

世界艺术大师系列
World Art Masters Series

晚清碎影

THROUGH
THE LENS OF
JOHN THOMSON
1868-1872

約翰·湯姆遜眼中的中國

中华世纪坛世界艺术馆 编著
Beijing World Art Museum

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中华世纪坛世界艺术馆
2009年4月16日-5月18日

Beijing World Art Museum
16 April-18 May 2009

序 一

100多年前，当西方人用坚船利炮强行敲开中国大门的时候，出现在他们眼前的不仅有梦寐以求的广袤的原料产地、劳务市场和商品输出地，更有令他们无比震惊的古老中国在过去数千年时间里孕育并积淀下来的深厚历史和文化。于是，在武力的开道下，随着西洋商品一同涌入的也有不少对这个神秘国度文化的探访者，苏格兰摄影师约翰·汤姆逊无疑正是其中特别突出的一位。

汤姆逊被誉为纪实摄影的先驱之一。这不仅是因为他到达了包括中国在内的亚洲很多国家和地区，甚至深入到从没有外国人涉足过的中国内地，而且还源于他在中国人普遍对摄影尚一无所知的时代，凭借其良好的沟通能力，拍摄到了上至王公贵族，下至平民百姓等各个阶层、各个地方的风土人情。更为重要的是，相对于晚清其他造访中国的摄影师来说，汤姆逊的镜头是不带有民族偏见的，是最为客观、真实地反映其所见所闻的。除此之外，汤姆逊在回到英国后，又不遗余力地通过各类出版物，将这些中国照片广泛地介绍给西方人，充当了一个在当时少有的公正且纯粹的文化使者角色。可以说，“汤姆逊是第一个最广泛拍摄和传播中国的西方摄影家，是第一个对中国早期摄影术进行珍贵记录的摄影家，是第一个在拍摄中国人时孜孜追求摄影审美的艺术家和沟通大师，同时还是第一个广泛表现出对中国人民友好和同情的西方摄影家”。

汤姆逊去世后，他在中国拍摄的珍贵照片连同玻璃底版均被伦敦的维尔康姆图书馆收藏。虽然在图书馆的努力下，这批藏品得以系统地整理和编目，并接待了许多国家的研究学者，但对于照片诞生地的普罗大众来说，他们一直以来仍旧是遥远和陌生的。欣喜的是，在一个多世纪后的今天，在多方努力下，中华世纪坛世界艺术馆终于迎来了“晚清碎影——汤姆逊眼中的中国（1868—1872）”摄影展，这次展览首次把汤姆逊的照片从遥远的英国带回来，并大规模地介绍给中国最广泛的观众群体。

在介绍的同时，展览还突出强调了一个“回望”的主题，这也正是中华世纪坛世界艺术馆2009年的业务主题——“回望中国”。当然，这种回望还不仅仅是我们自身对历史过往的回望，因为这些照片出自一个西方人的眼光，所以实际上这是一种跨越时间和地域的多角度的回望。既有过去的外国人如何看待当时的中国，又有现代的中国人如何看待自己的过去，当然还有现代的中国人透过外国人的眼光如何看待自己的过去等等。今天，当年费尽心力去记录和被记录的人俱往矣，但庆幸影像尚存，通过展览，这些影像又回到了当年场景的发生地——北京、福州、广州和东莞等地，它们将以见证者的身份去史海钩沉，并促使当代人去抚今追昔。

／王立梅，中华世纪坛世界艺术馆馆长
2009年4月

Foreword 1

More than a century ago the West opened China's gates with military force. What met their eyes was not just the huge quantity of raw materials such as fertile land, labour resources and export sites, but also an amazing sight of culture and history built up through several thousands of years of Chinese civilisation. As Western commodities rushed into the old China there followed many individuals who wanted to investigate this mysterious land and culture. The Scottish photographer John Thomson stood out among these visitors.

Thomson is known as one of the pioneers of photo-journalism. This is not just due to his extensive travels in Asia, including China but his choice to reach destinations in the interior previously undiscovered by foreign eyes, and also because of the unique era in which he traveled, when Chinese people knew next to nothing about photography. His powers of communication enabled him to capture the local customs and feelings of each place he visited, as he photographed Chinese people of all classes, from the aristocracy to the common man. More importantly, when compared with other foreign photographers in China during that era, his work is unaffected by racial prejudice but reflects an objective and realistic perspective of what he saw. Moreover, after his return to Britain, Thomson did his utmost to introduce these images of China to the West, through many illustrated lectures and numerous publications, he became one of the rare impartial cultural envoys of the time. It can be said that, "Thomson was the first Western photographer to disseminate images about China on such a wide scale, the first photographer to make such an earnest record of China, the first artist and master of communication to pursue with such devotion the aesthetics of photography. He was also the first Western photographer to extensively express kindness and empathy towards the Chinese people."

After his death, Thomson's collection of glass negatives of China were purchased by the Wellcome Library in London. Although the collection was well looked after and cataloged under the efforts of the Library and received the attention of many international scholars and researchers, the works however remained distant and estranged from the people of the land where they were created. It is wonderful that, today, more than one hundred years later, thanks to efforts from all sides, the Beijing World Art Museum is at last welcoming this exhibition "China – Through the Lens of John Thomson 1868 – 1872" to China. This is the first time that Thomson's photographs have traveled this distance from Britain, to be viewed by their widest audience, the Chinese people.

The Beijing World Art Museum's theme for 2009 is "China Retrospect". "China – Through the Lens of John Thomson 1868 – 1872" will be one of the most important exhibitions of this year, placing emphasis on the theme of "looking back". Of course, this type of recollection is not as simple as looking back at our history from our own perspective, because these photographs also express the perspective of a Westerner, so this exhibition represents a multiple view that transcends different time and place. It captures how Westerners would have seen China at that time, how contemporary China sees its own history, and of course how modern day Chinese people see their past through the eyes a foreigner.

The photographer and his subjects are long gone, but their influence lives on. Through this exhibition audiences can retread their steps and return to the land where these images were captured, places such as Beijing, Fuzhou, Guangzhou and Dongguan, viewers can witness the past and treasure their memories.

