 1721-1727 inventory of his porcelain collection (**figs. B-C**).⁶ According to that inventory, Augustus’ collection, which was displayed at the so-called Japanese or Dutch Palace, held over 13,000 pieces of porcelain from China and Japan. Six years later the total amount of East Asian porcelain collection reached around 25,000.⁷ The

³ Tys Volker, *Porcelain and the Dutch East Indian Company: As Recorded in the Dag-Registers of Batavia Castle, Those of Hirado and Other Contemporary Papers 1602-1682* (Leiden: Rijkmuseum voor Volkerkunde, 1971), 131ff, 218.

⁴ Nicole Coolidge Rousmaniere, *Vessels of Influence: China and the Birth of Porcelain in Medieval and Early Modern Japan* (Portland: Ringgold Inc, 2012), 57-59. Menno Fitski, *Kakiemon Porcelain: A Handbook* (Leiden: University Press, 2011), 61-63.

⁵ See for discussion, for instance, Patricia F. Ferguson, ‘Japan China’ Taste and Elite Ceramic Consumption in 18th-century England: Revising the Narrative, chap. in *The Country House: Material Culture and Consumption*, eds. Jon Stobart and Andrew Hann (Swindon: Historic England, 2016), 119-21.

⁶ Elisabeth Schwarm, *Das Inventarium über das Palais zu Alt-Dresden. Anno. 1721 und die Bestandsaufnahme der Porzellane und Kunstwerke im Holländischen Palais*, chap. in *Japanisches Palais zu Dresden. Die Königliche Porzellansammlung Augustus des Starken*, eds. Ulrich Pietsch and Cordula Bishoff (München: Hirmer, 2014), 103-107.

⁷ Ingelore Menzhausen-Handt, “Das erste Inventar der Dresdener Porzellansammlung,” *Jahrbuch der Staatlichen Kunstsammlungen Dresden* 1 (1959): 104-09; Elisabeth Schwarm, *Das Inventarium*, 106.

predominance of polychrome Japanese porcelain as one of the key features of Augustus' porcelain collection also manifested his strategic approach in positioning his collection vis-à-vis that of Frederick William I of Prussia (1657-1713) in Berlin. Frederick's collection was the largest of its kind in Europe at the time, which primarily focused on blue and white Chinese objects.⁸

Curiously, collecting East Asian porcelain in Europe had belonged almost exclusively to the female cultural domain until around 1700, according to Bischoff. The aforementioned Frederick I of Prussia was one of the earliest male pioneers who started engaging with collecting porcelain, thereby dissolving its close association with femininity in Germany and the Netherlands. Accordingly, an increasing number of male members of European royal families and aristocracy furnished their state apartments in a Chinoiserie-style with porcelain in the 1710s and the 1720s; "Chinois" lacquer, mirror cabinets, and porcelain subsequently enjoyed rising popularity (fig. D).⁹

Symbolically, porcelain objects were endorsed with both cultural and political significance in the early modern European political world. The political power attached to porcelain can be differently contextualized according to gender; porcelain, especially its "collecting," and investing in its manufactories symbolized political power for elite male rulers in eighteenth-century Europe, whereas its use served to heighten the political identity of elite women.¹⁰ Augustus the Strong's obsession with East Asian porcelain, his creation of ostentatious collections and palaces dedicated to them, his massive promotion of technical knowledge, as well as his launch of the Meissen manufactory for production of 'Dresden China' in 1709 were undertaken to solidify his wealth and position within the European socio-political landscape.

Porcelain's materiality with its smooth, semi-translucent surface seems predestined to be decorated with pictorial motifs. Despite scant textual evidence, the design of Japanese Imari export porcelain clearly indicates that the porcelain workshop utilized contemporary woodblock prints of *ukiyo-e* (Pictures of the Floating World) as one of its visual pattern resources for decorating.¹¹ This practice is in line with other circumstances of Edo-period artisans who produced craft objects, as they often sought sources of inspiration for pictorial motifs in paintings and prints. Belonging to popular visual media in Japan during the Edo period, *ukiyo-e* featured images of beauty and pleasure, depicting celebrities, famous places, and urban life (fig. E). Since inception in the mid-seventeenth century, *bijinga* (images of beauty 美人画)—one of the most celebrated subjects represented handsome young men and beautiful women *à la mode*. Their panache, highly-stylized representation, and affordability made it attractive for people of different social strata, which caused *ukiyo-e* prints of *bijinga* to become a visual catalogue of the latest fashion and a visual source for craft workshops. Featuring the motif of a female figure glancing over her shoulder, two women are positioned between screens and sprays of flowers on either side of the plate's front rim; this decoration in *kinrande* style documents a cross-media use of a popular subject for *ukiyo-e*'s *bijinga* images since the mid-seventeenth century (fig. B). The pictorial theme represents courtesan images in the *ukiyo-e* genre, and is strongly reminiscent of the iconography of the Third Princess (*Onna sannomiya* 女三宮) from the classic novel *The Tale of Genji* (*Genji monogatari* 源氏物語). In the original tale, the Third Princess was following her escaping cat and unintentionally revealed herself on the veranda to her

⁸ Cordula Bischoff, *Die Bedeutung des Japanischen Palais. Die Porzellansammlungspolitik der sächsischen Kurfürst-Könige*, chap. in *Japanisches Palais in Dresden: Die Königliche Porzellansammlung Augusts des Starken*, eds. Ulrich Pietsch and Cordula Bischoff (München: Hirmer, 2014), 290; Renate Eikermann und Julia Weber, *Meißener Porzellan mit Dekoren nach ostasiatischen Vorbildern* (München: Hirmer 2013), 1:70-83.

⁹ Bischoff, *Die Bedeutung des Japanischen Palais*, 288.

¹⁰ Susan Broomhall and Jacqueline Van Gent, *The Gendered Power of Porcelain among Early Modern European Dynasties*, chap. in *Gender and Political Culture in Early Modern Europe, 1400-1800*, eds. James Daybell and Svante Norrhem (London, New York: Routledge, 2017), 62; Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, "Women, China, and Consumer Culture in Eighteenth-Century England," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 29, n. 2 (Winter, 1995/1996): 157.

¹¹ See, for instance, Nera Laura and Manuele Scagliola, eds., *East Asian Ceramics: The Laura Collection* (Torino: Umberto Allemandi & Co, 2012), 320; *Dresden Europa Welt*, 74; 78; and 90.

future lover. Following this storyline, she is commonly depicted as a beauty with a cat (or a dog in other versions) behind or next to a window blind. In the popular imagery of *ukiyo-e*, the cat is often depicted as disclosing the naked foot of the woman while she glances back and tries to tame her pet by playing with the skirt of her robe. Symbolic of uncontrolled lust and a metaphor for the courtesan's sexual ability, the agile cat turns the woman into a pictorial parody of the courtesan.¹² Focusing on the motif's play on female visibility by marketing their beauty and femininity, it also suggests the commonality of both courtesans and the Imari ware itself: images of beauty and luxurious Imari ware were both a commodity and a commodified object of desire.

Listed in the 1721-1727 inventory of the great East Asian porcelain collection of Augustus the Strong (1670-1733), the polychrome porcelain figurine reproduced here reflects the Genroku era's typical representational mode in the manner of the *ukiyo-e* designer Nishikawa Sukenobu (1671-1750); the robe's bold design and the hairstyle signify fashionable women of the merchant class or a courtesan (fig. C). Figurines such as this were in high demand among Japanese export porcelain, and several extant objects in the Porzellansammlung Dresden collection document the Dresden court's fascination for them. Curiously, the special circumstances surrounding the *ukiyo-e* prints as visual resources for Imari porcelain were possibly promoted by Westerners. The decorative transformation of another type of export object during seventeenth-century Edo Japan—Japanese export lacquer—is a case in point. The changing tastes of VOC customers engendered a shift in lacquer design. In reaction to the demand from the Dutch East India Company, local producers discarded the previously popular style of the geometric *namban* style (南蛮様式, literally "Southern Barbarian") featuring border designs and lavish use of mother of pearl, and replaced it with a radically new 'Pictorial Style' beginning around the 1640s. This new design remained dominant until the VOC discontinued official orders for large lacquer furniture in 1693.¹³ This stylistic change, again, portrays the decoration pattern of Chinese "transitional" porcelain from the 1630s and 1640s, inspired by the Dutch taste for realism and for elaborate depictions of landscapes, figures, flowers, plants, and animals.¹⁴ Given the fact that *ukiyo-e* prints were commercially circulated in the local market and available as popular collectibles at a reasonable price, it seems almost self-evident that Imari porcelain workshops resorted to the easy access visual catalogues of contemporary beauties. Still, while further research is necessary, the *ukiyo-e*-related motifs on Dresden Imari porcelain can be reframed within the broader context of the emergence of a pictorial style across media in East Asian export objects by reconsidering the importance of the Dutch VOC as a design agent promoting figural decoration.

