

# Western Eyes: Historical Photographs of China in British Collections, 1860-1930

## 1860—1930 英国藏中国历史照片

上

National Library of China, British Library  
中国国家图书馆 大英图书馆



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1860—1930

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# 前言

2000年初夏，中国国家图书馆善本特藏部主任黄润华先生访问美国，洛杉矶加州大学东亚研究中心的汤维强先生赠给他一本戴维·哈里斯（David Harris）编纂的图册《OF BATTLE AND BEAUTY: FELICE BEATO'S PHOTOGRAPHS OF CHINA》（1999），出版者是美国圣芭芭拉艺术博物馆（Santa Barbara Museum of Art）。黄先生退休前，将这部图册留赠给善本特藏部舆图组。图册以圣芭芭拉艺术博物馆米歇尔和詹妮·威尔逊文库（Michael And Jane Wilson Collection）中的1862年费利斯·比托（Felice Beato）中国照片集为基础编纂而成，汇集了世界最早的随军摄影师希腊人费利斯·比托（Felice Beato）拍摄的85幅有关中国的照片，其中以第二次鸦片战争英法联军进攻大沽口战役的照片最为著名。由于当时摄影技术的局限，拍摄场面大多是静态的，但这些照片仍然令人非常震撼。这个发明不久的新技术忠实再现了当时大沽口要塞的面貌和惨烈战斗后的场景，为研究第二次鸦片战争提供了宝贵资料。书后还附录了戴维·哈里斯调查世界各地收藏比托的另外16个摄影册的参考目录，这激发了我们进一步挖掘这类老照片的兴趣。

2005年1月，我和林世田有幸前往大英图书馆（即英国国家图书馆，本书沿用习惯，仍称“大英图书馆”）考察国际敦煌项目，在讨论间隙，我们不失时机地询问关于英国各馆收藏中国题材老照片的情况，得到国际敦煌项目负责人魏泓（Susan Whitfield）和区域协调人高奕睿（Imre Galambos）的热情响应。他们安排了一个时间让我们拜访该馆专门负责照片收藏的约翰·费尔科纳（John Falconer）。约翰给我们看了该馆收藏的几个相册，其中第一个就是费利斯·比托拍摄的鸦片战争相册。看到这个列入戴维·哈里斯参考目录的原书，我们十分激动，眼前浮现出这位英籍希腊摄影师回到伦敦，制作和兜售他在远东见闻的情景。约翰还给我们看了另外几个摄影师的相册，品质十分出色，资料也很丰富。

在英期间，英方还特别安排我们参观了伦敦大学亚非学院图书馆（SOAS）。在一个堆满资料的房间，我们浏览了1900年义和团围攻英国使馆时英国人坚守在阵地上的照片，每张照片下面都有潦草的说明，还看到俄国传教士在北京的日记和绘图。这些珍贵资料据说受到中国第一历史档案馆的重视，被复制回国，但至今未见该馆公布。

回国前，我们建议在中国国家图书馆举办一个关于中国题材的老照片展览，让



中国民众也能亲眼目睹和了解那段复杂的历史。这个建议未免大胆一些，因为其题材涉及英国对华战争的内容，也许会揭开历史的伤疤，让人忆起那段埋藏在心底的永久伤痛，但英国同事们仍然表示了积极的态度，让我们看到了举办这个展览的可能。

回国后，联合举办老照片展览的想法得到詹福瑞馆长和陈力副馆长的赞同，他们建议由善本特藏部出面和英国方面积极沟通，促成这个展览在北京举办。2006年9月，善本特藏部举办“西域文献国际研讨会”，与会的魏泓、约翰和新任国际敦煌项目区域协调人蒙安泰（Alastair Morrison）带来英国国家图书馆同意举办该展览的信息，并希望这个展览也列入国际敦煌项目。在随后一年中，约翰和蒙安泰再次到中国国家图书馆，带来老照片的样例。国际交流处严向东处长和文化教育培训部曹宁主任参与了双方的会谈，最终商定2008年秋季在中国国家图书馆举办展览。