／Wang Limei, Director, Beijing World Art Museum
April, 2009

福建博物院
2009年6月13日-8月16日

Fujian Museum
13 June-16 August 2009

序 二

1868-1872年间，中国风雨飘摇的满清王朝正处在孕育着巨变的前夜，如果没有那些来自世界各地的摄影师的纪录，我们将永远丧失那个时代的许多历史瞬间和社会风俗画卷。苏格兰摄影师约翰·汤姆逊是来华纪实摄影师的先驱，他用相机客观地、真实地、艺术性地记录下19世纪中后期的中国社会面貌。

1839年银版摄影术的发明，正式拉开了现代摄影的序幕，而在此之后不到30年，西方摄影技术就随着约翰·汤姆逊来到中国，这些新发明的胶片记录下了封建社会后期那个在阵痛下裂变的中国。这些照片涉猎极广，涵盖了风光、人物、建筑、家庭、市井各个角度，让人们从不同的侧面了解到一百多年前的中国历史和文化。

本次展览的150幅照片，是汤姆逊作品在中国的首次大规模巡展，有许多都未曾与国人见面。这些珍贵照片具有双重的史料价值，不仅是那个时代中国人文景观的见证，同时也是展示早期摄影技术水平的重要资料。

同时，我们也希望通过此次展览，进一步增进中英两国人民之间的友谊和文化交流。

最后预祝展览圆满成功。

/ 杨琮，福建博物院院长
2009年4月

Foreword 2

During the period from 1868 to 1872, China stood precariously at the eve of a new era. The Qing Dynasty was enveloped by the forces of change. If not for those foreign photographers, record of many important historical moments and scenes of daily lives and customs of society would be lost forever. Scottish photographer John Thomson was a pioneer of photo-journalism, his objective, realistic and artistic perspective created a unique record of the face of Chinese society at the end of the 19th Century.

The invention of daguerreotype in 1839 launched the modern age of photography, and less than 30 years later Thomson brought this Western photographic technology with him to China. He used this newly invented wet collodian process to record the final years of feudal society as it broke up and the subsequent birth pains of a new age. These photographs touch on a broad range of subjects, covering many different themes such as landscape, portraits, architecture, family, and urban life. They give people diverse perspectives through which to view and understand Chinese history and culture that was in existence over a century ago.

The 148 photographs to be shown are the first large scale shown of Thomson's work in China. Many of them have never been seen by the Chinese people. The historical value of these treasured images is twofold: they are not just a witness of views of Chinese culture and society at the time, but also an important resource of early photographic history and techniques.

We also hope this exhibition will advance friendly relations and cultural exchanges between the peoples of China and Britain.

I wish the exhibition great success.

/ Yang Cong, Director, Fujian Museum
April, 2009

广州博物馆
2009年8月25日-9月25日

Guangzhou Museum
25 August-25 September 2009

序 三

从17世纪欧洲盛行“中国风”以来，中国文化一直吸引着无数欧美人士心向往之，并备受欧洲推崇，在欧洲近代社会发展过程中起到过较大影响。历史进入19世纪以后，西方文化逐渐占据强势地位，并深刻影响了中国近代历史进程。中国与欧洲这两种不同的文明由此在一种错综复杂的情形下进行交流与对话。而百年前的英国摄影师汤姆逊正是在这样的历史文化背景下，身扛笨重的摄影机，前来中国，并在中国大江南北一些重要的城市里，以他特有的审美视觉，有选择性地拍摄了不同社会阶层的风采，展示了东方人的审美情趣，留住了历史的瞬间，也为我们留下了一笔丰厚的文化遗产。今天，在中英两国文化人士的共同努力下，这批珍贵的历史照片沿着汤姆逊当年走过的足迹，分别到北京、福州、广州、东莞等城市巡展，特别是广州的展出地点定在广州博物馆馆址所在地镇海楼，则更是独具历史意义。因为这里不仅仅是广州的老城标，更是当年游历广州的欧洲画家笔下常见的风景。虽然汤姆逊的摄影作品中尚未见到有镇海楼的题材，但是却有镇海楼所在地越秀公园内的其他场景，所以我们可以肯定的是，汤姆逊到广州时一定曾远远望见过镇海楼。可以说，镇海楼是汤姆逊到广州进行拍摄时的历史见证者。

我们期待通过这次展览，让羊城人民更好地了解广州的过去，拓宽文化视野，增进与世界各国人民的友谊。

／程存洁，广州博物馆馆长
2009年4月

Foreword 3

Since the 17th Century when “Chinoiserie style” became fashionable in Europe, Chinese culture has attracted countless Europeans and Americans in search of something from the East. It has also had a relatively big influence on the development of Europe in modern times. After entering the 19th Century, Western culture gradually came to occupy a more forceful position, which deeply influenced the development of modern Chinese history. Because of this, exchange and communication between these two different cultures are enveloped by very complex attitudes and emotions.

It is against this historical and cultural background that the British photographer John Thomson arrived in China more than one hundred years ago. Coming to China, weighed down with cumbersome camera equipment, he traveled to important cities all over the country, to the north and south of the Yangtze River. With unique aesthetic vision he selectively photographed and captured the elegance of each different social class, showed the aesthetic flavour of the people of the Far East, leaving us with a record of an historical moment and a rich cultural treasure. Today, under the mutual efforts of Chinese and British cultural institutions and individuals, these treasured historical photographs have followed in the footsteps of Thomson over a century ago and are coming on an exhibition tour to cities such as Beijing, Fuzhou, Guangzhou and Dongguan. In Guangzhou they will be exhibited at the Guangzhou Museum's Zhenhai Tower with its unique historical significance. It is significant as a building because it not only represents the old city of Guangzhou, but because it was frequently painted by Western artists of the period. Although Thomson's works did not include scenes of the Zhenhai Tower itself, he did take an image of a memorial arch in the Yuexiu Park, therefore we can say for certain that on his travels to Guangzhou, the Tower would have attracted his gaze. It can be said that the Zhenhai Tower was a historical witness to the period of Thomson's travels to Guangzhou.

We eagerly await this exhibition and hope that it will help the people of Guangdong Province to better understand the past of Guangzhou, that it will broaden our cultural field of vision, and enhance friendly relations with people around the world.

／Cheng Cunjie, Director, Guangzhou Museum
April, 2009

东莞展览馆
2009年11月3日-12月2日

序 四

一个多世纪以前，约翰·汤姆逊以一种对东方文化的好奇和对不同人种文化的偏好，以人类学、社会学的眼光，以摄影艺术家的敏锐为我们记录了大量珍贵的中国影像。“晚清碎影——汤姆逊眼中的中国（1868—1872）”摄影展使我们有幸欣赏到这些影像。

纵观汤姆逊拍摄的照片，他不仅拍摄了许多达官贵人与宫廷生活，而且还将摄影镜头对准了中国山水与普通百姓，拍摄了大量风土人情和普通人的生活，成为当时中国社会生活最真实的写照，对我们从一个侧面了解100多年前的中国历史和文化具有重要的价值。

汤姆逊拍摄的中国影像在19世纪的传播，大大促进了当时西方对中国的了解。时隔一个多世纪后，当他的作品返回中国之际，这些影像再次为我们架起了中西文化交流的桥梁，也让我们感受到了约翰·汤姆逊对中西文化交流的贡献。

东莞展览馆作为一座综合性的城市展览场馆，在着力宣传推介东莞的同时，亦致力于引进高品位的文化艺术展览，促进城市间的文化交流。作为“晚清碎影——汤姆逊眼中的中国（1868—1872）”的展出场馆之一，我们希望通过此次展览的举办，加强东莞市民对近代中国尤其是近代广东历史人文的认识与了解，感受近代来华的外国人眼中的中国风土人情，进一步增进中英两国间的文化交流。

感谢英国维尔康姆图书馆、中华世纪坛世界艺术馆为此次展览的举办所付出的努力！祝展出圆满成功！

／钟长永，东莞展览馆馆长
2009年4月

Dongguan Exhibition Center
3 November-2 December 2009

Foreword 4

More than one century ago, John Thomson traveled to China, filled with a curiosity about the Far East and a fondness for people of different cultures. From an anthropological and sociological perspective and with the keen aesthetics of a photographic artist he recorded a portrait of China that has become a great treasure. Through the exhibition “China – Through the Lens of John Thomson 1868 – 1872” we are very fortunate to be able to admire the images that he captured.