Edo Japan was ruled by the Tokugawa shogunate, who enforced a policy of national seclusion from 1639 to the mid-1850s. This policy severely restricted foreign access into Japan and closely controlled all foreign trade through the port of Nagasaki. Japanese color woodblock prints had largely remained unknown to Europe, partly due to the strict export embargo of items such as maps and pictures by the Tokugawa shogunate and partly owing to the lack of European demand in contrast to other luxury Japanese export items such as kimonos, lacquer, and porcelain.¹⁵ The popular and artistic reception of *ukiyo-e*

¹² See *Dresden Europa Welt*, 2017, 78-79. See also for a detailed discussion on the visual parody of the Third Princess Episode in *ukiyo-e*, Doris Croissant, "Visions of the Third Princess. Gendering Spaces in 'The Tale of Genji' Illustrations," *Arts Asiatiques* 60 (2005): 103-20.

¹³ Christiaan Jörg, "Japanese Export Lacquer for the Dutch Market," *ICOMOS* 35 (2000): 43-46; Oliver Impey, "Japanese Export Lacquer: The Fine Period," *ICOMOS* 35 (2000): 11-18; Teresa Canepa, *Silk, Porcelain and Lacquer: China and Japan and Their Trade with Western Europe and the New World 1500-1644* (London: Paul Holberton Publishing, 2016), 411.

¹⁴ Jörg, "Japanese Export Lacquer for the Dutch Market," 44.

¹⁵ Before the opening of Japan to the world in 1854 Japanese printed books including *ukiyo-e* pictures entered into the collections of the Royal Cabinet in The Hague and Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris via private Dutch collectors. These illustrated books, however, remained unnoticed by the contemporaries. For a detailed discussion, see Matthi Forrer, "The Discovery of Japanese Illustrated Books in Europe and the United States," *The World of the Japanese*

prints in the West began only after the first wave of the Japan craze in the second half of the nineteenth century. Against this backdrop, the trans-medial translation of *ukiyo-e* subjects through the medium of eighteenth-century Japanese export porcelain, as demonstrated above, deserves more heightened attention by future scholarship. It not only serves as a starting point in probing connectivity between different media and cultures. This early example of borrowing *ukiyo-e* imagery to export objects also has great potential in destabilizing previous discussions on the cross-cultural impact of images of Japanese women, expanding its temporal scope, and redefining the research field.

Female Imagery in Nineteenth-Century Japanese Photography: Crossing Gazes and Discourses

Coincidentally, photography belonged to the group of commodities that enjoyed heightened popularity in the West after the “opening” of Japan in the mid-nineteenth century. After the arrival of the American “Black Ship” under Commodore Matthew C. Perry (1794-1858) in 1853, Japan’s policy of national seclusion was put an end. The United States–Japan Treaty of Amity and Commerce of 1858 stipulated Japan’s opening of Hakodate, Hyōgo, Nagasaki, Niigata, and Yokohama (Kanagawa) as treaty ports for foreign commerce and settlement. Once a fishing village, Yokohama emerged as the most important port by 1867. It became “the great centre of foreign traffic in Japan (...) [due to its] facility of communication from abroad, and (...) its position on the seaboard of the central portion of the empire.”¹⁶ The new shipping route made possible by the construction of the Suez Canal in 1869 created a shortcut around the Cape of Good Hope. Additionally, the growing inland infrastructure for rail transport—especially the trans-continental rail service through Canada and the United States in the late 1860s—along with the development of North American intercontinental and sea transportation networks between Europe, North America and East Asia, stimulated greater mobility and fostered globetrotter tourism in the early 1870s. Thomas Cook’s first world tour in 1872 triggered the age of round-the-world tourism, bringing an increasing number of western visitors to Japan (**fig. F**). By the mid-1870s, the presence of tourists and steamship agencies became a part of Yokohama’s cityscape. Yokohama became one of the most prosperous port cities in Meiji Japan with the largest international population and overseas trade, as witnessed by W. E. Griffith:

The four great steamship agencies at present in Yokohama are the American Pacific Mail, the Oriental and Occidental; the English Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company; and the French Messageries Maritimes Paquet Postes Francais. The Ocean Steamship Company has also an agency here. The native lines of mail steamers *Mistu Bishi* (Three Diamonds) also make Yokohama their terminus. The coming orthodox bridal tour and round-the-world trip will soon be made via Japan first, then Asia, Europe, and America.¹⁷

Illustrated Book: The Gerhard Pulverer Collection. Freer Gallery of Art, The Smithsonian Institution, accessed June 21, 2018, <https://pulverer.si.edu/node/172>.

¹⁶ Nicholas Belfield Dennys, ed., *The Treaty Ports of China and Japan: A Complete Guide to the Open Ports of Those Countries, Together with Peking, Yedo, Hongkong and Macao. Forming Guide Book & Vade Macum for Travellers, Merchants, and Residents in General* (Hong Kong: A. Shortrede and Co., 1867), 580-81.

¹⁷ William Elliot Griffith, *The Mikado’s Empire: Book II, Personal Experiences, Observations, and Studies in Japan, 1870-1875* (New York: Harper, 1876), 339.

Upon returning home, long-time Western residents in Japan, including diplomats, merchants, missionaries, as well as sailors and globetrotters who had toured East Asia, brought back souvenir photographs purchased in Asian treaty ports. Yokohama, one of Japan's largest settlements for non-Japanese residents, also offered shopping for Western curio hunters, as well as a number of photo ateliers and vendors targeting Western customers. Many extant photographs from nineteenth-century and early-twentieth century Japan in the Dresden collection of the Museum für Völkerkunde are from globetrotters, such as German scholars or members of German military delegations, reflecting the broad social strata of those visiting Japan by the early-twentieth century (fig. G).

Initially imported from the West, photography's technical aspects prompted Japanese practitioners to ask for instructions from scientists and European and North American amateur and professional photographers. Once the technology reached Japan in 1848, it took several years for scholars in the Kagoshima domain to produce a photographic image, due to the lack of any available knowledge on using the first daguerreotype camera.¹⁸ In 1857, they successfully produced a blurred portrait of Shimazu Nariakira depicting the feudal lord of the Kagoshima domain; it is the oldest known extant Japanese photograph. The first wave of Western commercial photographers to take photographs of Japan coincided with the significant growth of Japanese trading ports circa 1860.¹⁹ Japanese commercial photographers also emerged during the early 1860s, with the opening of photography studios; Ueno Hikoma 上野彦馬 (1838-1904) in Nagasaki by 1862; Shimooka Renjō 下岡蓮杖 (1823-1914) in Yokohama; and in Osaka by Uchida Kuichi 内田九一 (1865, 1844-1875). At this juncture, the first generation of professional Japanese photographers emerged. According to the *Graded Evaluation of Tokyo Photographers (Tōkyō shashin mitate kurabe 東京写真見立競)* published in March 1877, major Japanese cities boasted a great number of photography studios, with the number of registered Japanese-run studios in Tokyo reportedly reaching over 100.²⁰ By 1891, the flourishing port city of Yokohama boasted ten Japanese-run photography studios catering to non-Japanese customers; 11 years later the total number of Yokohama-based souvenir photography studios had risen to 15.²¹ The Czech globetrotter Josef Kořenský noted in his diary in 1893 that major souvenir photography studios of the 1890s in Yokohama run by Kusakabe Kimbei 日下部金兵衛 (1841-1932), Ogawa Kazumasa 小川一真 (1860-1929), and Tamamura Kōzaburō 玉村康三郎 (1856-?) were virtually flooded by incoming orders from foreign tourists.²² The photographs from Japan discussed in this volume emerged from this phase, in which native commercial photographers dominated Japan's tourist market. Photography as a modern visualizing technology became an indispensable source of information on distant cityscapes, landscapes, objects, and peoples within a few years of its invention. With its mimetic power to capture objects in a seemingly authentic manner, this technology was a predestined substitute for earlier Orientalist images and pictorial illustrations such as drawings and paintings. Japanese subjects in Meiji souvenir photography were predominantly connoted by femininity (see figs. 3-5, 3-6; 10-4, 10-5, 10-7). Among the Kusakabe Kimbei studio repertoire in Yokohama, for instance, more than half of

