

The Orientalist Reality, Tourism, and Photography:
The Parrish Family Albums in Japan, 1899-1904

Tessa Handa

VMS 523S

Professor Gennifer Weisenfeld

Duke University

December 11, 2012

Winner of the 2013 Chester P. Middlesworth Award

The representation of the Orient, in its attempt to be detached and objective, would seek to eliminate from the picture the presence of the European observer. [...] Representation was not to represent the voyeur, the seeing eye that made representation possible. To establish the objectness of the Orient, as a picture-reality containing no sign of the increasingly pervasive European presence, required that the presence itself ideally become invisible.¹

Timothy Mitchell's excerpt discloses the power dynamic inherent in Orientalism, a system of thought and scholarship which expresses the Orient as separate, eccentric, backward, silently different, sensual, and passive.² It also reveals the integral roles of "seeing" and representation in how the West constituted the East as the Orient, especially within the context of tourism.³ The Westerner, positioned outside the picture frame, had the unique perspective to "see the whole picture" and to observe the Orient as an object. This privileged view reinforced the Westerner's superiority over the Orient. By photographing what was seen, the Westerner made his/her notion of the Orient a reality.⁴ However, if the Orient conveyed by these photographs is contingent upon the invisibility of the Westerner, does the meaning change when the Westerner becomes visible? Specifically, what happens to the objectness of the Orient when the Westerner is represented within the Orient? In 1904, the Parrish family of Durham, North Carolina, returned home from a five-year stay in Japan with both family and souvenir photoalbums. Their family albums were filled with photographs of the Parrishes and their friends posing in various locations during their travels in Japan. Do these pictures, such as when the Parrish family is

¹ Mitchell, Timothy, "Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order," from *Colonialism and Culture*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 306-307. Although Mitchell is primarily concerned with the European tourist, I will be examining the American tourist under the assumption that a similar power dynamic was at play between the American tourist in the "Orient." Later in the paper I will explicate this similar power dynamic, but qualify it for the American/Japanese context.

² Said, Edward W. 1978. *Orientalism*, (New York: Pantheon Books: 1978), 6. Said's work is one of the most influential evaluations and critiques on Orientalism in post-colonial studies. Mitchell claims that his analysis is "much indebted to Said's work" (316).

³ The definition I use for the term tourism is from John Urry's *The Tourist Gaze*, "leisure activity; movement through space and periods of stay in new place(s); intension to return home."

⁴ As a mechanical reproduction of the "real-world," photographs were commonly understood to be representations of the real.

standing in front of the Daibutsu, the Great Buddha in Kamakura, make Japan less Oriental? Or does their presence reify the picture and ultimately authenticate the real Orient?⁵

Current scholarship in the field of early Japanese photography rarely analyzes early photographs of tourists in Japan. Most scholarship is focused on the studio photographs sold to tourists. Also, the field of early Japanese photography is a comparatively new subject of academic inquiry and the scattered archives of extant images prove to be a challenge to the growing number of scholars in the field. Nevertheless, archives of images have been reorganized and we can now attribute the provenance of the major collections. Terry Bennett, a collector, dealer, and historian of East Asian photography, argues that the identification of the photographer is paramount to the analysis and understanding of early Japanese photography. His two recent works, *Photography in Japan, 1853-1912* and *Old Japanese Photographs: Collectors' Data Guide*, present the current state of the field as of 2006, and provide an exhaustive attribution guide for collectors. In short, Bennett promotes a methodology based on biography and oeuvres. In contrast, Allan Hockley, a Japanese art historian, claims that stressing biographies and oeuvres is problematic. Instead, he argues that these images should be analyzed according to the context of production – the market supply and demand – and what they meant to the viewer.

Scholars that do focus on early tourist photography in Japan include Christine Guth and Luke Gartlan. Guth's *Longfellow's Tattoos: Tourism, Collecting, and Japan* focuses on the intimate and revealing case study of Longfellow, an eccentric individual who “presented a

⁵ Mitchell points out the inherent contradiction between tourism and Orientalism – the tourist tried to grasp the Orient as something picture-like, but they also came to experience a “reality.” In short, “The Western tourist thought they were moving from the exhibit or the picture to experience the real thing” (309). The crux of this paradox is the photograph – a mechanical product that was thought to capture a picture of reality.

carefully edited, coded, and idealized microcosm of his life in Japan.”⁶ Beyond focusing on Longfellow, she broadly considers the impact of souvenir photographs on tourists’ itineraries and Westerners’ motivations for having themselves photographed. To a large extent, this paper is building off Guth’s contextualization of Victorian Americans in Japan. However, unlike Guth, I aim to look more narrowly at touristic photography in the framework of Orientalism. Gartlan’s *Japan Day by Day? William Henry Metcalf, Edward Sylvester Morse and Early Tourist Photography in Japan* examines the role of William Henry Metcalf as an amateur photographer to explain his excision from Edward Morse’s *Japan Day by Day*. He is primarily concerned with the status of photography in early Japanese Area Studies and not the meaning of touristic photography in an Orientalist framework. Therefore, this present case study is a unique opportunity to explore how tourism and photography frame, reinforce, reproduce, and complicate systems of Orientalism – and ultimately the idea of Japan.

In order to do this, I return to Mitchell and his notion of the Oriental Reality. According to Mitchell, the Orientalist Reality is defined by three factors: Essentialism, Otherness, and Absence.⁷ I argue that the souvenir album photographs unambiguously display all three factors and confirm the Orientalist Reality. By this logic, if the family photographs further reified the Orientalist reality, then these three factors should also be present. If this is the case, it is possible that the Parrishes traversed the space from behind the camera to the picture frame to exclaim “Look, we were here!” The photographs were documentary proof that they experienced the real and authentic East. However, photographs are neither reproductions of external reality nor do

⁶ Guth, Christine, *Longfellow's Tattoos: Tourism, Collecting, and Japan*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press; 2004), 88.

⁷ Mitchell, Timothy. “Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order,” in Nicholas Dirks, ed. *Colonialism and Culture*, 289. Essentialism is the reduction of meaning down to distilled signifiers. Further, by Otherness, I understand the term to indicate “not Westerner” – something other than that which is Western. Finally, Absence is the lack of Western presence.

they always convey “the intention of the power behind the lens.”⁸ I claim that the Parrish family photographs clearly display Essentialism, ambiguously display Otherness, and do not display Absence. In short, the family photographs do not fulfill the requirements of the Orientalist Reality. Instead they convey an ambivalent meaning that is neither documentary nor simply Orientalist. I propose that this ambivalent meaning is due to the transformation of the tourist into an Other and the breakdown of the illusion of an exotic Japan via the presence of the Westerner. Nevertheless the ambivalent meaning conveyed by the tourist’s family photographs demonstrates a triangulation of the Japan idea. These photographs simultaneously emphasize the Orientalist reality, reveal the illusion, and serve up the tourist as an object much like the Orient. To illustrate these suppositions, I will first analyze the Parrishes’ roles as tourists and Orientalists within the context of Meiji Japan.⁹ Then I will conduct a series of comparisons between selected souvenir photographs and family photographs from the Parrish albums and apply Mitchell’s defining features of an Orientalist Reality. Ultimately, my conclusions contribute to the understanding of the role of touristic photography through the lens of Orientalism in Meiji Japan.