2008年5月，我和赵大莹藉由中英文化连线基金的资助，前往英国挑选照片。在约翰和蒙安泰的帮助下，我们在SOAS浏览了上千张照片，除庚子事件照片外，还得见1911年武昌起义的系列照片、西方传教士在中国各地传教活动的照片，以及大量关于中国的风景、民俗、人物肖像的照片等。经过与英国同事共同遴选确定，展览脉络逐渐清晰。1860年第二次鸦片战争、1900年义和团运动和1911年辛亥革命都是改变中国历史的重大事件，成为展览的主干，三个事件的原始照片在中国公开展出，相信足以引起震动。而穿插在其中的关于政治、军事、社会、文化等题材的照片则为历史主干充实了血肉，主要有（1）弥尔顿·米勒（Milton Miller）和一些俄、法摄影师在19世纪60年代的作品，约翰·汤姆森（John Thomson）、托马斯·查尔德（Thomas Child）和赖阿芳（Lai Afong）在19世纪70年代的作品，唐纳德·曼尼（Donald Mennie）在20世纪20年代的作品等，反映了从香港、澳门、广东到北京的中国人物、风俗、建筑、风景；（2）爱德华·弗朗西斯·查普曼（Edward Francis Chapman）、珀西·莫尔斯沃思·赛克斯（Percy Moleworth Sykes）、弗雷德里克·马迟曼·贝利（Frederic Marshman Bailey）、克拉蒙特·珀西瓦尔·斯克林（Clarmont Percival Skrine）对中国新疆喀什噶尔的记录，奥莱尔·斯坦因（Aurel Stein）在丹丹乌里克、尼雅、敦煌、高昌、和阗、交河故城等地的三次探险记录，反映了西方在19世纪70年代到20世纪20年代在中国西部进行的外交和文化活动；（3）众多佚名摄影师拍摄的西方传教士在泉州、厦门、广州、沧州、天津、武汉、重庆、北京、福建永春、湖南等地的照片，揭示了19世纪90年代到20世纪早期西方教会在中国广大地区的传教活动；（4）乔治·斯科特（James George Scott）拍摄的中缅边境勘界照片揭示了中国南部的外交活动；（5）第二代设德兰侯爵（Marquess of Zetland）劳伦斯·约翰·拉姆利·邓达斯（Lawrence John Lumley Dundas）从上海沿长江旅行到重庆，再从重庆到达成都，最后横跨云南进入缅甸的漫游者历程，这是他研究东亚经济和政治体制的深入旅行；（6）乔治·沃伦·斯威尔（G. Warren Swire）拍摄的太古公司管理下的中国航海公司在长江和中国沿海的贸易、码头、仓库、船队等情况，涉及到北京、天津塘沽、哈尔滨、沈阳、龙口、山东杨家沟、青岛、烟台、武昌、



汉口、宜昌、南京、九江、芜湖、浦口、宁波、海宁、上海浦东、长沙、南昌、登州、福州、厦门、广州、汕头、山西、重庆等地，照片数量巨大，我们每地选择一张照片，以突出这家外国公司在中国各地的发展情况。

这次展览是两个国家图书馆第一次举办关于纪录近代中国历史的大型展览。通过摄影师对中国历史事件、风物人情、城市建筑等的观察、记录和认识，反映这个特殊历史时期内中国历史、文化、社会和经济等方面的重大变化。这些题材的历史照片是在中国大陆的首次展出，通过泛黄甚至可能缺角的照片，使读者能够凝望那些动人的身影，感受近代中国曾经遭受的磨难，激发人们的深沉思考，给人以特别的心灵收获。

大英图书馆的约翰·费尔科纳在照片遴选起了中坚作用，他选择的摄影师和照片都具有代表性，通过这些作品来说明中国的重大历史事件、社会、文化面貌，在地域上具有广泛性，在摄影技术和艺术上也忠实反映了时代的特点。在目录编制上，如何把时间、事件和摄影师有序排列起来是很困难的，但约翰编制的目录做到了这一点，反映了他多年潜心研究的成果。不仅如此，他还为展览图录撰写了全部说明文字。2008年8月北京奥运会刚刚结束，中国国家图书馆古籍馆（善本部）的同事们就开始了紧张的文字翻译、图片校订和地点考证等工作。这个工作由曹菁菁和翁莹芳负责，参加翻译的同事有李文洁、徐亚娟、彭福英、李燕晖等；参加图片校订、地点考证的同事有鲍国强、姑丽尼格尔·艾斯卡尔、李红英、刘波等。中山大学章文钦教授也在百忙之中帮助考订了多处内容。除承担部分翻译工作外，曹菁菁和翁莹芳还进行了全书统稿，并请蒙安泰对照英文将中文译稿进行了细致的审核。从英国回来后，赵大莹一直沟通中英双方，进行协议的草拟和资料的传递工作，还参与了最后的统稿和审核工作。林世田和我也参与了部分审校工作。可以说，展览和这部图录的面世，凝聚了中英图书馆许多同事的心血、汗水和友谊。这里还要特别感谢英国国家图书馆的葛汉·肖（Graham Shaw）、魏泓和高奕睿，感谢詹福瑞、陈力、严向东、曹宁等领导对展览给予的巨大支持，感谢国家图书馆出版社社长郭又陵慷慨同意出版展览图录，以及该社的殷梦霞、王燕来在很短时间里编辑出版了这本书。感谢英国皇家亚洲学会、伦敦大学亚非学院等公私收藏家，他们慷慨地出借照片，使这些珍贵记录能够在百年后的中国再次展出，使中英两国人民正视和反思历史，更好地面向未来。