¹⁸ The very first daguerreotype reached Japan five years earlier, in 1843. It was included in a shipment to Nagasaki merchant Toshinojō Ueno, and was returned for unknown reasons.

¹⁹ For details on the first decades of photography in Japan, see, for instance, Anne Wilkes Tucker et al., *The History of Japanese Photography* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2003). See also Terry Bennett, *Photography in Japan, 1853-1912* (Boston: Tuttle, 2006); Karen M. Fraser, *Photography and Japan* (London: Reaktion Books, 2011).

²⁰ See, for instance, Naoyuki Kinoshita, *Shashin garon* [Theory on Photographic Painting] (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1996), 22; Maki Fukuoka, "Selling Portrait Photographs: Early Photography Business in Asakusa, Japan," *History of Photography* 35, n. 4 (2011): 355-73.

²¹ Sebastian Dobson, *Yokohama Shashin*, chap. in *Art and Artifice: Japanese Photographs of the Meiji Era: Selections from the Jean S. and Frederic A. Sharf Collection at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, eds. Sebastian Dobson, Anne Nishimura Morse, and Frederic Sharf (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 2004), 28.

²² Josef Kořenský, *Japonsuko: Behemiajin ryokōka ga mita 1893-nen no Nihon* [Japonsko. Japan of 1893 seen by a Bohemian traveler], trans. Suzuki Fumihiko (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 2001 [Prague, 1895]), 42.

the “costume” photographs—depicting genre scenes of domestic lives in Japan as visual representations of cultural differences—featured exclusively Japanese women, whereas only one-sixth of the costume images from the Kimbei studio depicted Japanese men as the primary subject.²³ The popular Japan craze and infatuation with Japonisme within Western artistic circles was fueled by the influx of Japanese woodblock prints of beautiful women and landscapes and enhanced by publications such as *Le Japon artistique*; this publication was issued by the influential Paris-based art dealer Samuel Bing. These media surely contributed to the popularization of images of Japanese women in nineteenth-century Europe and North America (**fig. H**).²⁴ Interestingly, Japanese souvenir photography studios—often located in shopping areas for foreign tourists, allowing them to gain first-hand insight into the tastes of their clients—catered to this fad. A large number of post-1880s Japanese souvenir photographs depicting Japanese women adopted iconography similar to *bijinga* depictions.²⁵ The predominance of female imagery, however, also seems to have been a cross-cultural phenomenon typical of the nineteenth-century image industry, as demonstrated by contemporary colonial photography and its obsession with exotic images of femininity. As part of the commercial tourist industries based in thriving, cosmopolitan port cities in Meiji Japan, Japanese souvenir photographers needed to anticipate remarks by commentators such as J. W. Murray: “In all countries, the most interesting objects in the eyes of a stranger, are the female population.”²⁶

Swayed by a nineteenth-century Orientalist ideology and enforced by the male gaze constituting the majority of its clientele, female images in early photography from Japan and East Asia generally emerged as a trope, embedded as a cross-section of symbolic hegemonic power relationships between the West and Japan. The mode of photographic representations of local women was frequently informed by what Behdad and Gartlan termed “photo-exoticism,” reducing people to ethnographic types and exotic objects for visual pleasure.²⁷ Women, in the context of nineteenth-century power asymmetries between gender and nation, were easy to objectify as a visual commodity representing the Cultural Other.

The mode of commodification of Japanese women was both explicit and implicit (**figs. I, J, and K**). Souvenir photography from the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries from Japan often captures the power asymmetry between the West and Japan symbolically. A Meiji souvenir photograph featuring geisha on display as part of a *harimise* 張見世 living presentation of courtesans embodies a vivid example (**fig. L**). Aside from curious visitors and voyeurs, *harimise* displays of courtesans and geishas in a latticed

²³ Mio Wakita, *Staging Desires: Japanese Femininity in Kusakabe Kimbei's Nineteenth-Century Souvenir Photography* (Berlin: Reimer, 2013), 10.

²⁴ For a discussion on nineteenth-century Japonisme and the Japan craze in Europe and North America, see, for instance, Gabriel P. Weisberg, ed., *Japonisme: Japanese Influence on French Art, 1854-1910* (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1975); Klaus Berger, *Japonisme in Western Painting from Whistler to Matisse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Julia Meech-Pekarik and Gabriel P. Weisberg, *Japonisme Comes to America: The Japanese Impact on the Graphic Arts 1876-1925* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1990); Gabriel P. Weisberg, Anna-Maria von Bonsdorff, and Hanne Selkokari eds., *Japanomania in the Nordic Countries, 1875-1918* (Brussels: Mercatorfonds, 2016). The reproduction of **fig. H**, in University of Wisconsin, Madison Library, last accessed May 25, 2018 <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/DLDecArts/DLDecArts-idx?type=turn&entity=DLDecArts.JaponArtistiqueII.p0143&id=DLDecArts.JaponArtistiqueII&isize=M>

²⁵ For a detailed discussion and its multi-layered significance, see Wakita, *Staging Desires*, 163-75.

²⁶ Letterpress text by James William Murray accompanying Felice Beato's photograph *Out for a Walk* in the Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs. The New York Public Library. Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

²⁷ Ali Behdad and Luke Gartlan, Introduction, in *Photography's Orientalism. New Essays on Colonial Representation*, eds. Ali Behdad and Luke Gartlan (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2013), 2. Studies by Eleanor M. Hight and David Odo explore the ethnographic approach, mirroring how late-nineteenth-century Japanese souvenir photography has been shaped and viewed. See for instance, Eleanor M. Hight, *The Many Lives of Beato's Beauties*, chap. in *Colonialist Photography: Imag(in)ing Race and Place*, eds. Eleanor M. Hight and Gary David Sampson (London: Routledge, 2002), 126-158; David Odo, *The Journey of 'A Good Type': From Artistry to Ethnography in Early Japanese Photographs* (Cambridge, MA: Peabody Museum Press, 2015).

parlor facing the street had been an integral part of the Yoshiwara pleasure quarters in today's Tokyo from its inception in the seventeenth century until the beginning of the twentieth century. Yoshiwara and its close association with forced, yet legal, prostitution fueled both heated discussions on human rights and popular curiosity among Westerners after the opening of Japan. Yoshiwara and its courtesans became frequent objects of discussion in Western travel accounts of the late-nineteenth century. Heavily dictated by an invisible yet culturally, politically, and economically potent and powerful West, here the camera captures young apprentices in the front row and courtesans in formal kimonos with the brothel's crest standing in the back. This photograph effectively visualizes the double exposure of the objectifying gaze cast by both local/physical and Western/virtual Yoshiwara visitors onto the women.