The Parrishes as Orientalists

Nineteenth century Japan underwent a whirlwind of dramatic changes and transformations. During this time period, Japan was in the process of rapid modernization via the government’s advocacy of *bunmei kaika*, or civilization and enlightenment, based on Western models. By the late nineteenth century, with its victory in the Sino-Japanese War, Japan had “caught up” with the West, militarily and industrially. The Japanese government’s monopoly on the importation of leaf tobacco was a small part of this period of rapid growth. In 1899, the

⁸ Guth, Christine. 2000. Charles Longfellow and Okakura Kakuzo: Cultural Cross-Dressing in the Colonial Context. *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 8 (3): 606.

⁹ Said, *Orientalism*, 206-207. I use the term Orientalist to indicate that the Parrishes’ implicitly participated in systems of Orientalism or “latent Orientalism,” Said’s term for unconscious positivity.

government also imposed a prohibitive duty on imports of manufactured tobacco products.¹⁰ Meanwhile, in the United States, Duke & Sons Company, the largest and most profitable cigarette-manufacturing firm, came together with five other leading cigarette firms to form the American Tobacco Company. With J.B. Duke as President, the company implemented a policy of diversification and foreign expansion. Despite Japan's inhospitable stance towards the importation of foreign tobacco products, Duke saw Asia as an important new export market because the population had a long history of tobacco use.¹¹ To circumvent the Japanese restrictions on imports, American Tobacco Company, purchased a controlling interest in one of the established Japanese tobacco firms, Murai Brothers Company, to produce and sell its products to the Japanese market.

Edward Parrish, a native of North Carolina, owned his own tobacco leaf auction house until he lost the business due to the financial crisis of 1893. J.B. Duke hired him to work as Head Buyer at American Tobacco and, in 1899, Duke offered Edward Parrish a \$15,000 salary to move to Japan and act as the vice-president of the Murai Brothers Company.¹² From 1899 to 1904, Edward, his wife Rosa, and their daughter Lily lived in Tokyo, Japan (*Fig 1*). While in Japan, the Parrishes stayed at Western-style hotels and enjoyed a social life surrounded by other Westerners (*Fig 2*). As Gennifer Weisenfeld articulates that tourists sought out the comforts of home despite their intention to experience the “real” and “authentic” Japan.¹³ Although the Parrish family did fraternize with the Murai family, they did not integrate into a Japanese

¹⁰ Durden, Robert Franklin. *The Dukes of Durham, 1865-1929*. (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1975), 74.

¹¹ Durden, *The Dukes of Durham*, 73.

¹² Wilson, Leonard. 1916. Durham-Orange-Wake County NC Archives Biographies: Parrish, Edward James, 1846. Accessed November 21, 2012. <http://files.usgwarchives.net/nc/durham/bios/parrish42gbs.txt>
Mr. Parrish's yearly salary, adjusted for inflation, is approximately \$416,000 in today's currency.

¹³ Weisenfeld, Gennifer. 2000. Touring Japan-as-Museum: NIPPON and Other Japanese Imperialist Travelogues. *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 8 (3): 750, 784-85.

lifestyle.¹⁴ They selectively left the comforts of their familiar hotel lifestyle to encounter Japan. This context allowed the Parrishes to be perpetual tourists with the encounters predetermined by packaged tours presented by tourist materials.

The relationship dynamic between the Murai family and the Parrish family was one of host and privileged guest. As guests, the Parrishes were treated to lavish banquets, tours of the Murai residences, and leisurely mushroom hunt excursions (*Fig 3*). Nevertheless, this relationship was also permeated by the power dynamics between employee and employer and Westerner and Easterner. A photograph of a banquet from one of their family albums further expresses these power relationships (*Fig 4*). The photograph shows the Parrish family and the Murai family dining together at a Western-style banquet table decorated with small Japanese and American flags. What appears to be a celebration of a mutually beneficial partnership is, instead, a subtle display of the intricate power dynamics between the American family and the Japanese family. The American Tobacco Company was the controlling shareholder of the Murai Brothers Company and, in turn, the Murai family hosted the Parrish family as privileged guests with Edward as their company superior. Although Edward's role was Vice-President of the company, he represented the interests of American Tobacco Company and J.B. Duke, and reported back to headquarters on the performance of the company and his colleagues.¹⁵ In one of these letters, Edward reports "Messrs. Murai and Mr. Matsubara are even more anxiously concerned about the

¹⁴ Also in the Duke archives is Lily Parrish's scrapbook, a considerable collection of artifacts which composes a narrative of her experience in Japan. According to the scrapbook, her experience consisted primarily of social events and gathering with other Western hotel guests. She collected calling cards, dance cards, and event programs. Although Lily's individual experience of Japan, as mediated through her social circles at the hotels, is peripheral to this paper, it does demonstrate an important aspect of the Parrishes' experience of Japan.

¹⁵ The Edward Parrish Letters in the Duke Archives contains typed letters between the American Tobacco headquarters (J.B. Duke, J.B. Cobb, W.R. Harris, and W.L. Walker) and K. Murai. All letters discuss the business and whether J.B. Duke approves or disapproves of the sales and investment strategies of the Murai Brothers Company.

business...than ever before.”¹⁶ He follows this statement with an overview of the hours worked by the Japanese employees, relaying the dedication and work ethic of Murai and his counterparts. Further, his attitude toward Japanese people in general is revealed in his business letters. In a letter to W.L. Walker, he states that the Japanese liked “a mild, mellow smoke,” because “Japanese people do not eat much meat, or strong food like we Americans, their principle diet being rice, fish, [and] vegetables, and therefore a strong cigarette attacks their *stomachs*.”¹⁷ In the context of this letter, Edward’s association of “strong” with Americans suggests the Japanese are “weak.” Therefore, despite his convivial relationship with the Murai family, the quote from Edward’s letter suggests the inherent superiority he felt Americans possessed in contrast to the Japanese.

Furthermore, the Murai family’s adoption of Western style clothing, customs, and architecture demonstrates the terms in which business was conducted during the Meiji period. Like the Meiji government, as part of *bunmei kaika*, economic entities took on the mantle of Westernization to appear modern to foreign business partners. These visible manifestations of equating modernization with Westernization demonstrate the psychological colonization of Japan by the West.¹⁸ Therefore, I posit that the Parrish family’s role as tourists in Japan was invested with the power of both the American Tobacco Company’s ownership of the Murai Brother’s Company and that of Western colonizers of Japan.¹⁹ As tourists, the Parrish family

¹⁶ Parrish to Cobb, first vice-president of the American Tobacco Company, April 23, 1900, E.J. Parrish letterbook. S.H. Matsubara was the secretary of the Murai company.

¹⁷ Parrish to W.L. Walker, October 19, 1900, and Parrish to J.A. Tomas, June 20, 1901, E.J. Parrish letterbook.

¹⁸ I am not suggesting that this process was not complex and contested, but for the purposes of this paper, elaboration on the nuances of psychological/epistemological colonization or “colonization of consciousness” is beyond the scope of this paper.

¹⁹ Although I use the term Westerner broadly, it is important to note the key differences between American and Europeans. America garnered a special relationship with Japan when Commodore Perry forced the Japanese to end their period of isolation. Finally, America was a relatively new nation and had a certain amount of anxiety about their cultural inferiority to Europe, which in turn affected their relationship with Japan.

traveled to famous sites such as Nikko and Mt. Asama, collected souvenir albums, and had photographs taken of themselves and their friends.