To look at Thomson's photographs in overall, we can see that he not only photographed the lives of the ruling classes and aristocracy, but also captured images of nature and of the common man. He photographed many images of the daily lives of common people, capturing their local customs and practices. His works are the most realistic portrayal of Chinese society of that period, and are most valued as a tool for us to understand Chinese history and culture from one hundred years ago.

The dissemination of Thomson's photographic portrait of China in the 19th Century greatly enhanced the West's understanding of China. Over a hundred years later, as these works return to China, once again we elevate the bridge of cultural exchange between the East and the West, and recognise Thomson's contribution towards this exchange.

The Dongguan Exhibition Centre is a comprehensive exhibition venue. As well as putting efforts into increasing knowledge and understanding of Dongguan, it is also dedicated to introducing quality international cultural and art exhibitions in order to advance cultural exchange between cities.

As one of the exhibition venues of “China – Through the Lens of John Thomson 1868 – 1872” we hope that through this exhibition we will strengthen Dongguan residents' understanding and knowledge of modern Chinese history, in particular modern history and culture of Guangdong Province. We hope that it will enable us to view foreign perspectives of 19th century Chinese and will also help to enhance cultural exchanges between China and Britain.

We would like to thank the Wellcome Library in Britain and the Beijing World Art Museum for all of their efforts in organising this exhibition. We wish it great success!

／Zhong Changyong, Director, Dongguan Exhibition Centre
April, 2009

人类的汤姆逊

/ 仝冰雪

如果当年伟大的马可·波罗能用几张照片来说明他漫游古老中国的经历，那么他的美丽传说会更加动人。

——约翰·汤姆逊

摄影术在1839年正式宣布发明后，伴随着第一次鸦片战争的炮火，也被西方人带入中国。在最早来中国摄影的几个西方人中，汤姆逊并未在其中之列：

第一个来中国摄影的外国人——法国人于勒·埃及尔
Jules Alphonse Eugène Itier, 1802-1877, 1844年来华；

第一个来中国的商业摄影师——瑞士人皮埃尔·罗西耶
Pierre Joseph Rossier, 约1829-1898, 1858年来华；

第一个大清都城的摄影师——意大利人菲利斯·比托
Felix Beato, 约1825-1907, 1860年来京；

但在中国的摄影史上，汤姆逊是第一个最广泛拍摄和传播中国的西方摄影家，是第一个对中国早期摄影术进行珍贵记录的摄影家，是第一个在拍摄中国人时孜孜追求摄影审美的艺术家和沟通大师，同时还是第一个广泛表现出对中国人民友好和同情的西方摄影家。

一、第一个最广泛拍摄和传播中国的西方摄影家

当研究上面提到的三位最早到中国的摄影师的照片时，我们会发现，于勒·埃及尔的银版摄影主要是在澳门和广州地区，拍摄数量极少；皮埃尔·罗西耶的立体照片拍摄只覆盖了香港和广东，而菲利斯·比托的湿版摄影也局限在香港、广州、天津、北京等几个城市。相比之下，约翰·汤姆逊的摄影作品则是第一次涵盖了中国的台湾、福建和长江流域的许多地区，他也成为西方第一个最广泛拍摄中国的摄影家。

回顾当时的摄影技术和中国人对摄影的认知，也许可以看出一个外国摄影师深入中国拍摄的难度。



图1 Fig.1

John Thomson: A Humanist View of the World

/ Tong Bingxue

'Had the great Venetian traveler, Marco Polo, been able to confirm by a series of photographs his story of the wonders of Cathay, his fair fame would have escaped the discredit cast upon it for centuries, and indeed until comparatively recent investigation confirmed his story.'

— John Thomson

After its invention in 1839, photography was introduced into China by Europeans. John Thomson however, was not among the first photographers who visited China.

The French customs inspector and amateur daguerreotypist Jules Alphonse Eugène Itier (1802-1877) was the first person to bring photography into China (1844);

the Swiss pioneer photographer Pierre Joseph Rossier (c.1829 - c.1898) remained in China for several years from 1858, produced some of the first commercial photographs of China;

and the Venetian photographer Felice Beato (c.1825 - c.1907) arrived in imperial capital Beijing in 1860, took some of the first photographs of the Summer Palace.

In the history of photography in China, however, John Thomson was the first western photographer to have traveled and photographed so extensively and to have take up an active role informing the western audience about China the country. In his books on China, Thomson showed his genuine interest in the development of photography in China, while his photographs of the country and its people demonstrated he was not only an effective communicator and an excellent artist but also a human being with a profound love for China and deep feelings for its people.

1. Thomson's work and legacy

Looking at photographs of China by Jules Alphonse Eugène Itier, Pierre Joseph Rossier and Felice Beato, we see that Itier mainly documented the conclusion of the Treaty of Whampoa and took a small number of daguerreotypes of Chinese people and scenery in Macau and the Guandong region. Rossier's stereographs covered mainly Hong Kong and Guangdong, while Beato's images were mainly about Taku forts in Tianjin, the Summer Palace in Beijing, and of Hong Kong and Guangdong. In comparison, Thomson was the first western photographer to travel and photograph so extensively across China from Formosa to Fujian and up the Yangtze River.