Yet, some other extant photographs from the Dresden collection prove photography's potential to disrupt mechanisms of the Orientalist vision. A series of post-1880 souvenir photographs from Japan featuring a laughing geisha are rare examples showing the exuberance of Japanese female models (**fig. K**). Contrary to the common practice both for local, personal and commercial use, the anonymous photographer explicitly tried to capture the full emotion of the female model. The image was meticulously constructed; the layers of kimono garment and *obi* sash were carefully hand-tinted in beautiful colors to comply with contemporary fashion trends for young women. With a slightly tipped head and an elegantly held umbrella, the female model was obviously instructed to pose in a dancer's manner. Her cheerful facial expression and effortlessly elegant posture display a set of what Pierre Bourdieu termed symbolic-cultural capital. Cultural capital is, similar to tea practice or other artistic pursuits, the form of cultivated dispositions, acquired over time, embodied and internalized as one's habitus. Successfully performed, they turn into a symbolic-cultural capital to surpass class differences and generate social distinction.²⁸ The model's perfectly trained body language embodies a subversive act, leading the imposed power asymmetries between the West and Japan as the exotic Other *ad absurdum* by her active performance of a symbolic distinction. This particular photograph demonstrates an attempt by an anonymous Japanese photographer to counter the invisible but inherent power structure manifested by the photograph, expressing a "resistance" against the passive commodification of local female under the gaze of Westerners, through a gleaming smile.

How Women were Framed, Imagined, and Constructed? The Cross-Media View from Late Imperial China

As *topoi* of the visual imaginary, the transnational profusion of Chinese female images was a cross-media phenomenon initiated in the early modern period; they appeared frequently on the surfaces of exported porcelain, large-sized wallpaper and illustrations, and, by the end of the nineteenth century became protagonists in early commercial photography. In addition to the widely-circulated porcelain vessels bearing female figures, the European market for other media representing Chinese beauties was introduced by Athanasius Kircher's (1602-1680) encyclopedic book entitled *China Illustrata* in which two engravings of

²⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Forms of Capital*, chap. in *Handbook for Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. J.G. Richardson (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 47-9; Bridget Fowler, *Pierre Bourdieu and Cultural Theory: Critical Investigations* (London: Sage, 1997), 28.

Chinese women were made available to European audiences (**fig. M**).²⁹ These two images greatly enriched the European interest in Chinese women begun by Tomé Pires (1465?-1524/1540) in his *Suma Oriental que trata do Mar Roxo até aos Chins*.³⁰

Although Kircher's book was influential, the information within was based on second-hand sources that he received from overseas missionaries. Next, in response to a growing interest in Chinese elite cultures, Louis le Comte S. J. (1655-1728)—who participated in the French Jesuit mission to Beijing—published three volumes under the title *Nouveau mémoire sur l'état présent de la Chine* (1696)—a pioneer work that marked the beginning of French Sinology, in which an engraving of a well-dressed Chinese woman (*Dame Chinoise en deshabilité*) is accompanied by detailed descriptions of physical appearance, costumes and even gestures (**fig. N**).³¹ Following in his footsteps, Joachim Bouvet S. J. (1656-1730), who also worked as a missionary in Beijing, published a costume book entitled *L'Etat présent de la Chine en figures* in 1697.³² Based on authentic Chinese sources, this detailed account of the proper dress codes for Han Chinese and Manchu noble women was presented to European audiences for the first time in color (**fig. O**). These Chinese women's bodies are not just decorative subjects of European print culture, however; in this volume, these depictions are explored terms of questions of associated material culture, trans-mediality, and transcultural viewership. Representations of women dynamically encode the changing status of women's social standing, their expanding engagement in mainstream culture, and technical changes; that is, they mirrored larger shifts in elite visual cultures.

Framing of Chinese Female Bodies

Dancing, reclining seductively, or engaging in an intimate conversation are explored in the essays of the first section of this volume. Writers address the ways in which female bodies were displayed in painting, print, and in front of the lens during the Early Modern and Modern periods from the sixteenth century to the late nineteenth centuries. Here the keywords “body” and “movement” (both broadly defined) are critically analyzed.

In imperial China, the Confucian view of a family-centered society prevailed; among didactic narratives were female-centered images. Women were expected to be morally flawless and obliged to fulfill expectations such as carrying on the ancestral line, raising heirs, managing the household and pleasing their husbands with their beauty and talents in the arts of dancing and singing. Their beauty, however, was also

²⁹ For a general introduction concerning the impact of Chinese exported commodities on European art, refer to Lother Ledderose, *Chinese Influence on European Art, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries*, chap. in *China and Europe: Images and Influences in Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. Thomas H. C. Lee (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1991), 221-49. The earliest version of Kircher's text was published in Latin, *China monumentis qua sacris qua profanis, nec non nariis naturæ & artis spectaculis, aliarumque rerum memorabilium argumentis illustrata* [Illustrations of China's sacred monuments, arts of nature and spectacles, and other memorable things] (Amsterdam, 1667). For a short descriptive introduction of this publication, consult Baleslaw Szczesniak, “Athanasius Kircher's: China Illustrata,” *Osiris* 10 (1952): 385-411. A detailed, analytical study of Kircher's two engravings of Chinese women is provided by Dawn Odell, *Chinese 'Paintings of Beautiful Women' and Images of Asia in a Jesuit Text*, chap. in *Ut picture amor: The Reflexive Imagery of Love in Artistic Theory and Practice, 1500-1700*, eds. Walter S. Melion, Joanna Woodall, Michael Zell (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2017), 106-38.

³⁰ Tomé Pires, *Suma Oriental que trata do Mar Roxo até aos Chins* (Lisbon, 1515).

³¹ Louis Le Comte, *Nouveaux mémoires sur l'état présent de la Chine* [New Memoirs about the Present State of China] (Paris: Anisson, 1696), 1:215.

³² Joachim Bouvet, *L'Etat présent de la Chine en figures* [The present state of China with engraved figures], illustrations by Pierre Giffart (Paris: P. Giffart, 1697).

sometimes considered hazardous and harmful, as their appearance in Ming-Qing exported porcelain suggests. By analyzing the trans-medial copying of a widely circulated dancer motif, Feng He argues for theatricality as a critical concept for defining “narrative porcelain” and explains how the female figure’s performative movements were integrated into the designs on porcelain surfaces. To highlight the ways in which these visual elements were embedded with cultural and political implications, he focuses on the mechanisms of copying Qiu Ying’s 仇英 (1494?-1552) “paintings of court women” (*shinühua* 仕女畫).³³

Serving as a major source of pictorial inspiration, Qiu Ying’s dancing figures were well known by his contemporaries and copied extensively in a number of Ming woodblock prints with different connotations; they embodied various historical tales, as revealed by the visible inconsistencies in the decorative and environmental settings of the prints. In this process of copying and altering the figures, the compositional features of Qiu Ying’s dancers or, in Feng He’s words the “theatricality” embedded in the figures’ movements, first provide a vehicle to represent “critical moments in the storyline, and to guide the visual imagination of the reader to the furthest extent possible.” (He, “Theatricality and Trans-Media Motifs in Early Qing Narrative Porcelain.”) The modes in which this popular motif was presented suggest the Confucian view of feminine charms as “poison” and reference the historical lessons made for *junzi* 君子, or male elders. Transferred onto porcelain surfaces, this kind of theatricality was greatly enhanced by multiple spectators; the addition of a second, and even third, viewer synoptically represents the performative moments in the tale.

In the realm of late nineteenth century photography, theatrical poses disappeared mainly due to the technical limitations of early cameras. Instead, bodies were staged in static positions, consistent with compositional formats used in Chinese ancestral portraits. As part of Chinese visual modernity in the late nineteenth century, women were exposed to public voyeurism through this revolutionary medium. Courtesans were one of the pioneering social groups who first leveraged this technology; in addition to its liberating forces it was also linked to colonial hierarchy and surveillance. Foreigners were the major clients of treaty port photographic studios.

Focusing on three travel albums containing souvenir photos held in the Dresden collection of the Museum für Völkerkunde, Clara Tang discusses how women were staged, viewed, and consumed in photographic spaces by outlining cultural scenarios that might have affected the making of these constructed views. To capture the shifts in female representation, she assesses consumption, questions of publicity, and privacy and their entanglement with popular visual culture in Chinese cosmopolitan centers. Many of these photo prints were produced by foreign photographers based in major treaty ports, such as William Saunders (1832-1892), before they were incorporated into German collections under the guise of ethnographic objects in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The making of these images was not merely conditioned by the gaze of the male photographers who brought them into being, but also by their target audiences and the contemporary cultural milieu that framed foreign encounters in ethnographic terms.