The Parrishes as Tourists

The Parrishes' frame of reference for Japan was most likely based on the Victorian American "Japan Craze" of the 1880's.²⁰ In *The Japan Idea: Art and Life in Victorian America*, in the chapter, "Selling Japan to the West," William Hosley surmises that "the ultimate act at the height of the Japan craze was to go there and shop like mad."²¹ This ultimate act was made possible by the realization of transcontinental rail travel in the United States, the opening of the Suez Canal, and eased restrictions on travel to Japan. By the time the Parrish family traveled to Japan and bought their souvenir albums, even the requirement to obtain passports to travel around Japan was discarded. Hosley also argues that the "published travelogues of artists and writers and the creation of Western tourist amenities led to a boom in Asian travel during the 1890s."²² Publications on Japan, such as William Elliot Griffis' *The Mikado's Empire* and Basil Hall Chamberlain's *Things Japanese*, became required reading for travelers visiting Japan. Due to the subsequent travel boom, these authors published travel guides. In 1889, Chamberlain co-authored *Handbook for Travellers in Japan*, an exhaustive and authoritative travel guide. However, Hockley, in his essay "Globetrotters' Japan: Places" from the MIT Visualizing Cultures website, posits that tourists "generally preferred guidebooks targeted more specifically to their limited range of potential experiences."²³ He references W. E. L. Keeling's 1880 *Tourists' Guide to Yokohama, Tokio, Hakone, Fujiyama, Kamakura, Yokoska, Kanozan, Narita,*

²⁰ Hosley, William N., and Wadsworth Atheneum, *The Japan Idea: Art and Life in Victorian America*, (Hartford, Conn: Wadsworth Atheneum, 1990) 45.

²¹ Hosley, *The Japan Idea*, 46.

²² Hosley, William, *The Japan Idea*, 46.

²³ Hockley, Allen. 2010. Globetrotters' Japan: Places: Foreigners on the Tourist Circuit. MIT Visualizing Cultures, accessed on 10/21/12. http://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/gt_japan_places/ga2_essay02.html

Nikko, Kyoto, Osaka, Etc., Etc. as an example of a portable guidebook that delivered a short “highlights” itinerary. Murray’s *Handbook for Travellers in Japan* contains over seventy pages of advertisements for Japanese Western-style resort hotels, retailers, banks, bookstores, and photographic studios. Although the archived items from the Parrishes’ trip to Japan did not contain the aforementioned guidebooks, they still participated in one of the most popular tourist practices – photography.

In Victorian America, by the 1870’s, “photography had become a ritual that symbolically confirmed normative family life in the United States.”²⁴ The fact that the Parrish albums were retained and archived in the Duke library shows the importance placed on these albums by the family. The Parrish album collection contains three 12 x 16 inch lacquer-covered albums, three 12 x 16 brocade-covered albums, and three 5 x 7 inch brocade-covered albums. Two of the 12 x 13 brocade-covered albums contain high quality hand-tinted albumen studio photographs.²⁵ The other larger brocade album contains black and white, sepia, and a few hand-tinted family photographs of varying sizes. The three smaller brocade albums are all personal albums, two of which contain poorly hand-tinted photographs and one of which contains black and white and sepia tone photographs of the Murai residences. The lacquer albums contain a mixture of studio and family photographs, hand-tinted and black and white. The diversity of these albums and the heterogeneous composition of photographs even within one album suggests that the Parrishes utilized one or more photographic studios for multiple services. Even the family photos appear to have been developed, cropped, and sometimes hand-tinted by professional studios. Moreover, in four albums, the family photographs are mounted alongside professional studio photographs.

Frederic Sharf, in “A Traveler’s Paradise” from *Art and Artifice: Japanese Photographs of the*

²⁴ Guth, *Longfellow’s Tattoos*, 74.

²⁵ The albumen print is a nineteenth century process of transferring the photographic image from the negative to a paper base using albumen found in egg whites to bind the photographic chemicals to the paper.

Meiji Era, notes that “it was not uncommon for an arriving traveler to immediately visit a photographic studio, buying photos of places he had not yet seen.”²⁶ In the case of the Parrishes, they seem to have visited the studio at various points during their stay in Japan to simultaneously have their photographs developed and to add to their collection of professional studio photographs. This close relationship between the family photographs and the studio photographs is notable; therefore, it is not surprising that the subject matters are also similar in content and tone.²⁷

Commercial photography studios generally advertised two generic categories, views and costumes, hand-colored photographs, and albums made and filled to order.²⁸ The subjects of the studio photographs, as previously mentioned, reflected the desires and tastes of the studio’s Western customers because the solvency of the businesses [was] dependent on their patronage.²⁹ Hosley argues that Victorian Europeans and Americans saw Japan as the antidote to the ill effects of modernization. Therefore, they wanted pictures of Japan’s essentialized past, without the presence of Westerners. As one American tourist, Isabella Bird, noted in a letter to her sister, she longed to get away from Yokohama, which “has irregularity without picturesqueness, and the grey sky, grey sea, grey houses, and grey roofs, look harmoniously dull.” Instead she wanted to go “off the beaten track [...] to the regions most unaffected by European contact.”³⁰ Bird sought to experience the real Japan, which she understood to be more picturesque than the cities tainted by Western encounters. Furthermore, it was common for a tourist to handpick the

²⁶ Dobson, Sebastian, Anne Nishimura Morse, Frederic Alan Sharf, and Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. *Art & Artifice: Japanese Photographs of the Meiji Era*, Selections from the Jean S. and Frederic A. Sharf Collection at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, (Boston, MA: MFA Publications, 2004), 11

²⁷ Note that I use the term “studio photographs” for the photographs purchased by the Parrish family from studios and “family photographs” for the photographs taken by the Parrishes’ personal camera.

²⁸ Hockley, *Globetrotters’ Japan: Places*, “The Business of Photography,” 7.

²⁹ Hockley, *Globetrotters’ Japan: Places*, “The Business of Photography,” 12.

³⁰ Bird, Isabella L. (Isabella Lucy), 1831-1904. *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan*. Project Gutenberg.

photographs they wanted mounted in the souvenir album. The photographs made to fulfill the tourist's expectations were then curated into a set of desired views and costumes particular to the customer's individual tastes. The majority of the studio photographs in the Parrish albums are types of people ranging from sumo wrestlers and farmers to mothers and children. *Figure 5* is a hand tinted studio photograph of sumo wrestlers on a platform with onlookers.