由于时间匆促和译者能力所限，图录编辑过程中，还有部分内容无法考订确认，也难免出现纰漏和错误，敬希读者指正。

国家图书馆古籍馆

张志清

2008年9月2日



## Preface

In the early summer of 2000, when Mr. Huang Runhua, director of the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections (RBSC) of the National Library of China (NLC), visited the USA, he was given a book by Mr. Tang Weiqiang from the Center for East-Asia Studies in the University of California, Los Angeles. This book — *Of Battle and Beauty: Felice Beato's Photography of China* — was compiled by David Harris and published by Santa Barbara Museum of Art in the USA. Before retirement, Mr. Huang donated it to the Map and Old Photographs Group of RBSC. This volume was compiled from Michael and Jane Wilson's Collection in Santa Barbara Museum of Art and included 85 photographs of China taken by Felice Beato (1820–1907) — one of the earliest war photographers in the world. The most famous photographs are the ones showing the attack on Dagu Fort by Anglo-French forces. Despite the static nature of the scenes owing to the limitation of early photography, the images are still very powerful. This newly-invented technology provided a trustworthy depiction of Dagu Fort and the battle, so providing very important research materials for the study of the Second Opium War. The book also makes reference to sixteen other albums of Felice Beato researched by David Harris and aroused my interest to make further explorations into old photographs such as these.

In January 2005, Mr. Lin Shitian and myself had an opportunity to visit the International Dunhuang Project (IDP) at the British Library. During our discussion, we enquired about photographic collections of old China in the libraries and museums in Britain. Susan Whitfield, director of IDP, and Imre Galambos, IDP Project Coordinator, made us an appointment with John Falconer, Curator of Photographs at the British Library — and Curator of this exhibition. John showed us several albums, one of which was Felice Beato's album of the Opium War. We were very excited to see the originals of the photographs referred to by David Harris. It was as if we could see this British-Greek photographer producing his photographs and peddling his knowledge of the Far East on his return to London. John also showed us some albums of other photographers, which were of very good quality and contained much information.

With their help, we were also able to visit the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London (SOAS). In a room crammed with photographs and documents, we looked at photographs showing the British Legation in Beijing under siege by the Boxer forces in 1900. There were illegible annotations on each photograph. We also saw some diaries and drawings by the Russian diplomats in Peking. It was remarked that the First Historical Archives of China had attached great importance to these materials and had previously made copies but nothing has been published to date.

Before leaving Britain, we suggested holding an exhibition of historical photographs about old China in the NLC to give Chinese people the opportunity to see these materials themselves and understand something further of the complicated history of that period. This suggestion might have been considered slightly adventurous since the Anglo-Chinese War might be considered a sensitive subject.



However, our British colleagues were positive, and we believed there was a possibility of this happening.

After returning to China, the exhibition proposal was approved by Director Zhan Furui and Vice-director Chen Li. They asked the RBSC to contact the British Library to promote the preparation of the exhibition. In September 2006, RBSC held the "International Symposium on the Central Asian Collections" in Beijing. Susan Whitfield, John Falconer and the new IDP Project Coordinator, Alastair Morrison, attended the symposium and brought us the news that the British Library had agreed to co-host the exhibition as an activity of IDP. In the following year, John Falconer and Alastair Morrison came to the NLC again with the support of a British Council Connections Through Culture Grant, bringing samples of the photographs. Mr. Yan Xiangdong, director of the International Coordination Office, and Mr. Cao Ning, director of the Cultural Education Training Department, attended the bilateral talks. Finally the two sides agreed to hold the exhibition in the NLC in the autumn 2008.