Through the close comparison of two photographs attributed to Saunders’ studio, Tang identifies two types of courtesans, who established themselves as the major forces of advertising for early photography in China. Unlike Japanese souvenir photography sold to foreign customers, where images of female beauties were considered as collectable “objects,” in Chinese examples of courtesan-photographs, they were not specifically made for outright sale. The first case Tang identifies involved courtesans with lower social status who would have themselves photographed as a means of increasing their visibility and advertising their beauty and eroticism, or to use as mementos for their patrons. In line with the more stereotypical

³³ In the translation of *shinühua* 仕女畫 (“paintings of court ladies”) I follow James Cahill’s research, who first called attention to this category in addition to the consideration of *meirenhua* 美人畫 (“paintings of beautiful women”) (see footnote 35); literally, *shinühua* translates as “scholarly women,” which is the interpretation Sarah E. Fraser uses in her Introductory essay in this volume.

elite women promoted by modern print culture, the second case is epitomized by the figures' dignified clothing, elegant poses and the intimate spaces in which they were photographed, encouraging a voyeuristic gaze upon modern women with their "desirable literacy." These elements emphasize this style of photography's shared identity with the fashionable lives of contemporary social elites.

In the late nineteenth century, formats of courtesan portraits were multifarious and the ways that courtesans were photographed had a range of cultural implications. As the prototype of medium-sized portraits, the *carte-de-visite* had become an important aspect of Chinese Modernity in treaty ports. They were inexpensive, portable, easily exchanged, and therefore soon favored by high-ranking courtesans.³⁴ In these photographic spaces rendered by the male gaze, the abundance of seated female bodies were typically framed by Western-style luxury furnishings; styles were typically either Victorian or *Art Nouveau*. Conceptually bridging this in the early material culture of women's living space, Li Ye, in her essay, "When Women Sat Down: Representation of Women and their Living Quarters in Early Modern China" keenly captures how the shift in the use of these "visual frames" stemmed from an early painting tradition. Viewed from the perspective of female bodies as objects, low status furniture, such as the bench or the Chinese couch, she argues, "provides enough space for the lady to stretch out her body, in effect, reinforcing the male expectation for feminine posture." In contrast, when valuable interior items and gendered furniture made for presenting women were employed, it was for the purpose of displaying the taste and social status of male heads of household, who could afford to purchase luxurious furnishings. It was a common practice in imperial China, often seen in the genre of *meirenhua* 美人畫 ("paintings of beautiful women") or *shinühua* ("paintings of court ladies").³⁵ It continued to be perpetuated in the nineteenth century and impacted the way that Chinese women and courtesans were photographed in foreign studios. The roots of this compositional frame, however, probably lies in the Saxon court of the eighteenth century, where a great number of exported Chinese porcelain bearing idealized beautiful women were amassed. Among these generic images that were copied over time in architectural drawings, prints and European-made porcelain and stoneware, was the beauty and eroticism of these seated bodies, often enhanced by their luxury seats or surrounding furniture, which soon became stereotyped icons that formed the European view of exotic females of East Asia. They satisfied the European desire for exotic women, while the ideological implications of Confucian femininity embedded in the designs remained unknown to foreign consumers.

In Wenzhuo Qiu's view, these stereotypes were soon transcended by the rising figure of the "new goddess" inspired by European modernity. Lying on a *méridienne* and staged seductively in front of the camera lens, references to the Parisian "goddesses" of love and sex were obvious. During the time of the colonial expansion, France became the international center of modernity. Meanwhile the European desire for colonial and orientalized female bodies increased, as reflected in the pictorial paradigms established in the contemporary portraits of odalisques and courtesans. The Renaissance Venus, as Qiu argues, that

³⁴ Jason C. Kuo, *Visual Culture in Shanghai 1850s-1930s* (Cork: Global LLC, 2007), 104; Frank Dikötter, *Things Modern: Material Culture and Everyday Life in China* (London: Hurst, 2007), 245.

³⁵ James Cahill addressed the topic of "beautiful women paintings" in an early lecture "The Flower and the Mirror: Representation of Women in Late Chinese Painting," at the Getty Research Institute, spring 1994; the unpublished lecture notes, entitled "Women in Chinese Painting," are available online, last accessed August 1, 2018 jamescahill.info. Cahill's two major published manuscripts on the subject are: *Pictures for Use and Pleasure: Vernacular Painting in High Qing China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 1-65; and *Meiren hua: Paintings of Beautiful Women in China*, chap. in *Beauty Revealed: Images of Women in Qing Dynasty Chinese Paintings*, eds. James Cahill, Sarah Handler, and Julia M. White (Berkeley: University of California, Berkeley Art Museum; Pacific Film Archive, 2013), 8-22.

served as a major source for photographic compositions, was not unknown in both the eighteenth-century Qing court and Canton. In fact, the nude body of Venus made in export porcelain was in demand among European clients.³⁶

Known as the “Paris of the East,” to which foreign photographers flocked, Shanghai became the major zone for the entanglement of European and East Asian modernities. The “new goddess” motif was employed both in the making of catalogues of brothel women and in *carte-de-visite* that upper-class courtesans used for self-promotion. Their photos featuring reclining postures evoked an eroticism equal to famous courtesan paintings, such as Edouard Manet’s (1832-1883) *Olympia*. Their representations suggested they were more than Treaty Port sex workers; as pioneers of Chinese modernity, they consumed the most fashionable European items and luxuries, and utilized the art of photography. As a colonial medium, photography therefore became a “collective assemblage” involving the foreign view, the gaze of male consumers, and the self-affirmation of the photographed subject. To a certain extent, the “new goddess” created in the photographic space parallels the visual rhetoric of the seated bodies that stemmed from earlier Chinese visual culture.

The Construction of Women in China’s Patriarchal Visual Culture

The second section of essays, entitled “Ideals Imagined/Visual Topoi of the Imaginary,” looks back at the early modern period and re-contextualizes how women were idealized, imagined, and represented. As did Li Ye, Yang Zhao analyzes material culture, with an emphasis on sartorial expression in relation to female representation on early Qing exported porcelain. After presenting a wide range of examples, she keenly notes the absence of Manchu females and, at the same time, the persistence of Han Chinese women dressed in Ming-style clothing on porcelain. In the realm of Qing court painting, this paradigm also persisted until the reign of the Yongzheng 雍正 Emperor (r. 1723-1735).³⁷ Serving as the visual frame for the female figure, some of the gendered attire and imperial accessories reflect male expectations as well as the patriarchal values of Confucian society that Manchus inherited from the Ming dynasty.

As subject of the male gaze, women were expected to be demure, delicate, and elegant. Some of the fashions that greatly affected women’s physical activities and mobility helped to enforce these standards. By juxtaposing the femininity, beauty, and submissiveness embedded in Han Chinese female attire accompanied by abundant representations of masculine Manchu warriors on porcelain, Zhao leads us to one of the prevailing cultural oppositions in early Qing society: the Manchu shift from the periphery, as cultural outsiders, to central and orthodox protagonists. While Manchu males were often depicted as practitioners of martial arts, hunting or fighting in war scenes, Han Chinese men were self-feminized through less martial attire, emphasizing a rejection of Manchu masculine ideals. This explanation touches on a complicated, and thus far under-researched issue in Qing court painting and provides a reassessment of Qing representations of gender in “pleasure paintings for the emperor” (*xingletu* 行樂圖).³⁸

Did Manchu noble women wear Ming-style attire? Although the objects and figures in Yongzheng Emperor’s *Twelve Beauties* (*Shier meiren tu* 十二美人圖) and those in associated Qing court material

³⁶ Christopher M. S. Johns, *China and the Church: Chinoiserie in Global Context* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2016), 57-8.