Although there is no extant documentation regarding how the Parrish family took photographs of themselves, I surmise that the Parrish family used one of the Kodak camera models released in the 1890s and possibly hired someone to photograph their experiences. The Kodak camera had been on the market in America since George Eastman issued the revolutionary hand held camera and roll film, the Kodak No. 1. In 1895, Kodak, announced the Pocket Kodak Camera, and in 1898, the Folding Pocket Kodak Camera was introduced to the market.³¹ These models were easy to carry and did not require set up; this point and shoot function of the new Kodak cameras could explain the spontaneous quality of some of the Parrish family photographs. Additionally, like the studio photographs, the family photographs are primarily depictions of people, such as wrestlers and farmers, also pictured by the studio photographs. The family photograph, *Figure 6*, similar to the studio photograph *Figure 5*, depicts wrestlers. However, the family photograph is blurred with action and not composed carefully like the studio photograph. The lack of careful framing in the family photograph suggests the spontaneous nature of the captured moment. Furthermore, similar to the studio photographs, the family photographs present types of people either associated with Japan's traditional and pre-modern past or child-like or feminine. This impulse to selectively collect essentialized representations of foreign people demonstrates the roles of the Parrishes' as tourists and Orientalists. The Parrishes participated in the social labeling of the Japanese as "Oriental" or

³¹ West, Nancy Martha, *Kodak and the Lens of Nostalgia*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000), 1.

passive, child-like, feminine, and timeless, which resulted in the intrusive observation of Japanese people.³² The Parrishes' intrusive, or indiscreet, observation is apparent in *Figure 6*. The wrestlers, suspended in action, surround the picture-taker and stare back at tourist. The furrowed brow and downturned mouth of the man in the foreground further suggests that the presence of the tourist gaze was unwarranted and tactless. In sum, the photographs are at the intersection of Orientalism and Tourism – they are the reproduction of the tourist's gaze directed at the Orient.

As tourists, the Parrishes participated in the performative activities of “tourism” and the “tourist gaze.” The Parrishes performed tourism by moving from *here*, the familiar, to *there*, the opposite of the mundane.³³ In *The Tourist Gaze*, John Urry claims the tourist gaze is directed to the unfamiliar and exotic, “which is then visually objectified or captured through photographs.”³⁴ He further notes that the tourist gaze is socially organized and systematized by the tourist's indigenous frame of reference and is partially constructed and authorized by tourism professionals and experts. Within the context of Meiji Japan, the Western tourist's gaze was directed toward the exotic – the rural farmer, the temples, the geisha, the jinrikisha, and the tea ceremony – and organized and authorized by guidebooks and studio photograph albums. However, it is important to keep in mind that the images produced were false realities. As Urry points out, “the images generated of different tourist gazes come to constitute a closed self-perpetuation system of illusions.”³⁵ In the specific case of the Parrish family, the photographs demonstrate that their gaze was directed to the unfamiliar people, traditional and exotic alike. Hockley describes this phenomena of looking at people from other cultures and races: “Face-to-

³² Marien, Mary Warner. *Photography : A Cultural History*. (London: Laurence King, 2010),154.

³³ Vauday, Patrick. 2002. Photography from West to East: Clichéd Image Exchange and Problems of Identity. *Diogenes* 49 (193): 47-56.

³⁴ Urry, John, *The Tourist Gaze*, (Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications, 2002), 2.

³⁵ Urry, John, *The Tourist Gaze*, 7.

face encounters across race and culture can be status neutral in the moment they occur—both parties have equal opportunity to observe the otherness of their counterpart. But globetrotter photography tipped this balance in favor of Westerners by convincingly replicating face-to-face experiences with intimate portraits and authentic-looking scenes of daily life.”³⁶ Nevertheless, during this time in Europe and the United States, photography was not seen as an active signifying practice or a fine art, but as an objective record of external reality.³⁷ As Guth has eloquently pointed out, “photographs, which seemed to confirm the reality of the globe-trotter’s experiences in Japan, had an ambiguous and invariably essentializing relationship to the world they were intended to document.”³⁸ In sum, the tourist’s gaze objectified the Orient and reproduced this image via photography.

Despite the similarities between the studio photographs and the family photographs, the differences should not be discounted. Although the family photographs are products of the same Orientalist framework, they represent more than commercial tastes and the staged imaging of Japan. The similarities between the studio and family photographs only describe what the tourist gaze does to the captured Japan. What does the reproduction of the gaze do to the captured tourist? Furthermore, what does the tourist’s presence do to the objectified Orient? This triangulation of seeing – the tourist looking at the image of the tourist looking at Japan – can be seen in the family photographs. I will now analyze a set of comparisons between the family and studio photographs and map on Mitchell’s Orientalist Reality to locate the fundamental differences between the studio and family photographs.

Studio v Family Photographs

“The Woman Farmer,” (*Figure 7*), is an albumen photograph from one of the lacquer-

³⁶ Hockley, *Globetrotters’ Japan: People*, “Picturing the Japanese,” 1.

³⁷ Guth, *Longfellow’s Tattoos*, 54.

³⁸ Guth, *Longfellow’s Tattoos*, 58.

cover albums. Although the photograph is numbered H299, there is no photographer's marker or studio stamp on the photograph or the album. Regardless, the photograph was evidently produced from a high-quality professional studio. The hand tinting is subtle and not garish, and the mounting has remained intact even after over one hundred years. It is approximately 10 X 14 inches and matches the other photographs in the album in subject matter and style. This relative quality and cohesiveness suggests that this album was one of the more expensive albums in the Parrish collection and perhaps one of the more prized. Out of all the photographs, "The Woman Farmer" is one of only a few that is not staged in a studio. The angular shadow of the farmer, the extension of space behind the farmer, and the background out-of-focus foliage suggest that this photograph was taken *en plein air*. Nevertheless, whether or not the photograph was staged cannot be deciphered. The central figure is an elderly Japanese woman who occupies a majority of the framed space. Despite her proportionately large presence in the photograph, the slightly downward angle of the camera and the large bundle of straw strapped to her back diminish her stature. She hunches slightly forward and the thick fabric of her robe falls almost to her knees, truncating her legs. A white head covering encompasses her weathered face and the typical farm environment and accouterments frame her body. Although she is offered up as an object to be looked upon, she faces the camera directly and looks back at the viewer. Her look, however, is not confrontational. Despite her engagement with her observer, she is divested of power to challenge the objectifying gaze. Her hunched posture, dwarfed size, and complete definition as farmer allows the external appropriation of the type, "Woman Farmer." This type is an example of essentialism, the treatment of the farmer as necessary to the identity of Japan. Westerners, steeped in the torridness of modernity at home, yearned for a rural and bucolic Japan. The farmer and her rustic surroundings represented something the West had lost during modernization.

Furthermore, her foreign garb and relative smallness and age contrasted to the bulk of the straw bundle on her back emphasize her foreignness – her *Otherness*. To the Westerner, especially the wealthy urban Westerner, the “Woman Farmer” would have seemed utterly opposite of the corseted and laced woman. Finally, there is no apparent trace of the European presence within the photograph. Ultimately, this studio photograph confirms the Orientalist Reality.

The Parrish family photo (*Fig 8*) is from one of the smaller brocade-cover albums. The photographs in this album are hand-tinted, therefore, they are most likely also developed and mounted by a studio. Unlike the lacquer album with “The Woman Farmer,” this album contains entirely family photographs and the binding has fallen apart. The photograph features a group of people in the mid ground of the picture plane along a dirt road. Rosa Parrish is sitting down on the raised side of the road to the left of the group. On the other side of this group is another unidentified Western woman standing at a three quarters angle to the camera. Between the two Western women are two Japanese women farmers and two Japanese carriage drivers. The women farmers, like the “The Woman Farmer,” are wearing thick, rustic robes and white head coverings. The large bundles of straw strapped to their backs are even larger than the bundle on the “The Woman Farmer.” Their placement along the road and the woman’s walking stick suggest that they were stopped during their walk so that the Western women could pose for a picture. The Japanese carriage drivers stand slightly in the background and their postures are those of guides or escorts. They are taking the ladies on a tour and stopping to help them get their desired picture. The very act of stopping two women during their walk down a dirt road to capture their picture must be based on a preconceived notion of a desired subject. The choice to take this picture, a close representation of the studio photograph “The Woman Farmer,” shows the preexisting framework for what experience is significant to the tourist in Japan. I posit that

the studio albums helped construct this framework and authorized what the tourist could gaze upon. Like “The Woman Farmer,” the family photograph pictures an essentialized Japan. The two small, hunched women farmers are symbols of a rural and pre-modern Japan, and in turn, are a tourist attraction for the Westerners.