图2 Fig.2



图3 Fig.3

在1880年之前，摄影师采用的普遍是流行的湿版摄影法，摄影师不仅需要随身携带笨重的玻璃底板，还必须在拍摄现场涂布玻璃底板，现场显影和定影，因此需要随身携带移动暗房（一般是帐篷），各种药液甚至干净的清水。我们看看汤姆逊在中国的拍摄路线：广州、澳门、汕头、潮州、厦门、闽江、马尾、福州、台湾、香港、上海、胶州湾、天津、北京、上海、汉口、宜昌、九江、南京、上海、宁波等，近8000公里的行程。汤姆逊每次拍摄都需要雇佣多名“苦役”来背负笨重的照相器材，还要应对气候带来的困难：1871年冬天在胶州拍摄时，他刚把感光剂涂在玻璃上，玻璃就被冻住了，他只能找到炭火来融化。（图1）

汤姆逊作为商业摄影师，在深入内地的拍摄过程中，是没有外国部队的保护的。此外，汤姆逊不只是和中国的上流社会打交道，他更多地拍摄的是普通的中国人，这就要克服内地居民对摄影的恐惧。当时很多中国人认为照相机会把人的“灵魂”带走，摄影者甚至被认为是死亡的预言者，尤其当面对的是一个来自异国的白种人时，人们更为恐惧。汤姆逊亲眼看见有些中国人跪下哀求他不要把他们的影像乃至生命抓走。还有一次，他在广州拍摄古塔时，被人抓住推到江水里，幸亏被两个好心的中国姑娘搭救才得以逃脱。（图2）

今天，重新审视这一幅幅老照片，我们应当真诚地感谢汤姆逊，他的中国行程没有教会任务，没有外交使命，没有军事目的，也没有商业驱动，他完全以一种对中国的热爱，对东方文化的好奇和对不同人种文化的偏好，以人类学、社会学的眼光，以摄影艺术家的敏锐为我们记录了大量珍贵的中国影像。

汤姆逊当年对其所拍摄中国影像的有效传播，不仅使他本人获得了巨大的声誉，同时也极大促进了当时西方人对中国的了解。

早期来华摄影师一般都是通过销售原版照片册的方式来传播自己作品的，比如菲利斯·比托，而皮埃尔·罗西耶则通过售卖立体照片的方式来展示自己的中国影像。这样的方式不但局限性大，而且受众面很窄，此外还因所配照片文字太少而不易被人深入理解。而汤姆逊则采用出版有关中国的照片画册系列来展示自己的摄影成果，尤其是1873到1874年推出的《中国和中国人画报》（*Illustrations of China and its People*），采用凹版印制的方式，展示了200幅他拍摄的中国照片精品，每幅照片都有记录式的文字说明，开创了利用摄影制版的印刷方式向西方大规模介绍报道中国和中国人民的先例，在欧洲引起了巨大反响，也成为世界摄影传播史上的一段佳话。

二、第一个对中国早期摄影术进行珍贵记录的摄影家

早期的摄影师在中国被认为是匠人，在正史中鲜有记载；并且因为早期照相机的昂贵，很少有照相楼同时拥有两部相机，因此，单独记载早期中国摄影师和照相楼的文字和图像资料十分少见。而约翰·汤姆逊关于香港和北京两地摄影实践的记录为我们研究中国早期摄影史提供了十分宝贵的资料。（图3）

在1872年11月29号和1872年12月13日出版的《英国摄影期刊》上，汤姆逊的两篇文章系统描述了在香港的中国摄影师的活动。他介绍说，在香港的皇后大道上，有20家中国人开的照相楼。其中，有个

It is not difficult to imagine how arduous it must have been for a western photographer to work in China at that time, carrying a large amount of cumbersome equipment while facing the suspicious eyes of the Chinese.

Until 1880, the wet-collodian process was the most advanced and popular photographic technique. For the coating and sensitizing of the plates and the developing and fixing of the image, a complete chest of chemicals was needed. Processing had to be carried out immediately before and after exposure of the plate in dark room conditions. A portable light-proof tent big enough to house the entire array of instruments – dishes, glass measures, funnels, scales, weights, etc., as well as the photographer himself, was essential, as was a bucket and supply of fresh water. With these equipment and supplies, and 'with the aid of eight to ten bearers', Thomson sought to penetrate a largely unknown and unapproachable China, covering 8000 kilometres. Sometimes he experienced the extremes of temperature and on one occasion in winter 1871 while processing a picture of Chefoo, he poured some water over the glass negative and immediately the liquid froze on its surface. He had to thaw the negative over a charcoal fire and wash it clean with water.(Fig.1)

As an independent commercial photographer, Thomson was not accompanied by any foreign troops while traveling across inland China. In order to take photographs of ordinary Chinese, he often had to overcome people's fear of the camera. At the time it was a widespread belief that in taking a photograph a portion of the vital essence is extracted from the body of the sitter and imminent death is rendered an absolute certainty. Therefore a photographer was frequently looked upon as a forerunner of death, especially if he was a white foreigner. There were occasions when Thomson witnessed some Chinese so stricken with superstitious dread that they fell down on bended knees and beseeched him not to take their likeness with the fatal lens of his camera. On another occasion, when he was attempting to take a photograph of a tower not far from Guangdong, Thomson was assailed on the river bank by a mob of ruffians, who drove him into the river. Luckily he was taken into a boat by a couple of good-natured women. (Fig.2)

Today as we re-examine Thomson's photographs of China and its people, we feel we owe him a debt of gratitude. Out of pure curiosity for Eastern culture and love for China, he captured the day-to-day lives of the people and a great number of remarkable images of a fragile nation in the process of change. They were the first photographic social documentation of China to be published. These images not only showed Thomson's remarkable talent as a photographer, they also contributed a great deal to the 19th century western view of China and its people.

Whilst Pierre Joseph Rossier and Felice Beato's photographs were sold individually and so had a very limited audience, Thomson was the first to publish his works in book format. *Illustrations of China and its People* first appeared in 1873, with 200 engravings made from Thomson's photographs. These photographs were printed by the newly invented collotype process and the images were accompanied by Thomson's own text in which he frequently displayed remarkable knowledge, insight and wit. It caused a stir in Europe.

2. History of photography in 19th century China

In Chinese historical documents photographers were considered artisans. At that time, cameras were very

叫阿芳 (Afong Photographer) 的摄影师“有良好的艺术修养, 凭他的才能, 甚至在伦敦也能立足”。他随后详细描写了一个叫“A-Hung”的中国人经营的照相楼, 向我们全面展示了一个清代中国照相馆的生动写照:

进入摆满广告肖像照片的门口, 登上窄窄的楼梯来到二楼的接待室, 正在光着膀子的A-Hung赶紧穿上衬衫, 用洋泾浜英语和汤姆逊打着招呼。随后A-Hung向汤姆逊介绍了中国人的摄影趣味, 他说西方人总喜欢在摄影时脱离直线和垂线, 而中国人喜欢直视镜头, 脸部没有阴影, 这样他们的朋友在远处观看照片时就能看到他们的双眼和双耳, 也才能体现出一个人的全部容貌。但是受西方摄影教育的汤姆逊并不赞同这个观点, 认为这样的构图太平淡了, 还和A-Hung争论起来。最后, 汤姆逊开玩笑地说: 如果为了展示一个人的全貌, 你为什么不把人的后背和辫子也照一张, 贴在正面照片的后面呢? A-Hung丝毫没有示弱, 风趣地说: 好建议, 我考虑考虑!