³⁷ Wu Hung, *The Double Screen: Medium and Presentation in Chinese Painting* (London: Reaktion, 1996), 211-15; Kristina Kleutghen, *Imperial Illusions: Crossing Pictorial Boundaries in the Qing Palaces* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015), 241-69.

³⁸ Wu Hung, “Emperor’s Masquerade: ‘Costume Portraits’ of Yongzheng and Qianlong,” *Orientations* 26, n. 7 (1995): 25-41.

culture are depicted with attention to historical fidelity, no evidence survives from the Qing imperial household—in both Beijing and Taipei collections—that indicates that Han Chinese clothing was actually a feature of Qing court attire (**fig. P**). Yet the ardent Ming character of these costumes in the realm of representation—albeit anachronistic—might suggest another conclusion: that Ming dynastic clothing was actually worn at the Qing court (yet that does not seem to be the case).³⁹ In other words, the standards and paradigms of beautiful women that were established by Ming literati culture were, in fact, widely accepted in the Qing visual world even if solely in the realm of imagination.⁴⁰

Yizhou Wang in “Narrative and Sequence in the Three Dimensions on Dresden Porcelain: The Theme of ‘Xixiang ji,’” explores an early Qing text entitled *Manual of Beautiful Women* and offers an interpretation of the rise of female protagonists on narrative porcelain by analyzing its relationship to popular Ming-Qing texts. Seeing a woman as “a three-dimensional object that is deployed in the text spatially,...ornamentally, and in terms of surface, movement in action,” male elites evaluated women, developed categories within a fixed and complete ideological system, and promoted these standards by circulating texts based on intricate criteria. Xu Zhen, the author of the above-mentioned manual, is one example of these influential scholars who developed guidelines for evaluating women. These standards for judging a woman include evaluating the ontological aspects of her attire, accessories, accoutrements in her surroundings and living space, behavior (bodily gestures and activities in which she engaged in the service of men), and physical beauty. This list of criteria, as Wang argues, “strongly arouses the visual and tactile imagination of readers and shows the importance of the objects and materiality that were used to produce images of beautiful women...” In her eyes, depictions of women on export porcelain amassed in the Dresden collection were profoundly shaped by ideologies such as those articulated in Xu Zhen’s 徐震 (active 1659-1711) text. For example, Cui Yingying, a well-known fictional literary character who appeared frequently on porcelain was included in the *Manual of Beautiful Women* (*Meiren pu* 美人譜) under the category of “historically-famed beauties.” Parrots or orioles accompanying women, often seen in Ming-Qing prints and on porcelain, were listed in this manual as elements equal to scholarly objects in other settings (**fig. M**).

In the late Ming, large-sized porcelain vessels gradually entered the realm of interior design and its surfaces became ideal vehicles for displaying the figures of beautiful women. During the Transitional Period, as the repertoire of porcelain decoration was exploited, new types of female images were conjured. From that point on, decorative images of women were no longer the bearers of moral implications as we encountered in the emergence of the dancing figure (section one), but rather were considered generic, sometimes fictional images equal to floral ornament incorporated into the living environment of the elite male. Xue Yu asserts that these female images were gradually transformed from representing literary and religious figures to functioning as pure ornamentation during this critical period.

The question of how these changes affected social norms associated with Qing women is one of Yu’s primary concerns. A new type of image depicting the everyday spaces that women inhabited, which was commonly seen in the genre paintings of Dutch Golden Age, emerged on East Asian porcelain surfaces. Some of these images were early forms of self-promotion related to the pleasure industry. By adding touches of intimacy and naturalism, and thereby breaking the boundary between the real and pictorial world, the composers of these scenes rejected the previous bird’s-eye view of an external observer and emphasized the tangibility of a woman’s beauty in an illusionistic way. This radical change of taste was

³⁹ One example is the introduction of kingfisher feathers in Qing court adornment, Lianming Wang, “Kingfisher Feather and Qing Material Culture, 1660-1790,” lecture delivered at the Workshop “Uncovering the Animal,” King’s College London, June 29, 2018.

⁴⁰ A summary of these studies is provided by Wen-Chien Cheng, “Idealized Portraits of Women for the Qing Imperial Court,” *Orientalism* 45, n. 4 (2014): 87-99.

triggered, as Yu argues, mainly by Jiangnan-area courtesan culture, the increased commercial need for appealing female images, and the accessibility of European illusionism in early modern China.

In addition to women's beauty, women's roles within the family-oriented society were constantly central to visual representation. Porcelain with ideology-bearing motifs related to motherhood, sometimes referred to as the "Mother-Children motif," suggests that some exported porcelain amassed in the Dresden collection may have been produced for the domestic market. Litong Xiao analyses a group of mother-children images on porcelain and attempts to decipher their various connotations and symbolic meanings within the core concepts of Confucian femininity. In the first type of these porcelain, which emphasizes the ideal number of a family—four wives and sixteen sons—she highlights the issue of population decline in the early Qing as the major reason for this idealization. This led to an emphasis on the fertility of female family members.

Further, as a Kangxi *familie verte* dish reveals, a growing focus was given to the nourishing and educating of children (before they entered the public education system); these "mothering" scenes were immensely popular and became prevalent on porcelain produced in the second half of the seventeenth century. The messages conveyed were related to the expectation and idealization of feminine virtues and the promotion of a patriarchal model for society; these meanings were, however, lost by the time the object reached European collections.⁴¹ The represented figures are simply set amongst exquisite objects with symbolic meanings, such as those discussed in Ye Li's study.

The singularity of Litong Xiao's argument is that she links these imagined ideals to photography. Through the lenses of early foreign photographers, the idealization of the mother-child relationship is nonexistent and the Confucian ideology of femininity disappears. Instead, the mother, even stereotyped in selected cases, is represented as someone with limited access to the outer world and suffering from the miseries of family life.

Chinese Femininity in Colonial Construction: Stereotypes and Transcultural Trajectories

The third section of essays, "Perspectives on Femininity," consists of papers by three authors addressing the ways in which East Asian femininity was (re-)constructed in the nineteenth century by an emerging subjectivity and the gaze of foreigners. Xin Sun's article analyzes a composite photograph—a highly intricate photo print comprised of 102 individual portraits; she explores how it is constructed through multiple exposures and cut-paste techniques. Although its creation process shares some similarities with composite photography made by contemporary practitioners such as William Notman (1826-1891), this collage is different in that it was made directly from existing photographic prints with non-modifiable sizes. To determine its audience, Sun presents a detailed analysis of the photographed women's clothing, hairstyles, props and postures, before convincingly concluding that, in this example, there is a wide range of class, ethnicity, and social diversity. Many of these figures, as she demonstrates, most likely belonged to the courtesan group active in the period between the 1870's and 1890's. Unlike the *carte-de-visite* discussed, this type of photographic print enjoyed considerable publicity in urban spaces and became part of the modern commodity culture. The circulation of courtesans' images, or sometimes their illegal exposure to the public, led "virtuous" ladies to refrain from being photographed.

⁴¹ Dorothy Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth Century China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 143-55.

To a certain extent, this clue helps Sun arrive at the conclusion that the collage of portrait photographs was most likely displayed publicly as a studio advertisement or reprinted on souvenir postcards.

Items similar to this collage may also be found in nineteenth-century Japanese photography, in which the representations of femininity grew out of a century-long fantasy about East Asian women. In the Dresden collection, a set of Japanese travel albums owned by German globetrotters is analyzed by Shixin Liang. Rendered with normative techniques associated with souvenir imagery, these albums contain a wide range of photographs that vary in quality, subject matter, and technique. Known as “composite souvenir photography,” these lacquered albums were produced as a market strategy to attract foreign travelers in response to the saturation of souvenir photography in Japan during the 1890’s. In order to make these silent images speak, Liang identifies a Western male protagonist who appears multiple times in the album, photographed in different settings, identifying the participation of both professional studio photographers and amateurs in the making of this album. In a “composite album” a great range of quality can be observed. Liang highlights the radical transition from studio photography to the era of amateur photographic experimentation in the period following the commercialization of the foldable film camera by Eastman Kodak.