Additionally, the representation is not “Other” in the same sense as “The Woman Farmer.” The presence of the Westerners exacerbates the visual differences between the American women and the Japanese women, thus emphasizing the Other-ness of the Japanese women farmers. However, the Westerners, as part of the image, are inherently objectified. To quote Patrick Vauday, they could “see themselves from outside as an Other, to become the object for themselves.”³⁹ Within the system of Orientalism, the term Other is borrowed from Jacques Lacan who uses it to describe the stage of growth in which a child learns of his/her identity by separating his/her being from the mirror image.⁴⁰ In this context, the tourists learn of their identity not just from the Japanese Other, but also from themselves as an Other. Finally, the last factor of an Orientalist Reality, Absence, is violated by the presence of Mrs. Parrish and her friend. As Mitchell argues, “the ability to see without being seen, confirmed one’s separation from the world, and constituted at the same time a position of power.”⁴¹ Mrs. Parrish and her friend entered the world of the Orient and forfeited their position of power. Not only could they be seen by the object of their gaze, but they could also be seen in the space of the Orient by their future selves vis-à-vis the photographic reproduction.

The second comparison is between a studio photograph and family photograph of a baby carried on the back of either a nurse or the mother. *Figure 9* is a studio photograph from one of

³⁹ Vauday, Patrick. 2002. *Photography from West to East: Clichéd Image Exchange and Problems of Identity*. *Diogenes* 49 (193): 48.

⁴⁰ Lacan, Jacques, and Bruce Fink 1956. 2006. *Ecrits: The First Complete Edition in English*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 75 – 81.

⁴¹ Mitchell, “Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order,” in Nicholas Dirks, ed. *Colonialism and Culture*, 306.

the large brocade-covered albums. This album, like the lacquer-cover album with “The Woman Farmer,” only contains hand-tinted, studio photographs. However, unlike the lacquer-cover album, the hand-tinting varies in quality and the photographs are inconsistently numbered and titled. This brocade album is a composite album with photographs from different photographers, which were most likely hand picked by the Parrish family. The themes in this album range from landscapes of Lake Biwa, Nara, and Fujiya Miyanoshita to pictures of women and girls in kimonos. The unifying element is the aestheticism of each picture’s expansive, cherry-tree framed views or bright colored kimonos. Most likely, the Parrish family purchased this album early in their stay and the photographs were chosen not as reminders of places they had already visited, but for their pictorial aestheticism. “Young Nurse” (fig.9) features a young girl at the center of the frame. She is turned at a three-quarter angle to reveal the other subject of the photograph – a baby. A traditional Japanese parasol frames the faces of the young nurse and the baby. In contrast to “The Woman Farmer,” this photograph was staged on a set. The background is a painted scene of a lake surrounded by lush foliage and hazy fog. The baby epitomizes the child-like quality of the Orient and presents the first feature of the Orientalist Reality – Essentialism. Further, this image is devoid of any signs of modernity or Western influence and confirms Otherness and Absence. Overall, like “The Woman Farmer,” this image both confirms the Orientalist Reality and authorizes the tourist’s gaze.

The theme of the baby carried on its mother or nurse’s back was reproduced in the Parrish family album (*Fig 10*). This family photograph is from one of the larger brocade-covered albums, which has the most extensive collection of family photographs. The photographs range in size, tone, and subject matter. However, most have hand written subtitles under the image describing the subject, place and/or date. *Figure 10* shows Mrs. Parrish in the foreground turned

toward a Japanese woman and man. The Japanese woman is dressed in a plain robe and a white head covering. She is holding a paper parasol and has a thick strap extending across her shoulders. Next to her, a man, dressed in a similar plain robe and pants, pulls a cart loaded with timber. He is wearing a *sugegasa*, or a conical Japanese hat, that covers his face in shadow. However, his identity is unimportant because he is not the subject of the tourist's gaze. The subject of Mrs. Parrish's gaze is indicated by the subtitle, "small baby on his mama's back." The photograph reproduces both the subject of a baby, as seen in "Young Nurse," and also Mrs. Parrish's gaze. Like Urry states, professionals in the tourist industry authorize what the tourist gaze can look at and represent. Therefore, Mrs. Parrish's gaze is directed at a baby. This comparison, like the images of the woman farmer, illustrates the authority invested in the souvenir photography. Also, similar to the woman farmer photographs, this image features individuals from rural Japan as signifiers of an essentialized Japan. Further, like the "Young Nurse," this family photograph presents a child as the subject, which emphasizes the child-like quality of the Orient. Whereas essentialism is present in this photograph, Otherness is, again, ambiguous. This picture is unique because it not only turns Mrs. Parrish into an Other, but it also catches her in the act of looking. The tourist's gaze is captured and objectified. As something that is looked at and reproduced, Rosa Parrish's gaze can be scrutinized. The power structure between Rosa and the object of her gaze, the mother and child, is exposed and highlights the utter intrusiveness of the act. As Mitchell alludes to in his analogy of Bentham's panopticon, when the gaze is revealed, it loses a certain amount of authority over its object.⁴² Finally, like the previous family photograph of the women farmers, the feature of Absence is violated by Mrs. Parrish's presence. Overall, this photograph also presents a complicated Orientalist Reality.

⁴² Mitchell, "Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order," 306.

The final comparison is between a studio photograph and a family photograph of the Daibutsu. The studio photograph, titled “Daibutsu, Kamakura,” is from the same album as the “Young Nurse.” The Daibutsu occupies the very center of the frame. The low camera angle and the two Japanese men on the Buddha’s lap emphasize the immense size of the statue. The giant Buddha is shrouded in sunlight and, with the hand tinting, almost appears over exposed. This over exposure makes the statue appear washed out and clean – an object untouched by the passage of time. Like the other studio photographs, “Daibutsu, Kamakura” embodies all of the elements of an Orientalist Reality. The Daibutsu is an essentialized symbol of an Orient. It represents a traditional, spiritual, and exotic Japan untouched by the Westernization or modernization. Also the monumental Buddhist sculpture has no equivalent in the West, the quintessential sign of Otherness. The Daibutsu also reflected the Western desire for spirituality. During the nineteenth century, Americans such as Isabella Stewart Gardner and Ernest Fenollosa, constituted part of the Buddhism craze in Victorian America.⁴³ Finally, although the Euro-American is the intended viewer, their presence is excised from the representation. Absence supports the presentation of this tourist destination as something untouched by the West.