With the support of a further grant from the British Council China-UK Connections through Culture, Zhao Daying and I visited London to select photographs in May 2008. With the help of John and Alastair, we viewed hundreds of photographs on the Boxer Uprising and a number of photographs about the 1911 Revolution, Western missionaries in China and many depicting various scenes, everyday customs and people. After the selection, the main themes of the exhibition gradually became apparent, that is, the Second Opium War in 1860, the Boxer Uprising in 1900 and the Xinhai Revolution in 1911. It is clear that an exhibition of the photographs of these three events will arouse public attention and have a significant impact. The photographs related to politics, military affairs, society and culture support these historical themes and comprise of (1) The photographs of Milton Miller and some Russian and French photographers from the 1860s; of John Thomson, Thomas Child and Lai Afong from the 1870s; of Donald Mennie from the 1920s, all depicting Chinese customs, architecture and scenes taken in Hong Kong, Macao, Guangdong and Peking; (2) those of Edward Francis Chapman, Percy Molesworth Sykes, Frederic Marshman Bailey and Clarmont Percival Skrine's reports from Kashgar, Xinjiang; Aurel Stein's photographic records of his three Central Asian Expeditions, including Dandan Uiliq, Niya, Dunhuang, Karakhoja, Khotan and Yarkhoto — these reflect the Westerners' diplomatic and cultural activities in western China between the 1870s and 1920s; (3) many photographs of missionaries in Quanzhou, Xiamen, Canton, Cangzhou, Tianjin, Wuhan, Chongqing, Peking, Yongchun in Fujian and other places, by unknown photographers, showing the religious activities of Western churches in China from 1890s to the early twentieth century; (4) James George Scott's photographs of marking the boundary between Burma and China, which reveal diplomatic activity in southern China; (5) The 2nd Marquess of Zetland, Lawrence John Lumley Dundass' extensive travels from Shanghai along the Yangtze to Chongqing, from Chongqing to Chengdu and finally across Yunnan into Burma, investigating the economic and political systems in East Asia; (6) G. Warren Swire's numerous photographs concerning the trade, docks, depots and shipping fleets of the Swire-managed China Navigation Company along the Yangtze and the coast of China, including Peking, Tianjin, Tanggu, Harbin, Shenyang, Longkou, Yangjiagou in Shandong Province, Qingdao, Yantai, Wuchang, Hankou, Yichang, Nanjing, Jiujiang, Wuhu, Pukou, Ningbo, Haining, Pudong in Shanghai, Changsha, Nanchang, Dengzhou, Fuzhou, Xiamen, Canton, Shantou, Shanxi and Chongqing. We have chosen one photograph for each site to show the development of Butterfield & Swire's business throughout China.



This is the first large exhibition held by the NLC on the modern history of China. The historical events, cultures, society and economy of China are observed through photographs which mirror the great changes during this seminal period. It is also the first exhibition of historical photographs on these subjects. I hope that these yellowing and sometimes damaged photographs will cause readers to muse upon the vivid figures, to feel the sufferings of the history of Modern China, and to inspire reflection and a meditative state of mind.

John Falconer from the British Library played a key role. He selected representative photographers and photographs to show important historical events, society and culture. These photographs not only cover a vast geographical area of China, but also reflect the characteristics of photographic techniques and art at that time. It is hard to arrange the time, events and photographers in a meaningful order, but John manages it. This is owing to his extensive research experience with a special concentration on the history of photography. Moreover, he has written all the text, captions and the introduction to this catalogue. Following the end of the Beijing Olympic Games, colleagues from the Ancient Books Library of the NLC started on the translation, identification of photographs and textual research of the sites shown in the photographs. Cao Jingjing and Weng Yingfang were in charge of editorial coordination; Li Wenjie, Xu Yajuan, Peng Fuying and Li Yanhui carried out the translation into Chinese; and Bao Guoqiang, Gulnigar Esker, Li Hongying and Liu Bo were responsible for revising photographs and making textual study on the sites. Professor Zhang Wenqin from Zhongshan University also helped us with identification of some places. Cao Jingjing and Weng Yingfang, also requested Alastair to proofread the Chinese translations. Since returning from Britain, Zhao Daying has been in constant communication with our British partners, helping with drawing up the agreement, sending and receiving materials and undertaking the final revision. Lin Shitian and Zhang Zhiqing were also involved in the proofreading. We can say that this catalogue combines great efforts and friendship of colleagues from the British Library and the NLC. We would also wish to acknowledge Graham Shaw, Susan Whitfield and Imre Galambos from the British Library and Zhan Furui, Chen Li, Yan Xiangdong and Cao Ning from the NLC, who offered important support in the organisation of this exhibition. We are especially indebted to Guo Youling, director of NLC Press Company, who has agreed to publish this book and editors Yin Mengxia and Wang Yanlai, who have edited and published this book to an extremely tight schedule. In particular, we would also like to thank the Royal Asiatic Society, SOAS and all the other public and private collectors. They have generously permitted the reproduction of their photographs, which enable these rare materials to be exhibited in China after a century, so that the Chinese and British people can revisit their joint history and consider anew how to face the future together.