As subject matter who appeared frequently in these souvenir photographs, women dressed in beautiful kimonos were often labeled “geishas” after the albums entered Western collections. The story that we encounter in the Dresden photographs, however, is something different. According to Liang, the young Japanese women were teahouse servers, or courtesans, rather than geishas. Moreover, the way in which these images were amassed in a composite travel album reflects the intervention of the male gaze as well as long-held but largely fictional ideas about Japanese geishas triggered by contemporary novels such as *Madame Butterfly*. This stereotyped view was not only prevalent in nineteenth century travel photography industry, but it also obscured the vision of modern museum specialists. Although geishas were the icons of Japanese souvenir photography, Liang presents a new construct for reading these photos.

In a transcultural context, images of bodies become a critical visual field reflecting cultural imagination and visual manipulation. The invention of photography in 1839, as Qiuzi Guo points out, enhanced further stereotypes of Chinese women through categorization and a gaze of control, that was closely related to hierarchy and surveillance. In many of the nineteenth century works taken by foreigners, the existing stereotypical imagery of Chinese women found in painting, porcelain, and other Chinese export items, provided the visual inspiration for photographic works. The hybridity of these courtesans’ portraits, Guo writes in “From Porcelain to Photography: The Transformation of Femininity in the Representation of Chinese Women,” “reveals the dilemma of the Chinese woman caught between an emerging subjectivity and the stereotypical representation of an older framework.” Not only was a struggle between old and new media unfolding, but a new era in the visual representation of the Chinese feminine form had begun.

Market, the Ethnographic Gaze, and Chineseness: External Factors

Encompassing the seventeenth century to the late nineteenth century, the papers in section four provide two extreme examples of early and late representations of Chinese beauties, and elaborate upon the historic and socio-economic realities surrounding these images. From Tim Revell’s perspective, the revival of Ming themes and attire (also addressed in Yang Zhao’s essay) was not a choice made by late Ming and early Qing porcelain decorators, but was conditioned by a market-oriented strategy in response to economic tumult during the Transitional Period; imperial funds for porcelain orders were exhausted by the increased costs of military campaigns against Manchu invaders. Furthermore, excessive silver imports from the South America caused market inflation, which also decreased the domestic demand for porcelain.

In search of economic stability, private Jingdezhen kilns first targeted the antique market by emulating a large amount of porcelain with Ming dynasty themes and imperial reign marks. Second, these privately-run kilns increased the number of European orders to earn greater profit. The porcelain objects anachronistically revisited Ming histories and dramas, “[reinforcing] their authenticity as ‘Ming objects’,” according to Revell in his essay “Porcelain in the Transitional Period: A New Perspective.” Soon these products were acquired by both domestic and foreign markets. His arguments, convincingly made using examples from the Dresden collection, greatly deepen our knowledge of the persistence of Ming themes on Transitional Period porcelain. To a certain extent, they also explain the profusion of women dressed in Ming attire on porcelain that art historians have been struggling to explain for decades.

Another notable trend in the nineteenth century is that representations of beautiful women were often replaced by voyeuristic, or sometimes ethnographic, images exposing unsightly body parts. Stressing the historical and social issues connected to this phenomenon, Jurgita Rainyte elaborates the discontinuity within the representations of beauties in early Chinese photography and argues that the criteria for choosing items that came to represent China were essentially shaped by Western colonial practices. As a reinforcement of early conceptions of the Chinese and China, a new type of photography was employed by Westerners; the resulting images were used as ethnographic evidence and as visual proof of “Chineseness.” Seen as an “awkward disability,” foot binding, for instance, was exoticized as an aspect of gender in light of ethnographic discoveries. For foreign consumption, private and erotic features such as bound feet were growing into independent subjects, viewed through the lenses of well-known Western photographers based in China. The blatant exposure of tiny bound feet—or the “golden lotus” (*jinlian* 金蓮)—Rainyte argues, in her essay entitled, “Discontinuity of Beauty in Late Nineteenth-Century Chinese Photographs,” “was a good marketing strategy to attract customers.”

To meet consumer demand, photographers deployed an anthropological method of racial documentation; this was a photographic strategy widely used in both local and foreign markets. Chinese cameramen soon started to take anthropometric photographs and isolate specific body parts. In this dynamic process, Rainyte, argues that “photography became a vital tool to establish the parameters of cultural identity in large categories such as ‘China’ and ‘Chinese’ among late nineteenth-century foreigners.” While portrait and souvenir photographs targeted foreign tourist markets, a large number of prints, taken by both Western and Chinese photographers, could be considered ethnographic in content; their subjects emphasized the exotic, feminine passivity, and mysterious elements, which reinforced transcultural asymmetries of semi-colonial China as it appeared in the minds of European and American visitors.

Epilogue: Towards a New Interpretive Framework for Trade Porcelain

The volume concludes with an insightful essay, “Export or Exported? Primary and Secondary Transfer in Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth-century Chinese Porcelain,” written by Stacey Pierson, who critically reevaluates previous scholarship on Chinese export porcelain and calls for a new interpretive framework for the global circulation of objects. Adopting a cultural-anthropological approach, she assesses the biographies of trade porcelain amassed in European courts and emphasizes objects’ lives, their identities and mobility. Citing the work of Igor Kopytoff, Pierson invokes “cultural biography” as a guiding factor in devising a new theory of moved or circulated objects.⁴² In fact, some pieces of trade porcelain were not

⁴² Arjun Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge University Press, 1986), 64-94.

made for the international market (as mentioned briefly in previous chapters), but for domestic consumption. In general, the universal labeling of these objects as “export porcelain” leads us to confront one of the most problematic issues in previous scholarship on Chinese porcelain: that the identity of objects changes as they move or transfer from one place to another.

These identities are crucial and “as much a product of cultural trends as human one[s]” Pierson argues, calling attention to the long chain of possession in the process of “export” including: place of manufacture, traders, purchasers, even ship owners, and long-term owners. Instead of defining ceramics made for the foreign market as “export wares,” she recommends referring to them with more neutral and flexible descriptive terms such as “exported” or “transferred,” emphasizing the movement that enabled their changes in identities, rather the primary function for which they were made. In light of the framework of “transfer” and “biography,” this essay offers a new approach for describing the shift of things as they move between locations and categories.

As a unit, the studies in this volume aim to contribute to the scholarship on female representation of women in East Asian art by engaging in a multi-layered discussion on female imagery visualized and materialized in three media. The discussion probes the interconnection among print, porcelain, and photography across temporal and cultural boundaries. It is our goal that this ambitious volume contributes to the growing research field on artistic and aesthetic “flows” of objects from East Asia in a global context.

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Fig. A Plate. Porcelain, overglaze colors. Arita, Japan. Edo period, c. 1680-1700. H. 4.5 cm, D. 22.8 cm, D. footring 13.5 cm. Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Porzellansammlung, Inv. No. PO 577.
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Fig. B Large Plate. Porcelain, underglaze cobalt blue painting, overglaze colors and gold. Arita, Japan. Edo period, c. 1700-1720. H. 9.3 cm, D. 55.4 cm, D. footring 26.9 cm. Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Porzellansammlung, Inv. No. PO 5710. © Porzellansammlung, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Foto: Adrian Sauer.



Fig. C Female Figure. Porcelain, underglaze cobalt blue painting, overglaze colors and gold. Arita, Japan. Edo period, late 17th c.. H. 38.1 cm, D. 16.3 cm, D. Base 15.9 cm. Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Porzellansammlung, Inv. No. PO 119. © Porzellansammlung, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Foto: Adrian Sauer.



Fig. D Daniel Marot (1661-1752), *Das Porzellan- und Bilderkabinett in Het Loo* [The porcelain and picture cabinet at Het Loo Palace]. After Jan van Campen, Titus M. Eliens, Rijksmuseum et al., *Chinese and Japanese Porcelain for the Dutch Golden Age* (Zwolle: Waanders Uitgevers, 2014), 179, fig. 6.