In comparison with the studio photograph, the replication of framing is striking. The Parrishes and their travel companions stand in the very space represented in the souvenir photograph. More so than the photographs of people, this choice of place was not spontaneous. The Parrish family knew the Daibutsu in Kamakura to be a tourist destination, a place that one

⁴³ For more on Buddhism in America see: Thoman Tweed’s *The American Encounter with Buddhism, 1844-1912 : Victorian Culture & the Limits of Dissent* and Rick Field’s *How the Swans Came to the Lake: A Narrative History of Buddhism in America*.

must encounter to experience Japan. Thus, their choice to visit the Daibutsu and line up in front of the statue to pose for a photograph was a planned experience. Similar to the studio photograph, the family photograph represents a traditional, spiritual, and exotic Japan. The Parrishes, like most Western tourists, desired to see a monumental symbol of Japanese spirituality. However, the representation does not simply convey Otherness. Like the other family photographs, by placing themselves in the frame and becoming part of the image they are objectifying themselves and obviating the feature of Absence. Ultimately, the structure of the Orientalist Reality is laid bare – without all the features clearly present, the pictured reality is revealed as a reality external to “Japan itself.”⁴⁴

For the Parrishes, the family photographs were documentation. They captured images of themselves occupying the space of the real Japan – therefore, authenticating their idea of Japan, the simulacrum of Japan.⁴⁵ However, when the photograph is understood as a signifying practice, the meaning conveyed is ambiguous. On the one hand, the tourist’s presence exacerbates the differences between the Japan they chose to picture and themselves, the modern Westerners. On the other hand, the tourist is also objectified and the tourist gaze is laid bare for scrutiny, which leads to the incomplete Orientalist Reality, as defined by Mitchell. Nevertheless, the ambiguity in the production of the idea of Japan is a symptom of modernity. The modern and mechanical practice of picture-taking dictated the touristic behavior of the Parrishes. Where they stopped and how they experienced their travels was mediated by the desire to document and memorialize their tour via photography. Likewise, picture viewing, via the souvenir albums, also presented

⁴⁴ The phrase, “Japan itself,” is my adaption of Mitchell’s phrase the “East itself,” referring to the distinction between the East on exhibit and the East as a geographic location to which Europeans traveled (303).

⁴⁵ Baudrillard, Jean. "Simulacra and Simulations." Jean Baudrillard, *Selected Writings*, ed Mark Poster. Stanford University Press, 1998, pp.166-184. Although I use this term in the dictionary sense, as a likeness – similar, yet artificial – I also use it as a reference to the philosophic treatment of simulacrum by Jean Baudrillard (that a simulacrum is not a copy of the real, but becomes truth in its own right).

the Japan that they expected to see and, in a sense, predetermined what they would find to be picture-like. The Parrishes consumed and copied, to an extent, commercial photographs that produced alterity in the form of the essentialized Japan.⁴⁶

What does this intersection between tourism, photography, and orientalism mean? On the surface, it “authenticates” the idea of Japan; however, it also exposes the underlying power structures of the Orientalist Reality. Through the comparative analysis of studio photographs and the photographs of the Parrish family’s tour of Japan, I argue that the personal photographs were staged and performed to reproduce the experience of Japan as presented by the studio’s touristic photographs – further authenticating the “real-Japan” by occupying the space of Japan’s signifiers. However, the personal photographs also simultaneously Othered the tourist and violated the rule of absence, which broke down the Orientalist Reality. The Parrishes certainly did not intend to convey this meaning, but when the images are subject to a critical analysis within the theoretical framework of Orientalism, the simplistic reading of touristic photographs as either documentary or enacting colonialist desires is complicated. The tourist gaze is divested of its authority and the entire system of the Orientalist Reality is revealed as artificial. In turn, the idea of Japan, predicated on the Orientalist Reality, is shown as something that has very little to do with “Japan itself.” Instead, the idea of Japan is a product of the West’s search for knowledge and truth through order and representation. As Mitchell sums up, “Orientalism [...] is not just a nineteenth-century instance of some general historical problem of how one culture portrays another, nor just an aspect of colonial domination, but part of a method of order and truth essential to the peculiar nature of the modern world.”⁴⁷ As the world transitioned into the

⁴⁶ The term alterity was established by Emmanuel Lévinas to distinguish between self and not-self, like Lacan’s Other. The term has since been adopted by anthropologist such as Nicholas Dirks to refer to the constructions of the “cultural other.”

⁴⁷ Mitchell, “Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order,” 314.

twentieth century, the notions of Orientalism became further complicated by the increased ease of travel and transnational border crossing. The Parrishes' act of entering the space of the picture frame, next to the women farmers, mother and baby, and Daibutsu, presages the impending age of globalization. In conclusion, this case study reveals how touristic photography mediated the experience of the Western tourist in Japan and points to the dynamic and unstable power relationships between the West and Japan during the turn of the century.

Figures



Figure 1. Parrish and Murai families (Arrows indicate Edward, Rosa, and Lily Parrish). Edward Parrish Papers. 6th 8:D-9:A Box 17, c.1, Duke University Rubenstein Library.



Figure 2. Lily Parrish in Kyoto Hotel. 1901. Edward Parrish Papers, 6th 8:D-9:A Box 17, c.1, Duke University Rubenstein Library.



Figure 3. Ugi Mushroom Hunt. Edward Parrish Papers. 6th 8:D-9:A Box 17, c.1, Duke University Rubenstein Library.



Figure 4. Dinner with Murai and Parrish families. Edward Parrish Papers, 6th 8:D-9:A Box 17, c.1, Duke University Rubenstein Library.

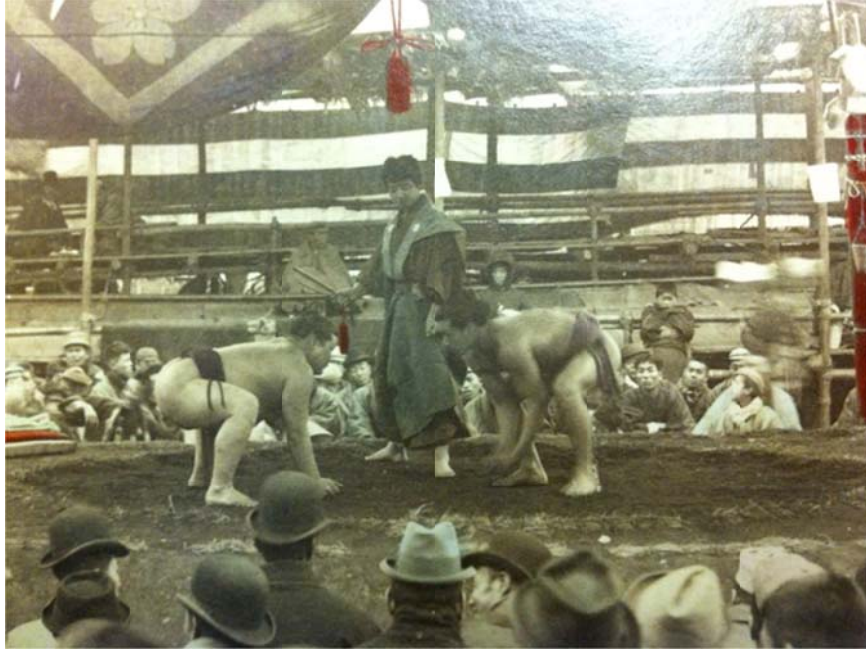


Figure 5. Sumo Wrestlers (Studio Photograph). Edward Parrish Papers, 6th 8:D-9:A Box 21, c.1, Duke University Rubenstein Library.