Due to the limitation of time and the ability of translators, we apologize for the inevitable omissions and errors. We beg your understanding and await for your feedback and suggestions.

Zhang Zhiqing

Ancient Books Library of NLC

September 2, 2008



# 导 言

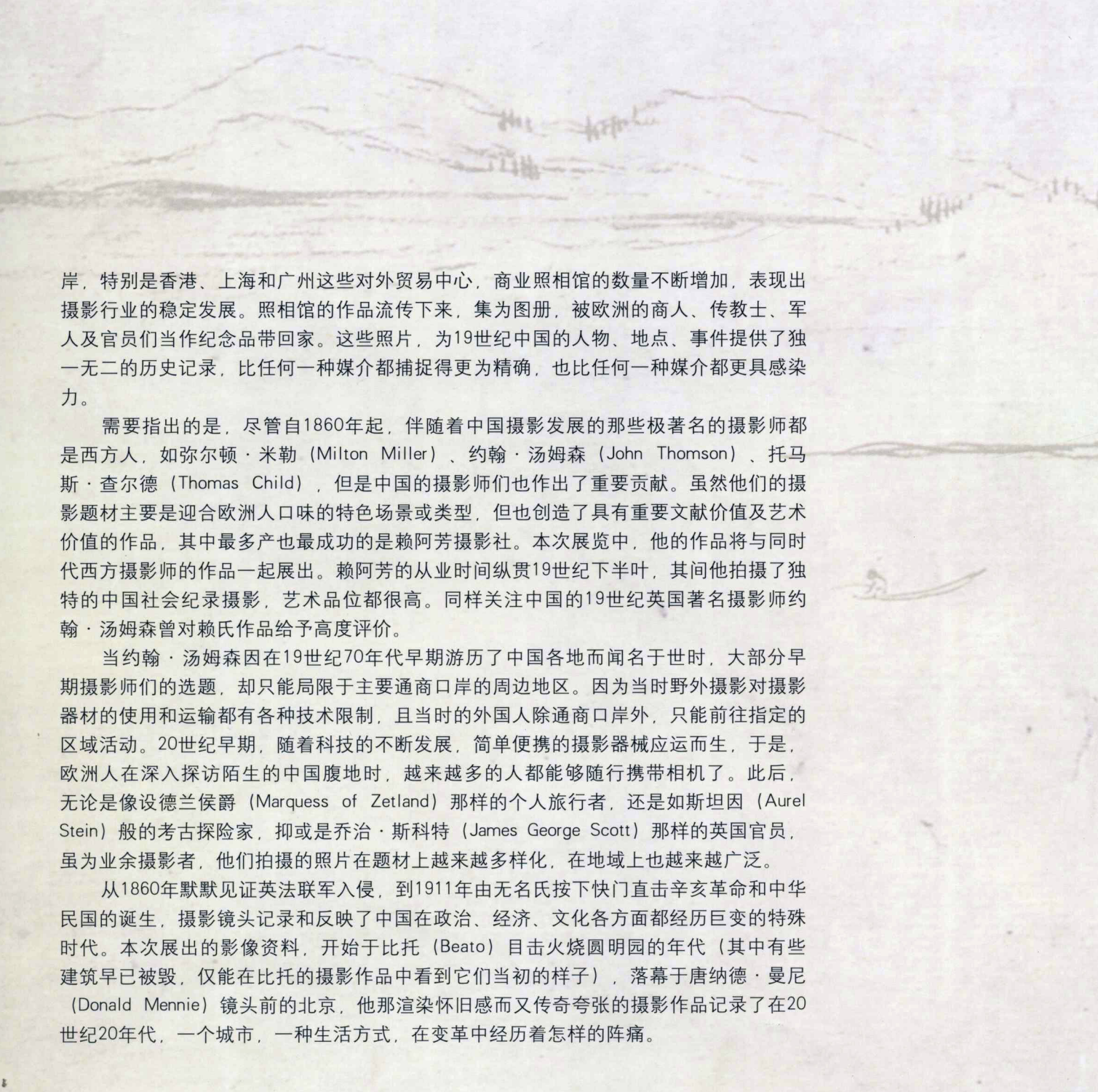
## 西方视角：1860—1930的中国照片

本次展览中的老照片是西方人拍摄或为西方人拍摄的业余摄影爱好者的作品，从1860年第二次鸦片战争末期到20世纪30年代，跨越了四分之三个世纪。这些老照片从风景、建筑、人物和历史事件的折射中，展示了西方对中国的一个不断累积的印象。不过拍摄这些照片的动机则因图片的内容不同而各不相同。费利斯·比托(Felice Beato)于1860年英法联军占领北京时拍摄的照片具有独特的历史意义。他的摄影动机既包括商业投机主义，亦出于留证战争场面的个人执着。步费利斯·比托后尘的摄影师们，仍以获得商业利益为主要动力。在随后几十年中不断涌现的优秀作品，有力证明了当时的欧洲人是多么着迷于中国的文化及日常生活。20世纪业余摄影者们所拍摄的作品，绝大多数都不太正规，在技术和布局上可能缺乏几十年前专业摄影师们的技巧，但这些无论是自我消遣的作品，还是某考古学家的图册，抑或是某商务旅行期间的摄影留念，都以多元的视角生动地展示了西方人眼中充满无穷的趣味和多样性的中国形象。

1839年，路易·达盖尔(Louis Daguerre)银版照相法工序的细节公布于众，而几乎同时，英国人塔尔博特(William Henry Fox Talbot)的光绘成像法也公布于世，从此一般群众也可以从事摄影了。摄影很快便成为记录异国风俗、文化和风景的理想媒介。不过，这一新媒介也存在着技术方面的限制：大体积的器材、复杂的化学程序和较长的曝光时间。因此，实际上摄影技术无法在远离欧洲的地区广泛应用。香港的对外贸易发展比较迅速，从19世纪40年代中期开始，商业照相馆最先在这里出现，尽管寥若晨星。由于那个时代照相业缺乏稳定的客户群基础，几乎没有一家照相馆能够维持较长的时间。尽管在19世纪50年代末，专业摄影师、业余摄影者和商人们都试图打开中国市场，但直到1860年以前，摄影行业并没有发展起来。