随后, 他跟随A-Hung来到了另外一个小屋里。墙上挂满了肖像照片, 也有画在帆布上的油画肖像。当时很多照相楼同时经营画像业务, 这些肖像大部分是外国人, 也有很多舰船画像。四五个光着脊背, 下穿绸裤的中国画家口含烟斗, 一边对着照片画像, 一边聊天, 其中一人还在阳光中哼着小曲, 一派其乐融融的景象。

A-Hung为本地几个穿着节日盛装的男女拍摄了照片, 他们都是一个姿势, 旁边是一方几, 几上的花瓶里插着一束假花, 背景布上装饰着两个窗帘。A-Hung给汤姆逊精心挑选的几张照片上的人脸都看起来很白, 很平淡, 汤姆逊打趣地说: 你拍摄的人好像刚刚在石灰水里泡过了。A-Hung得意地说: 是的, 我觉得你应当喜欢他们, 他们很精美, 我是通过给拍摄者脸上擦粉才得到这样的效果的。照相的玻璃屋里很热, 拍摄者一坐下就会出汗, 这样擦的粉就会很好地粘在脸上。不但本地人, 连马来人和黑人到这里照相都是采用这种方法, 效果很好, 成本低得更是不值一提。

A-Hung为本地人拍照的费用是12张 (名片照片) 收费8先令, 同时, 他也复制一些欧洲人拍摄的照片在自己的店里销售, 这样的照片是12张收费2先令。

最后, 汤姆逊来到了照相的玻璃屋子里, 阳光从上面照下来, 令人眩目, 他们坐在座位上, 颈部和四肢被照相专用的铁支架固定住, 然后相机被拉过来瞄准他们, 长时间的曝光好像经历了一个世纪, 最后当他们听到敲击帽子的声音时, 发现终于拍摄完成了。A-Hung消失在旁边的暗房里, 从一个小窗户里, 汤姆逊听到他在数底板: 一号!

汤姆逊从照相房间出来后, 再次环顾外屋的画师, 在角落里看到一个看起来比实际年龄长20岁的老者。他是一个在象牙上作画的缩微画师, 但他每天也就工作不超过两三个小时, 其余时间在吸食鸦片和午休。对比周围索然无味的工作环境, 很难想象他们能够画出如此精致和美丽的缩微肖像。他们的画像主要是根据顾客的照片而作, 每当顾客需要一幅缩微画像时, 他们就会在顾客的照片上罩住一个带方格的玻璃, 把照片分割成不同的方块, 用铅笔在象牙上画草图, 然后再根据照片内容填充。同样的方法也用在画大幅的油画肖像上, 但这样的油画画得不是特别精确——因为一般是几个画师合作完成一幅画, 技艺高超的画师画头部, 次等的画师画手部, 学徒画服饰和珠宝。绘制一幅18×12英寸的画像大约需要30先令, 对经常光顾港口的外国海员来说, 为他们的朋友或先人画像带回国内, 是一份不错的纪念品。

从汤姆逊的记载中可以看出, 脱胎于早期画楼的照相馆, 还保留了画楼的很多业务, 这是和早期摄

expensive and a studio rarely had more than one camera. Therefore, there were very few records of early Chinese photographers nor their photographs. Thomson's work provides us with invaluable visual and historical documentation in understanding 19th century China and its early history of photography. (Fig.3)

In 1872 Thomson contributed two articles to the *British Journal of Photography*. He recounts the activities of early Chinese photographers and portrait artists working in Hong Kong. According to him, on Queen's Road Central, there were about 20 photographic and artist studios and amongst them was Afong Studio owned by the Chinese photographer Lai Afong. He 'was a plump and good natured son of Han', Thomson recalls and 'a man of exquisite taste.'

According to Thomson there were a number of painters established in Hong-Kong but they all did the same class of work and have about the same tariff of prices, regulated according to the dimensions of the canvas. The occupation of these painters consisted mainly in making enlarged copies of photographs. In one such artist studio Thomson noted that its walls were adorned with paintings in oil and some of the specimens of photographic art displayed in doorways were fairly good. 'The work in this painting-shop, like many things Chinese, is so divided as to afford the maximum of profit for the minimum of labour. Thus one artist sketches, another paints the face, a third does the hands, and a fourth fills in the costume and accessories. A canvas portrait is placed on the artist's easel, and is covered with a piece of glass bearing the lines and squares which solve the problem of proportion in the large work.' In one corner of the studio, Thomson noticed that one artist had just roused himself from a long sleep and his clothes were redolent of the fumes of opium: 'he peers through his large spectacles into the subject's black eyes, and measures out her fair proportions as he transfers them to the canvas; then she is passed from hand to hand, until at last every detail has been produced with pre-Raphaelite exactitude, and a glow of colour added to the whole, far surpassing nature.'

Here Thomson was told that 'a Chinaman would not suffer himself to be posed so as to produce a profile or three-quarter face, his reason being that the portrait must show him to possess two eyes and two ears and that his round face is perfect as a full moon. The same observance of symmetry is carried out in the entire pose of the figure; the face too must be as nearly as possible devoid of shadow, or if there be any shadow at all, it must be equal on both sides; this love of symmetry is also observed in carrying two watches in place of one in pockets placed one each side of the coat. Shadow, the Chinese say, should not exist; it is an accident of nature, and therefore should not be portrayed, as it does not represent any feature of the face'; 'and yet', commented Thomson, 'they all of them carry fans in order to secure that very shade so essential to existence in the South of China!'

These early accounts of Chinese photographic studios have left us with an invaluable historical record of early Chinese photography.

In comparison to Hong Kong, in the imperial capital Beijing, the first photographic studio only emerged in 1879. Thomson's 1898 book *Through China with a Camera* provided us with a vivid account of early photographic activities in the city. As Thomson shows, already in 1871, there were at least two people in Beijing devoted to photography. One such person was a Mr Wang, a man with some imperial connections who accompanied Thomson when he photographed the ruins of the Summer Palace. The other, was a businessman, Mr.Yang, 'a fine sample of the modern Chinese savant — fat, good-natured and contented, but much inclined to take short cuts to scientific knowledge,



图4 Fig.4



图5 Fig.5



图6 Fig.6

影技术的发展必然相关的。因为那时没有放大技术，没有彩色技术，而国外市场对大的彩色肖像仍然有巨大的需求，加上中国便宜的劳动力资源，因此，画像和摄影并存，成为早期中国照相馆的一大特色。汤姆逊的那张正在画像的画师的照片也为我们考证早期中国摄影的发展提供了影像实证。