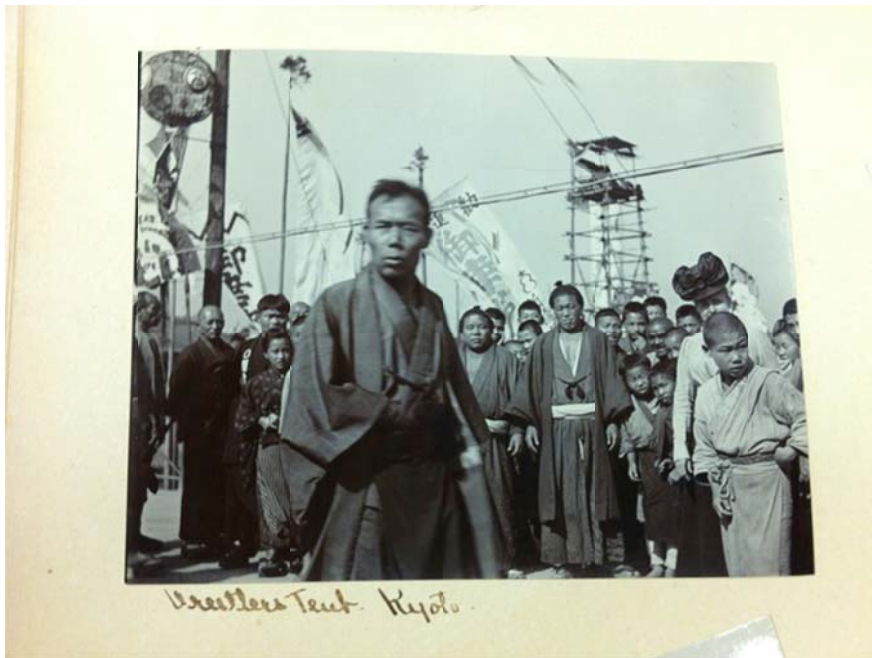


Figure 6. Wrestlers Tent Kyoto (Family Photograph). Edward Parrish Papers, 6th 8:D-9:A Box 17, c.1, Duke University Rubenstein Library.

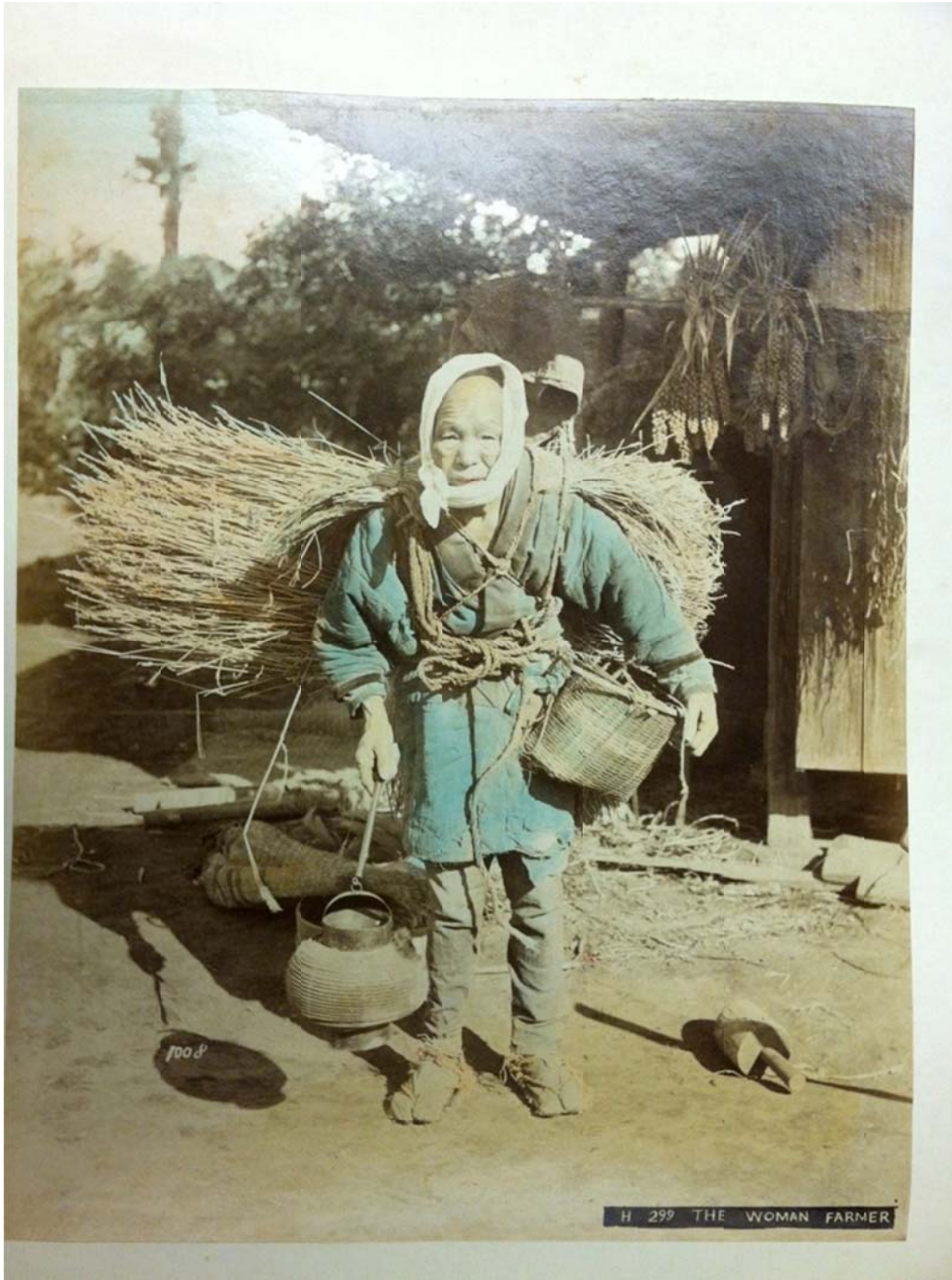


Figure 7. The Woman Farmer. Edward Parrish Papers, 6th 8:D-9:A Box 21, c.1, Duke University Rubenstein Library.



Figure 8. Mrs. Parrish with Women Farmers. Edward Parrish Papers, 6th 8:D-9:A Box 18, c.1, Duke University Rubenstein Library.



Figure 9. Young Nurse. Edward Parrish Papers, 6th 8:D-9:A Box 12, c.1, Duke University Rubenstein Library.



Figure 10. Small Baby on Mama's Back. Edward Parrish Papers, 6th 8:D-9:A Box 17, c.1, Duke University Rubenstein Library.