商业摄影师费利斯·比托于1860年下半年随军到达中国，这支军队后来占领了北京。他拍摄了关于军事战争过程及北京、广州两地建筑景观的照片。这是第一批大规模在中国大陆地区拍摄的影像资料。比托的到来，也标志着摄影业开始着力在中国立足。第二次鸦片战争结束后，中国被迫对外开放的贸易通商口岸不断增多，外国商人和移民也随之剧增。他们喜欢在中国摄影留念，成为摄影行业不断增长的市场需求。对绝大多数热情的业余摄影者来说，那时的摄影技术仍然是复杂且不稳定的，所以主要是专业摄影师们来满足市场需求。从19世纪60年代起，各通商口





岸，特别是香港、上海和广州这些对外贸易中心，商业照相馆的数量不断增加，表现出摄影行业的稳定发展。照相馆的作品流传下来，集为图册，被欧洲的商人、传教士、军人及官员们当作纪念品带回家。这些照片，为19世纪中国的人物、地点、事件提供了独一无二的历史记录，比任何一种媒介都捕捉得更为精确，也比任何一种媒介都更具感染力。

需要指出的是，尽管自1860年起，伴随着中国摄影发展的那些极著名的摄影师都是西方人，如弥尔顿·米勒（Milton Miller）、约翰·汤姆森（John Thomson）、托马斯·查尔德（Thomas Child），但是中国的摄影师们也作出了重要贡献。虽然他们的摄影题材主要是迎合欧洲人口味的特色场景或类型，但也创造了具有重要文献价值及艺术价值的作品，其中最多产也最成功的是赖阿芳摄影社。本次展览中，他的作品将与同时代西方摄影师的作品一起展出。赖阿芳的从业时间纵贯19世纪下半叶，其间他拍摄了独特的中国社会纪录摄影，艺术品位都很高。同样关注中国的19世纪英国著名摄影师约翰·汤姆森曾对赖氏作品给予高度评价。

当约翰·汤姆森因在19世纪70年代早期游历了中国各地而闻名于世时，大部分早期摄影师们的选题，却只能局限于主要通商口岸的周边地区。因为当时野外摄影对摄影器材的使用和运输都有各种技术限制，且当时的外国人除通商口岸外，只能前往指定的区域活动。20世纪早期，随着科技的不断发展，简单便携的摄影器械应运而生，于是，欧洲人在深入探访陌生的中国腹地时，越来越多的人都能够随行携带相机了。此后，无论是像设德兰侯爵（Marquess of Zetland）那样的个人旅行者，还是如斯坦因（Aurel Stein）般的考古探险家，抑或是乔治·斯科特（James George Scott）那样的英国官员，虽为业余摄影者，他们拍摄的照片在题材上越来越多样化，在地域上也越来越广泛。