和香港早期繁荣的商业摄影相比，当时的大清都城北京却是另外一番景象。北京最早一家中国人从事的商业摄影是成立于1879年的丰泰照相馆，由辽宁法库人任庆泰创办。在这之前，虽然1860年英国战地摄影师费里斯·比托拍摄了大量北京的照片并得到广泛传播，但在1860到1879近二十年间，中国人的摄影实践鲜有记录，而约翰·汤姆逊在1899年出版的《镜头前的中国》（Through China with a Camera）一书中的有关描述为我们研究北京早期摄影史提供了宝贵的史料。（图4）

根据约翰逊的记载，到1871年，至少有两位北京人在进行摄影实践活动。一位是王先生，陪同约翰逊去了西郊的皇家园林——颐和园拍摄，王先生是当时北京工部的一位高官；另外一位叫杨方（音译），他是一所当铺的老板，早年在上海接受的教育，也学会了很多时髦的知识和西化的生活方式，很愿意和北京的外国人交朋友。杨方邀请汤姆逊到家里做客，汤姆逊发现杨先生在家里建立了一个摄影室，自己动手配制药液，为家人拍摄了大量肖像照片，挂在自家的墙壁上。杨方还和汤姆逊交流了摄影的心得。虽然在汤姆逊的眼里，王先生和杨方还属于业余摄影师，但说明在当时的清禁地，在皇室还没有接受摄影术的情况下，摄影术已经在上层社会和民间都生根发芽了。

三、第一个在拍摄中国人时孜孜追求摄影审美的艺术家和沟通大师

汤姆逊在香港曾广泛地和中国摄影师交往，比如上面我们曾提到了他和A-Hung有关人像摄影角度和光线的辩论。他在相关书籍中曾提到：中国人喜欢全身照，喜欢左右对称，不喜欢脸上有阴影。受到西方正统教育的汤姆逊，对中国人的摄影审美虽然能够理解，但他在摄影创作中，并没有像很多当地的外国摄影师那样单纯地迎合本地市场需求，仍然坚持以自己的艺术理念拍摄了大量中国人的肖像，为我们从另外一个视角保存了一份早期的历史遗存。（图5）

比如在新加坡和香港，他在对中国人的商业肖像拍摄中拍摄了大量中国人的侧面肖像、半身照片或头部特写。作为一个商业摄影师，这样做是要冒风险的，因为很多中国客户并不喜欢这样的作品。当然在旅行拍摄中，汤姆逊也保持了他一贯的艺术创作风格，有意识地摄制了大量的特写肖像，我们可以在这次展览中充分欣赏到。

另外，汤姆逊有意识地发现平凡生活之美。比如他拍摄了大量中国妇女发式的特写照片，拍摄了大量妇女头饰的影像，从沿海的香港、厦门、福州到内地北京，从客家农妇到满清格格，这些珍贵的照片对我们研究清末女子头饰和服饰演变提供了珍贵的参考。（图6）

当今天我们仔细审视汤姆逊拍摄的影像时，还是会被汤姆逊杰出的沟通才能所折服。

我们知道，汤姆逊所使用的照相机，根据光线强度不同，曝光时间不等，但都是几秒甚至十几秒钟。但我发现，汤姆逊有意识地脱离了早期传统拍摄静态人物的方式，拍摄了大量动态的肖像和群体照片。比如：正在喊号的更夫，正在给小姐梳头的丫鬟，正在磨刀的匠人等，这些照片不是我们今天抓拍

and to esteem his own incomplete and haphazard achievements the results of marvelously perfect intelligence.’ Mr. Yang was an amateur photographer who had a private laboratory in his huge house and its walls were ‘garnished with enlarged photographs of Yang’s family and friends.’ (Fig.4)

3. Thomson – the artist and the man

Throughout his journey in China, Thomson never ceased to communicate with local people and in Hong Kong he often discussed photography techniques with local artists. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Thomson did not pursue purely commercial success. In Singapore and Hong Kong, he took a number of half portraits and head shots. To a commercial photographer, this carried a certain risk because the majority of Chinese customers preferred full body portraiture. In fact, as this exhibition shows, portraiture was an integral part of Thomson’s work: from formal portraits of rulers and gentry to images of Chinese women with different types of coiffure. Even when he was travelling, Thomson did not stop making portraits. These provide us with an important historical reference for the study of costumes and hairstyles of the late Qing period. (Fig.5, 6)

To take such images required a high level of communication between the photographer and his subjects, especially when trying to photograph among ‘a people hostile to foreigners’. Often, Thomson would suggest that subjects change their position or gesture so they would feel more at ease. Images of couples facing each other were highly unusual in imperial China, but Thomson was successful in taking a number of those. At times, there was a price to pay. For instance, Thomson had to bribe a woman handsomely in order to photograph her golden lilies, a euphemism for bound feet. Money was at times a way to communicate with the locals, as he wrote once ‘we offered one or two small silver coins to the children of the house but the old gentleman would not permit them to be accepted until it had been carefully explained to him that they were simply gifts to be worn as charms and not intended as a recompense for his hospitality.’ (Fig.7)

4. Thomson and China

Unlike many of his contemporaries, Thomson was not, as might be expected, attached to any government survey neither was he on an official mission. He went to China out of curiosity. While there, he gradually developed a profound love for the country and a deep sympathy for its people. There were no distorted images of China and in Thomson’s photos we see human individuals full of peculiarities - we see them smiling and relaxing.

Although Thomson was very critical of the corrupt Qing government he said reform should ‘begin with the government itself, however with the people of China, Thomson experienced ‘many instances of a simple genuine hospitality’ ‘all over the land; and I feel assured that any foreigner knowing enough of the language to make his immediate wants understood, and endowed with a reasonable even temper, would encounter little opposition in traveling over the greater part of China.’ This positive feeling Thomson held towards Chinese people can be seen through his photographs.



图7 Fig.7



图8 Fig.8



图9 Fig.9

那么简单，而需要耐心地与被摄者沟通，甚至让他们保持某个姿态。虽然汤姆逊有中国助手和翻译，但在当时摄影术并不太受欢迎的中国，尤其是在内陆地区，需要摄影师在一个尽可能短的时间内说服被拍摄者配合，比如如何保持姿势，尤其是保持一个真实、放松的姿势，这里面需要极大的和真诚的沟通能力。（图7）

在汤姆逊拍摄的中国人肖像中，有不少夫妻对视、母子相望、主仆眼神交流的照片，这是不符合当时中国传统习俗的。有人说，这都是当时外国人给拍摄者银两才达到的效果。确实，在当时有很多外国摄影师为了让中国人配合拍照都给一些所谓的“报酬”，但我认为，取得这样的效果更多是来自汤姆逊真诚的沟通和杰出的导演才能。他曾在游记中写道：“我主动给了住所里的小孩几个银币，但是一位老绅士不许他们接受。经过我再三解释说，这是有着吉祥象征的礼物，并非有意作为对其殷勤款待的报酬，他们才勉强收下”。可见在和中国人打交道的过程中，汤姆逊在尊重中国风俗的基础上表现出了充分的灵活性，这样也使他能够拍摄出一般西方摄影师难以达到的效果。