Fig. E Kikukawa Eizan 菊川英山 (1787-1867), *Two Ladies Facing Right*, 1802-1867. Color woodblock print, 35.2 × 24 cm. Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Kupferstich-Kabinett, Inv. No. A 1957-1060. © Kupferstich-Kabinett, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Foto: Andreas Diesend.



Fig. F Kusakabe Kimbei 日下部 金兵衛 (1841–1934), 553. *Grand Hotel, Yokohama*, 1890s. Hand colored albumen silver print, 19 × 27 cm, Yokohama Archives of History. After Yokohama Kaikō Shiryōkan, eds., 明治の日本: 横浜写真の世界 彩色アルバム [Meiji Japan: World of Yokohama photography. Colored album] (Yokohama: Yūrindō, 2003), 7, fig. 18.



Fig. G Ryuji Senda, *Group Portrait with Seamen and Presumably the Captain of the SMS Arcona with Japanese Women in a Tent*, putatively Hakodate, 1907-1910. Albumen print, 20.5 × 27.5 cm, cardboard base: 30.4 × 34.7 cm. Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Inv. No. F 1981-1/30.5.
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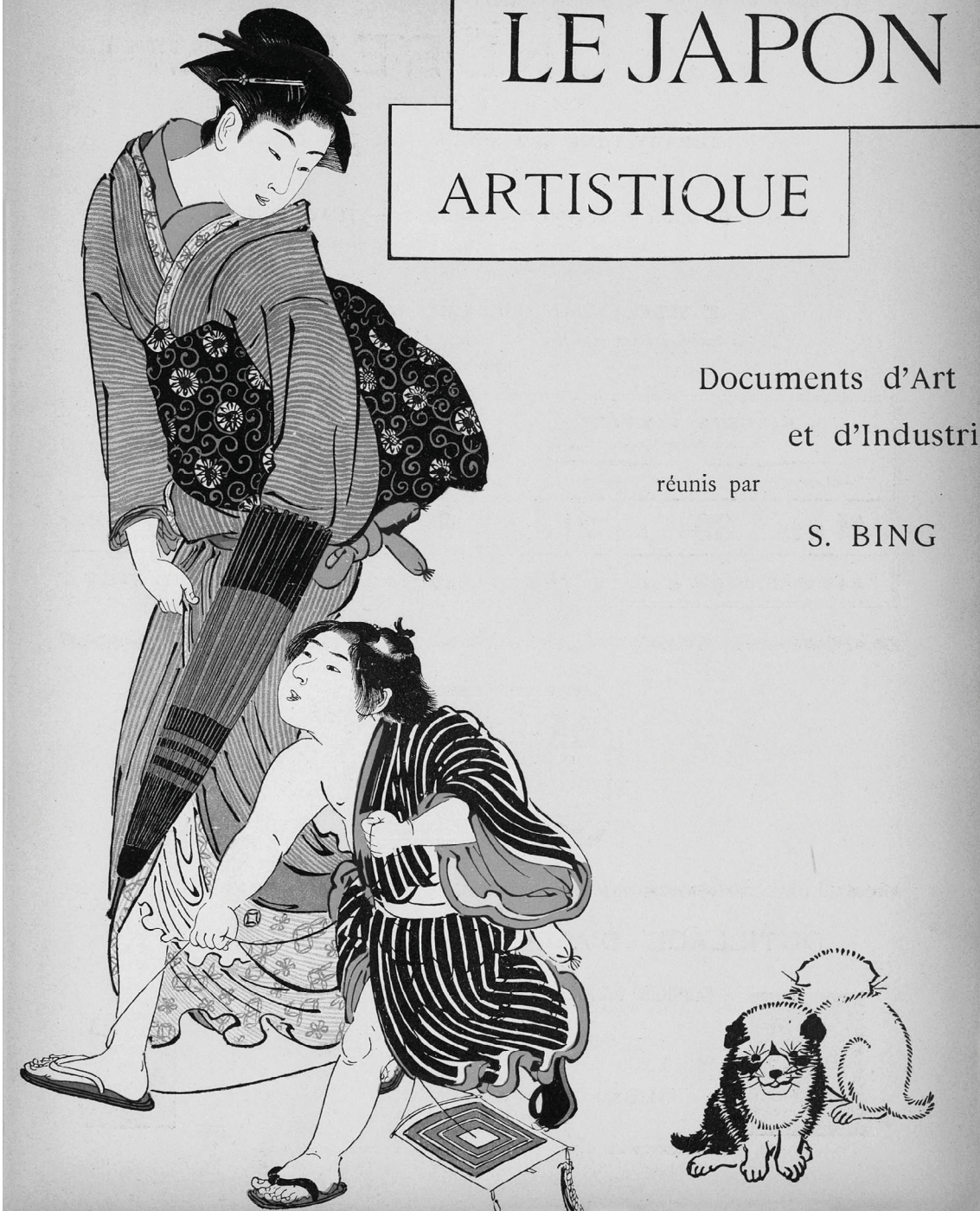


Fig. H Siegfried Bing, magazine cover, *Le Japon artistique, documents d'art et d'industrie* [Artistic Japan: Art and Industry Documents], n. 10 (Feb. 1889).



Fig. I Anonymous photographer, *Staged Scene with Four Japanese Women in the Bath*, 1870-1900. Albumen print, colored, 20.4 × 26.6 cm. Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Inv. No. F 1984-4/2. © Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Museum für Völkerkunde Dresden.



Fig. J Anonymous photographer, “*Whispering*” (Two Japanese Women by a Folding Screen [*byōbu*]), from the photo album “Japan III”, 1870-1900. Albumen print, colored, mounted on cardboard, 26.4 × 20.2 cm, page: 54.5 × 38.5 cm, album: 56 × 41 × 5 cm. Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Inv. No. F 2015-1/3.37. © Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Museum für Völkerkunde Dresden.



Fig. K Anonymous photographer, *Courtesans in the Latted Parlor of a Brothel in the Yoshiwara Quarter*, Tokyo, 1870-1900. Albumen print, colored, 21 × 27 cm. Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Inv. No. F 1984-4/1. © Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Museum für Völkerkunde Dresden.



Fig. L Anonymous photographer, *Portrait of a Japanese Woman with a Parasol*, 1890-1910.
Gelatin silver print, colored, 13.5 × 25.2 cm. Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Inv. No. F 1984-4/31.
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Fig. M Anonymous, *One of two engravings depicting Chinese women*. Athanasius Kircher, *China monumentis qua sacris quâ profanis, nec non variis naturæ & artis spectaculis, aliarumque rerum memorabilium argumentis illustrata* [Illustrations of China's sacred monuments, arts of nature and spectacles, and other memorable things (abbreviated title: *China Illustrata*)] (Amsterdam: Jacob van Meurs, 1667), between pages 114-115, right folio.



Fig. N Anonymous, *Dame Chinoise en deshabilité*. Engraving. 14 × 8 cm. Louis Le Comte, Franz Ertinger, Gérard Edelinck, eds., *Nouveaux mémoires sur l'état présent de la Chine* [New Memoirs about the Present State of China] (Paris: Anisson, 1696), 1:215.



Fig. O Pierre Giffart (1638 - 1723), *Dame Chinoise Mandrine du premier Ordre en habit de ceremonie selon la saison d'Esté* [Chinese Mandarin lady of the First Order in ceremonial dress in the summer season]. Engraving, size unknown. Joachim Bouvet and Pierre Giffart, *L'Etat présent de la Chine avec des figures gravées* [The present state of China with engraved figures] (Paris: P. Giffart, 1697), 149.



Fig. P Anonymous, *Prince Yong's Twelve Beauties*. China, Eighteenth century, Qing dynasty (1644-1912). Hanging scroll, one of a set of twelve, ink and color on silk. 184 × 98 cm. The Palace Museum, Beijing. After Yang Xin 楊新, “胤禛圍屏美人圖探秘” [Research on the Screen Paintings of Yinzhen's Beauties], 故宮博物院院刊 [Palace Museum Journal] 154 (2011): 7, fig. 1.