从1860年默默见证英法联军入侵，到1911年由无名氏按下快门直击辛亥革命和中华民国的诞生，摄影镜头记录和反映了中国在政治、经济、文化各方面都经历巨变的特殊时代。本次展出的影像资料，开始于比托（Beato）目击火烧圆明园的年代（其中有些建筑早已被毁，仅能在比托的摄影作品中看到它们当初的样子），落幕于唐纳德·曼尼（Donald Mennie）镜头前的北京，他那渲染怀旧感而又传奇夸张的摄影作品记录了在20世纪20年代，一个城市，一种生活方式，在变革中经历着怎样的阵痛。



# Introduction

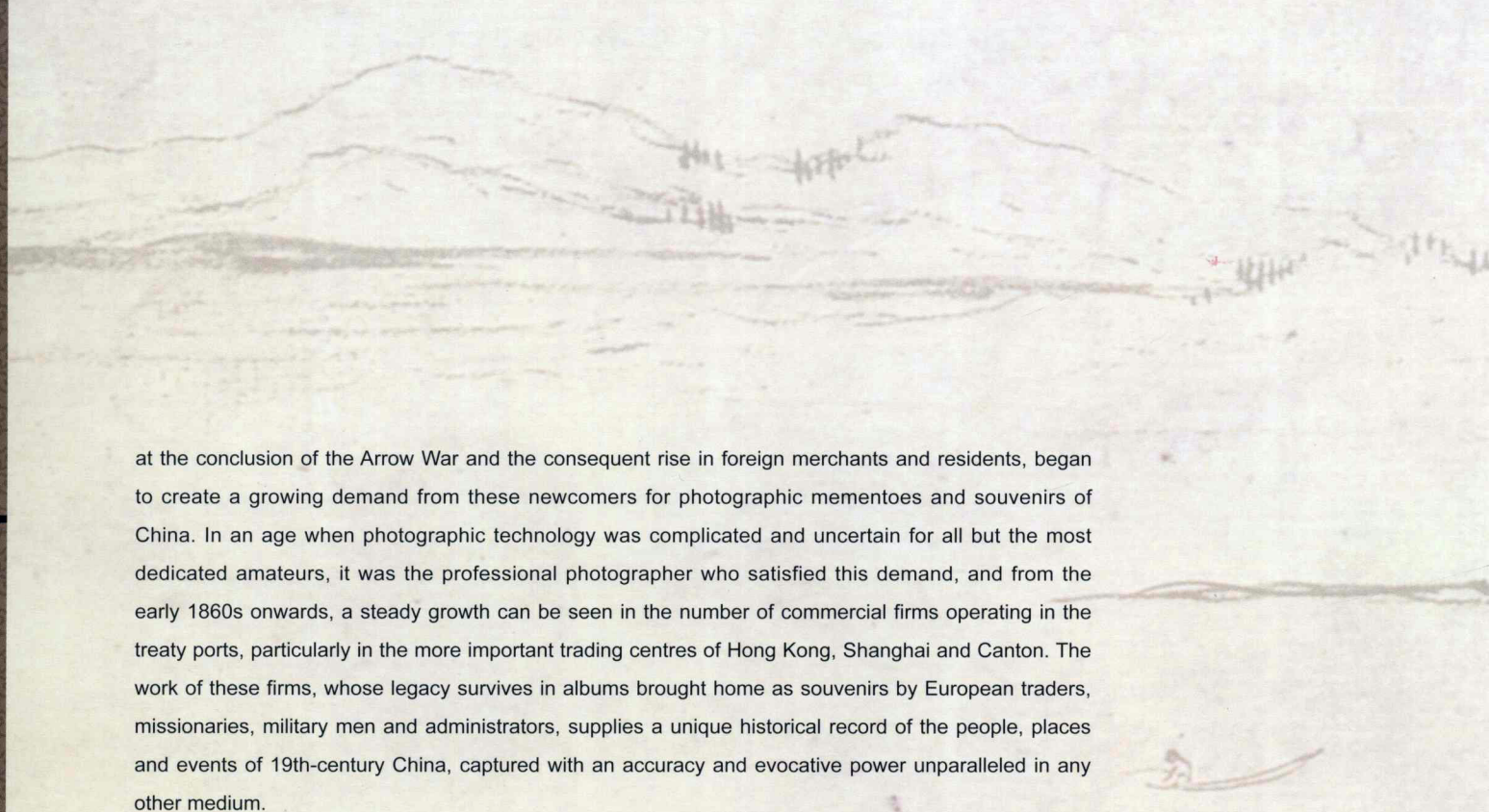
## Western Eyes: Photography in China 1860-1930