四、第一个对中国人民广泛友好和同情的西方摄影家

翻看西方摄影师早期在中国拍摄的照片，大部分人是抱有一种猎奇的心态，对中国人充满了敌意和曲解。因此，小脚女人、乞丐等社会阴暗面成为摄影师拍摄的主题，拍摄的人物大都神情木讷、呆板。而当我审视汤姆逊拍摄的中国照片时，我看到更多的是中国人的笑脸，看到了更多放松的中国人。

当汤姆逊来到中国时，虽然他也深感清政府的腐败，觉得“改革应当是政府本身的改革”（《镜头前的旧中国》，第5页，中国摄影出版社，2001年7月），而对中国人民，汤姆逊用切身体会说道：“我在中国的感受是：中国人相当诚恳、好客。我相信任何一个能用语言表达自己思想并能使对方理解的外国人，在中国大部分的旅途中不会遇到什么敌意的对待”。可以看出，汤姆逊对中国人民的态度是友善的，对中国人民是抱有同情心的，这种思想感情也表现在他的许多作品中。（图8，图9）

纵观汤姆逊拍摄的中国照片，虽然他也拍摄了达官贵人、风景名胜，但他拍摄更多的是大量普通人的生活和街头小景。在这些照片中，我们看到了很多悠闲的市民小姐，也看到了街边正在享受午餐的“苦力”，还有正沉浸在欣赏“西洋景”的孩子们。可以说，在汤姆逊的镜头下，我们发现了许许多多大清帝国臣民纯朴、美好的侧面，这样的影像不论在早期外国摄影师还是中国照相馆的拍摄中都是很少见的。在一张旗人女子梳头的照片中，端坐的小姐自然、放松，面带微笑，旁边站立的丫环面容敦厚，神情专注，而一侧的孩童天真无邪。这张照片即使放在今天来看，依然有着强烈的艺术感染力。在北京拍摄满族新娘的照片时，汤姆逊也了解到了这个新人未来在传统家庭中的低贱地位。凝视照片，当我们被新娘精美的头饰和华丽的盛装所吸引后，却更被新娘那忧郁的眼神和无奈的神情所打动，这些也正是作为摄影师的汤姆逊其同情心的真实写照。

A quick look through Thomson's photographs, show that his works were not merely portraits of rulers and landed gentry and panoramic landscapes. In China he photographed many anonymous individuals in street scenes and at their homes. He was very sensitive to human beings, and this was projected through his images: from coolies enjoying their roadside lunch, to children watching a peep show, a Manchu woman dressing her hair and a bride in her beautiful wedding costume, though with a hint of sadness in her eyes.

For Thomson, his China journey was remarkable and provided him with a wealth of experience as a photographer. His photographs contributed greatly to 19th century Europe's understanding of Asia and filled the visual gap between East and West. He became known as 'China' Thomson. Perhaps even more importantly, his images of China and its people, as well as his later images of London street scenes, present to us a humanist view of the world. (Fig.8, 9)

In his *Through China with a Camera*, Thomson wrote: 'I will conclude this introductory sketch by expressing the hope that China may awake from her lethargy before it is too late'. More than a century later, these images are finally brought back to China. Let's hope his wish will become true.

汤姆逊曾说，他在中国的经历是“愉快”的。在他的游记中，我们也可以充分感受到汤姆逊积极的生活态度和一种博爱的心态。在西方，汤姆逊曾经因为他对中国地形学和民族志学的记录而赢得了“中国的汤姆逊”的绰号，今天，回望汤姆逊镜头下美丽的中国，我们也应该亲切地称他为“中国的汤姆逊”。正像汤姆逊回到伦敦后因关注当地百姓疾苦而赢得“街头摄影家”的赞誉一样，他的这种博爱不是一种狭隘的民族偏好，是他对人类普遍的同情心使然，因此，我们更应当称呼他为“人类的汤姆逊”！

1898年，汤姆逊在他最后一部关于中国的出版物《镜头前的中国》第一章结束时曾说：“我希望中国能够尽快从他毫无生气的现状中觉醒”。一个多世纪过去了，在他的作品再次返回家乡之际，他善良的愿望也正在这里变成现实！

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约翰·汤姆逊：从伦敦到中国，从中国到伦敦

/ 威廉·舒巴赫，维尔康姆图书馆

让我们回到歇洛克·福尔摩斯时代的伦敦。浓雾中走来一位拄着手杖的老人，他从位于伦敦南部朴素的家中出发，沿着伦敦西区的时髦街道，穿过古典样式的豪华办公楼，去参观一个正在公开展示的新收藏：这些古物在威格莫尔街的一个展厅中展出，收藏者是一位富有的美国药剂师：亨利·S·维尔康姆。

来参观的老人是摄影师约翰·汤姆逊，那年是1920年，他已经83岁了。而在其青壮年时期，他曾是一个伟大的旅行家。从19世纪60年代开始，汤姆逊从故乡苏格兰出发，游历了远东很多地方。在岷江湍急的河流中，他险些遭遇翻船；在山东，当他试图拍摄一座横跨河上的古桥时，桥上的人们向他投掷石块，以至于他不得不用相机的三脚架来保护自己；在中国西部边远的山村，他是当地人见到的第一个欧洲人；他还曾与泰国国王孟库一世会谈，并穿过柬埔寨战争区到达了宏伟的吴哥城与吴哥窟遗址；在北京，他既拍摄到道光皇帝的六子——尊贵的恭亲王奕訢，也把镜头对向在胡同中走街串巷吆喝着卖瓷器的小贩；他曾勇敢地深入充满沼气的塞浦路斯沼泽去拍摄当地人的起居，在伦敦，他也无时无刻不在关注那些生活在维多利亚女王足下的底层贫民，而同时，他也被邀请为女王留影。

回到英国后，汤姆逊出版了很多介绍其旅行的书，也拥有了大量的玻璃底版，这些底版是他为了印制出版物而于数十年前从中国和其他地方带回来的。

1920年，汤姆逊在维尔康姆的这个历史展上，一定是看到了走廊上挂着的那排已经归属于维尔康姆私人财产的照片：那可以说是一个小型展览，内容大部分是关于非洲的，但没有中国。所以，在1920年5月12日，汤姆逊写信给画廊的主管：

亲爱的先生，我不知道维尔康姆先生是否有意在博物馆中辟出一间屋子专门用作照片展示。如果有此打算，那么选取一些我在东方拍摄的照片将会是有价值的，因为每张照片都再现了我所到之处的某些独特的风土人情。每个系列都包括了如文物、艺术、建筑、工业和发展见证等主题，地区涵盖了暹罗、交趾支那、柬埔寨、中国和塞浦路斯。我可以提供每个主题的底版和文字注释。我敢肯定，这些系列会有助于提升博物馆本已相当精彩的藏品规模和趣味性。真心希望得到您的意见。

约翰·汤姆逊

John Thomson: London to China, China to London

/ William Schupbach, Wellcome Library

We are in the London of Sherlock Holmes. Through the fog walks an elderly man with a stick. He makes his way along the streets in the smart West End with its lavish new office buildings in the classical style. He is on a trip from his modest home in Streatham in south London to see a new collection that has gone on public display: the exhibition, in a showroom in Wigmore Street, of historical artefacts belonging to the wealthy American pharmaceutical manufacturer, Henry S. Wellcome.