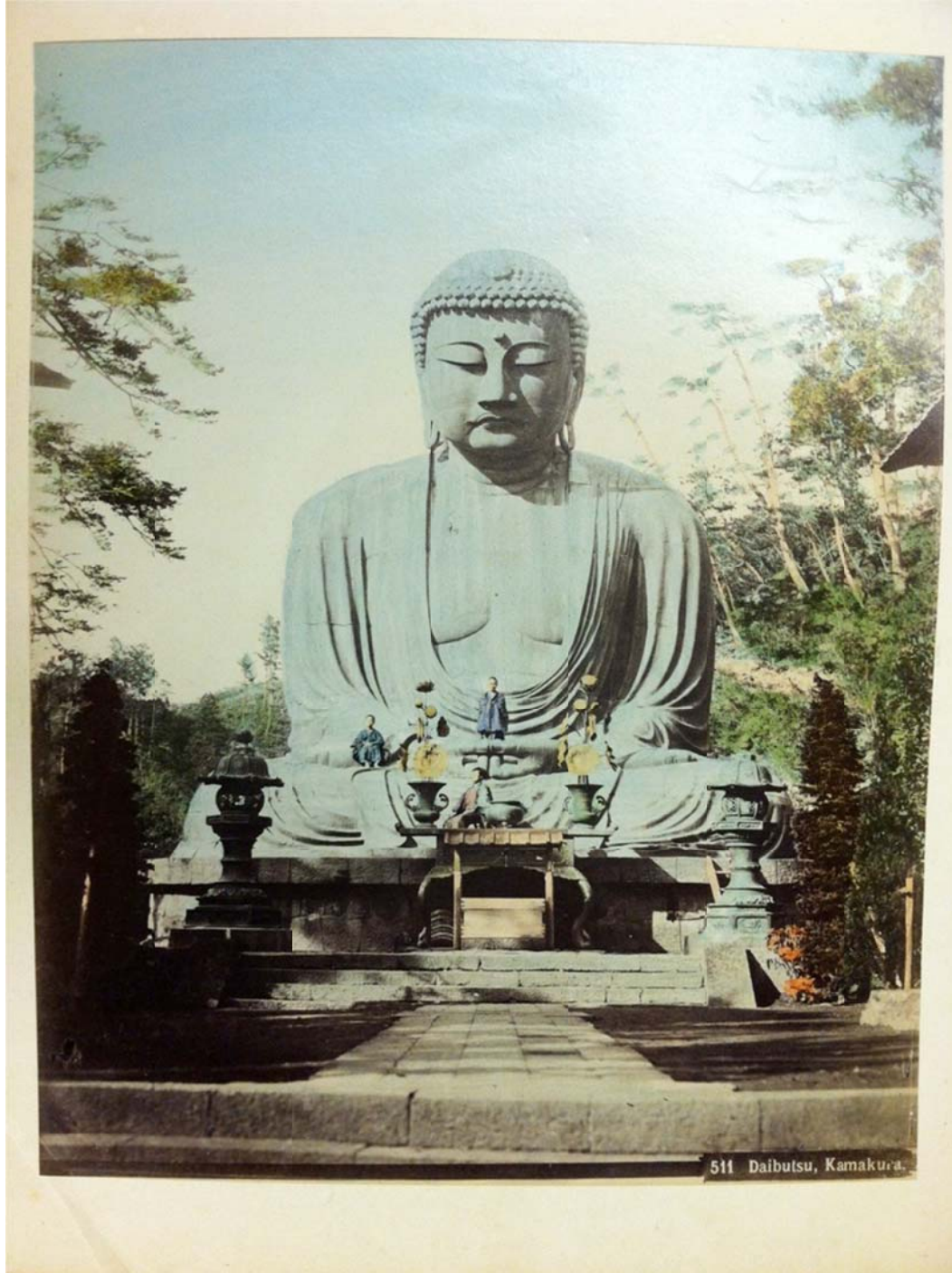


Figure 11. Daibutsu, Kamakura. Edward Parrish Papers, 6th 8:D-9:A Box 12, c.1, Duke University Rubenstein Library.

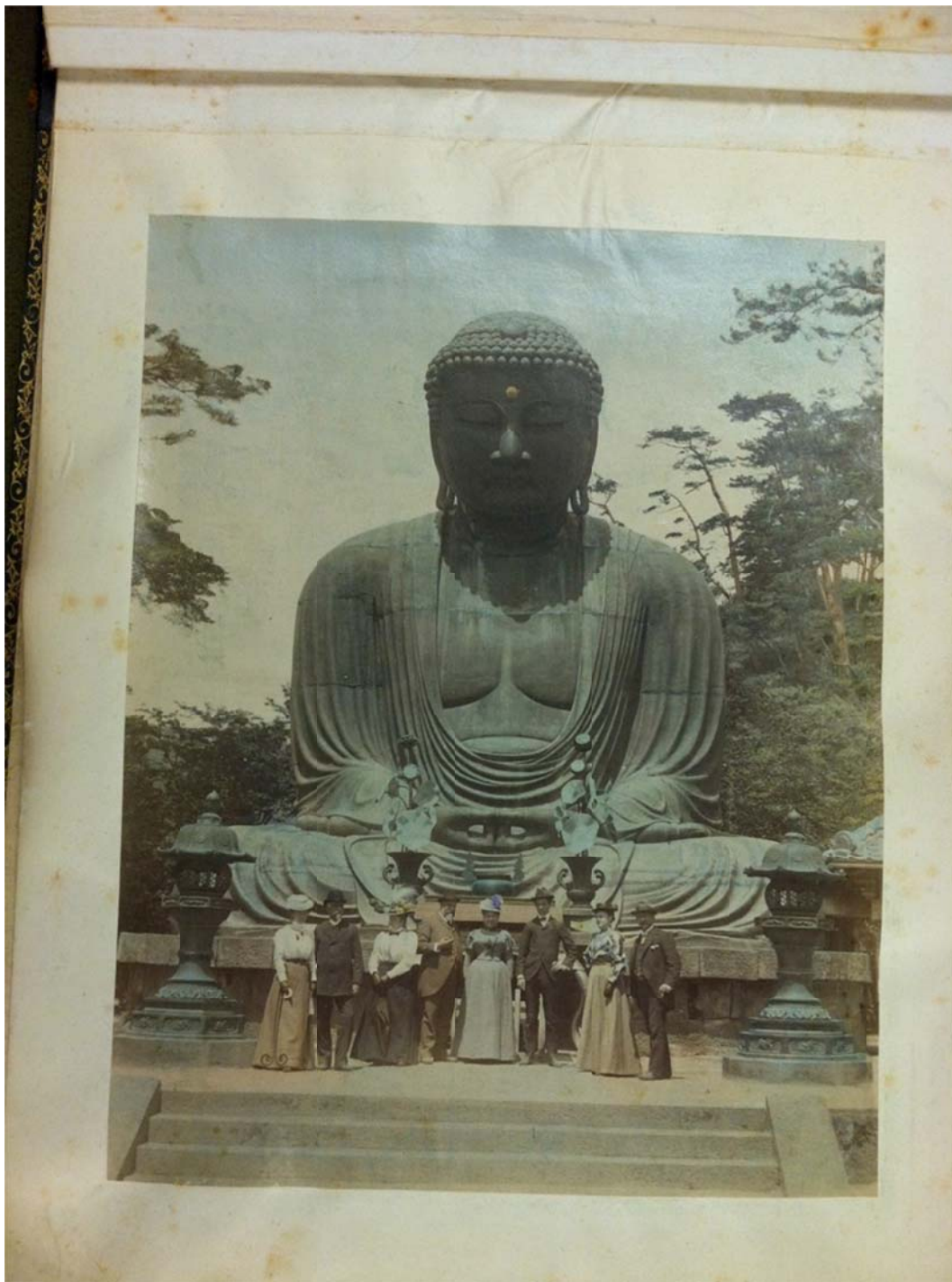


Figure 12. Daibutsu, Kamakura (family photograph), Edward Parrish Papers, 6th 8:D-9:A Box 21, c.1, Duke University Rubenstein Library.

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