The photographs in this exhibition present a cumulative impression of China, through the prism of landscapes, architecture, people and historical events, photographed by and for westerners over three-quarters of a century, from the closing phases of the Second Opium or Arrow War in 1860, through to the work of amateur photographers in the 1930s. The motivations behind the production of these images were as varied as their content. The unique historical importance of Felice Beato's photographic documentation of the Anglo-French Expeditionary Force which occupied Peking in 1860, was inspired both by commercial opportunism and a personal obsession with documenting scenes of conflict. While the photographers who followed in his wake were also primarily inspired by the prospect of commercial gain, the best of the work produced in succeeding decades forms a compelling witness to the European fascination with Chinese life and culture. The more informal work of amateur photographers in the 20th century perhaps lacks something of the technical and compositional skill of the professional photographers of earlier decades, but whether taken for private amusement, as an archaeologist's visual notebook, or a reminder of places visited in the course of business, these varied viewpoints in total present a vivid expression of the inexhaustible variety and interest of China to European eyes.

Photography became practically available to the public with the announcement of the details of Louis Daguerre's daguerreotype process in 1839, and with the almost simultaneous publication of the Englishman William Henry Fox Talbot's photogenic drawing process in the same year. Photography was swiftly seen as an ideal vehicle for recording the customs, cultures and landscapes of distant countries. The technical limitations of the new medium, however, which required bulky equipment, complicated chemical procedures and long exposure times, in practice restricted its extensive use in areas remote from Europe. In Hong Kong, with its growing foreign commercial community, attempts were made to establish photographic studios from the mid-1840s, but such initiatives were sporadic and the lack of any substantial customer base at this period ensured that none of these firms survived for any length of time. And while there is evidence of photographers, amateur and commercial, attempting to break into the China market in the late 1850s, very little photography survives from the period before the Anglo-French invasion of 1860.

The commercial photographer Felice Beato arrived with the foreign army which occupied Peking in late 1860. The record he created, both of the course of the military campaign itself and of the architecture sights of Peking and Canton, represents the first large-scale photographic documentation undertaken in mainland China. The arrival of Beato also marks the point at which photography began to establish itself as a permanent presence in China. The increasing number of treaty ports opened to foreign trade





at the conclusion of the Arrow War and the consequent rise in foreign merchants and residents, began to create a growing demand from these newcomers for photographic mementoes and souvenirs of China. In an age when photographic technology was complicated and uncertain for all but the most dedicated amateurs, it was the professional photographer who satisfied this demand, and from the early 1860s onwards, a steady growth can be seen in the number of commercial firms operating in the treaty ports, particularly in the more important trading centres of Hong Kong, Shanghai and Canton. The work of these firms, whose legacy survives in albums brought home as souvenirs by European traders, missionaries, military men and administrators, supplies a unique historical record of the people, places and events of 19th-century China, captured with an accuracy and evocative power unparalleled in any other medium.

It should also be noted, that although many of the most-celebrated names associated with the development of photography in China from the 1860s onwards—men such as Milton Miller, John Thomson and Thomas Child—were westerners, Chinese photographers also made a significant contribution. Their subject matter was also largely directed towards satisfying European demands for views of characteristic scenes and types, and a number of these Chinese photographers created bodies of work of major documentary and artistic importance. A selection of the work of the most prolific and successful of these Chinese photographers, the studio of Lai Afong, is also shown here alongside that of his European contemporaries. In the course of a career spanning the whole of the second half of the 19th century, Lai Afong created a unique record of Chinese life, whose artistry and taste won warm praise from John Thomson, the most famous of the European photographers attracted to China in the 19th century.

While the intrepid John Thomson is justly famous for his extensive travels through the Chinese Empire in the early 1870s, the subject matter of many of these early photographers was geographically limited to the areas surrounding the major treaty ports, both by the technical demands of transporting and using photographic equipment in the field, and by restrictions on travel outside areas designated for foreign access. By the early 20th century, however, advances in technology had led to the manufacture of more simplified and portable equipment and as Europeans penetrated deeper into the lesser-known