The elderly man is the photographer John Thomson, and the date is 1920, when he is 83 years old. In his youth and middle age he had been a great traveller. He had set off from his native Scotland in the 1860s and had travelled widely in the Far East. On the River Min rapids he had been shipwrecked. In Shantou, as he tried to photograph an ancient bridge over the river, the people on the bridge pelted him so that he was forced to defend himself with the tripod of his camera. He had been the first European to be seen by the inhabitants of the villages he had passed through in Western China. He had conversed with King Mongkut I of Thailand, and had made his way through the Cambodian jungle to find the colossal ruins of Angkor Wat and Angkor Tom. In Beijing he had photographed the admired Yi Xin (Prince Gong), sixth son of Emperor Daoguang, and he had photographed the street traders shouting out their wares amidst the crowded hutongs. He had braved the malarial swamps of Cyprus to photograph the Cypriot families in their rustic houses, and in London he had captured for all time the sufferings of the poorest class under Queen Victoria—whose photograph he had also been invited to take.

After his return to Great Britain, he had published many books on his travels, and was in possession of a large number of the glass negatives, which, decades before, he had brought back from China and elsewhere for reproduction in his publications.

On his visit to the Wellcome historical exhibition in 1920, Thomson would have seen a corridor lined with photographs already in Wellcome's possession: it was a small display and had much about Africa but nothing about China. So, on 12 May 1920, Thomson wrote to the curator of the gallery:

Dear Sir, I don't know if Mr Wellcome intends to have a room in the museum set apart for the exhibition of photographs. If he does, selections from the photographs taken by me during my eastern travels would prove useful, seeing that each photograph was taken to represent something peculiar to the lands and to the people I visited. Each series includes antiquities, arts, architecture, industries, and evidence of evolution. The regions include Siam, Cochin China, Cambodia, China and the islands of Formosa and Cyprus. I would supply the negatives and quotable notes to each subject. I am sure that such a series would add usefulness and interest to the wonderful collection of this museum. Kindly let me know your views on the subject. Yours sincerely, J. Thomson.

这封信可看做是拉开了我们当前此次摄影展的序幕。如果汤姆逊没有写这封信，展览的照片未必能留存至今。因为当时很少有机构会愿意负责如此多的工作：保存大量沉重的旧式玻璃底版，从负片洗印照片，编辑目录以及提供给全世界范围内的展览和研究。

汤姆逊希望维尔康姆能为他的摄影作品提供一间展室，这自然是一个合理的要求。因为维尔康姆自己也是个热心摄影的业余爱好者，他配制摄影用的化学试剂，出版摄影家年鉴，并建立起一个涵盖了很多大师作品的历史照片收藏库，其中包括：德西雷·沙尔奈拍摄的墨西哥风景，爱德华·德尼·鲍尔达拍摄的法国中世纪，爱德华·S·柯蒂斯拍摄的美洲土著人肖像，朱利亚·马格利特·卡梅伦拍摄的英国人肖像，塞缪尔·伯恩考察克什米尔的获奖作品。现在，汤姆逊的作品，与费利斯·比图和威廉·普赖尔·弗洛伊德这些均于19世纪曾拍摄过中国的摄影师的作品一道，也被纳入到此精美照片的宝库中。

但汤姆逊本人并没能等到将自己的摄影并入到维尔康姆的收藏就去世了，维尔康姆随后从汤姆逊的后人手上购买了他的作品。最终，三个金属边的大木箱子装着珍贵的底版被运到了维尔康姆的办公室，随后成为维尔康姆图书馆收藏的一部分，并保存至今。自1981年起，这批藏品被整理编目，并有许多中国、泰国、苏格兰、法国和美国的学者去研究。在研究过程中，人们找到许多在任何一本汤姆逊已经出版的书上都没有出现过的新照片，这些底版也成为它们所展现的那个场景的唯一见证物了。另外还有一些照片虽然发表过，但却被裁切过，以至于读者只能看到位于全画面中间的人物，而无法得知实际上在未剪裁的原图上显示出这个人是坐在皇宫花园或是户外的堤岸上。

除了照片本身所呈现的比例和内容，人们还可以更深入地研究和欣赏汤姆逊的艺术风格。因此，维尔康姆图书馆非常欣喜于这个即将开幕的展览，因为它将把汤姆逊最具人文性和启发性的照片介绍给新的观众们。

That letter was the beginning of the process that has led to the present exhibition. If Thomson had not written it, it is unlikely that the photographs in this exhibition would exist today: there were few institutions at the time that could have taken on the responsibility of preserving such a huge weight of old glass, making positive prints from the negatives, making a catalogue of them, and making them available worldwide for exhibition and research.

Thomson's hope that Wellcome would provide a home for his photographs was a reasonable one: Wellcome was himself an enthusiastic amateur photographer, he manufactured photographic chemicals, published a photographer's annual diary, and was building up a collection of historic photographs that would include works by many master photographers: views of Mexico by Désiré Charnay, records of mediaeval France by Édouard-Denis Baldus, portraits of native Americans by Edward S. Curtis and of English men and women by Julia Margaret Cameron, and prize-winning studies of Kashmir by Samuel Bourne. Within this treasure-house of fine photographs, Thomson, along with Felice Beato and William Pryor Floyd, would represent those who had photographed China in the nineteenth century.

Thomson died before the negotiations to add his photographs to the collection were concluded, and Wellcome subsequently bought them from Thomson's heirs. As a result, three wooden steel-lined crates containing the precious negatives were delivered to the Wellcome offices and subsequently became part of the Wellcome Library, where the crates and their original contents are preserved today. Since 1981 they have been catalogued and studied with the aid of many scholars from China, Thailand, Scotland, England, France and America. In the course of these studies, the collection was found to contain many photographs that Thomson had not been able to include in any of his publications: these negatives are the sole surviving witnesses of the scenes that they show. Others were published but in a cropped form, so that readers of Thomson's publications only saw the people in the centre of a composition, unaware that the uncropped original negative showed the people sitting in a palace garden or out on the Bund.

Given the size and range of Thomson's work, there is still much scope for further study and enjoyment of his art. The Wellcome Library is therefore delighted that the present exhibition will bring Thomson's most humane and evocative photographs to new audiences.