

“Paris, Japan, and Modernity: A Vexed Ratio”

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Transport and travel provide a vehicle through which to challenge the centrality of Paris, and by extension, the West in the nineteenth century.¹ We know that new forms of circulation and Haussmannization were the very means through which modern life was radically reshaped. Less acknowledged is the way in which European representations of movement outside its borders, at sites not routinely defined as modern complicates the ratio of power and modernity typically assigned to Paris and elsewhere. This essay uses mobility as a way to tackle the nominal question, “Is Paris Still the Capital of the Nineteenth Century?”² I introduce new objects of study and new methods of analysis. At the heart of this essay are the travel narratives of two Frenchmen in Japan, Émile Guimet, founder of the eponymous museum of Asian art in Paris, and the artist Félix Régamey, who accompanied him on his tour in 1876.³ By moving our attention to East Asia through travel itself, we can better understand the changing balance of power between East and West in the nineteenth century, and the contested terms of center and periphery that have preoccupied recent scholars in the humanities and social sciences.⁴

The focus of this essay rests not on the biographies of Guimet and Régamey, but on what their activities abroad reveal about the politics of travel.⁵ The Frenchmen journeyed through terrains that signified Western power over the non-West. Their previously unexamined images of transport in Japan as well as the travel narratives of figures as diverse as the Austrian diplomat Joseph-Alexander Hübner, the French amateur photographer Hugues Krafft, and the

Englishwoman Isabella Bird show how apparently insubstantial vehicles of rickshaws and palanquins confounded relations of power, gender, and class between visitors and natives. It will be argued that physical movement abroad disordered the familiar representation of East and West.⁶ The material conditions of travel would shuffle the deck, swapping the upright, masculine Occidental and his supine, effeminate opposite. In the images of Guimet, Régamey and others, the reclining odalisque turned out not to be Japanese.

A new historiography built on lived, corporeal experiences, or what we might call a *histoire du vécu*, is especially germane when modern transformations were registered by the body.⁷ New technologies of mobility, for one, disciplined travelers through fixed seating arrangements and train schedules; the uniform speed produced by engines moving on regularized tracks instead of the bumpy rhythm of animal motion altered their senses, as scholars have shown.⁸ History is made by the human transactions that both produce and transform over time the macro phenomena of institutions, class structures, and markets.⁹ The focus on individual experiences in the negotiation of overarching structures is aligned with new developments in historiography.¹⁰ I examine men and women whose transnational contacts were interlocked with but not mere products of the colonial machine. My materialist study of experience is similar to the historiography of everyday life (*Alltagsgeschichte*), that turns away from the analysis of vast structures towards the texture of daily experience.¹¹ This revisionist German group, along with microhistorians, foreground human agency within particular networks of social relationships, as the historian Brad S. Gregory has noted, thus rejecting the *longue durée* formations once viewed to determine individual lives.¹² Where or how much the circles of individual agency and historical process overlap is what I wish to address.

A brief treatment of Franco-Japanese relations in the nineteenth century necessarily begins with the American Commodore Matthew Perry, whose visits in 1853 and 1854 led to the opening of treaty ports to the U. S., followed by Britain, France, and the Netherlands.¹³ To escape the brutal treatment inflicted on China by Western powers Japan signed further unequal treaties in 1858 to 1859. The country lost its control of trade and tariffs, and accepted European extraterritoriality and military presence within its borders for decades to come. French foreign policy in this period involved both aggression and assistance.¹⁴ It maintained troops in Yokohama to protect its nationals, but helped to build a modern Japanese navy and arsenal at Yokosuka from 1865 to 1882. A team of French officers provided military training while the jurist Gustave-Emile Boissonade de Fontarabie, vice-rector of the University of Paris, went to Japan as advisor to the Ministry of Justice.¹⁵ Such relations between the two nations continued at various levels until 1880.

Throughout this period Japan's priority was the renegotiation of existing agreements (Guimet and Régamey arrived at that very moment).¹⁶ It succeeded in ending British extraterritoriality by 1899 through the "Treaty of Commerce and Navigation." Japan obtained similar agreements with other Western powers and effectively regained full tariff autonomy by 1911. Thus the country overturned its subjugation in little more than a half century of the Perry Expedition. It would pursue its own colonial ambitions, thereby further complicating relations between East and West.¹⁷ China and Korea became the site of Japanese aggressive control well into the twentieth century.

Japan's national history rules out any idea of subalternity, yet at the individual level the laborers who conveyed foreigners from one place to another assumed exactly that role. Gayatri Spivak's interrogation of whether the subaltern can speak to power and the extent to which they

are ventriloquized by those who claim to represent them transparently remains apposite.¹⁸ But inasmuch as Guimet and Régamey were ventriloquists, they were not wholly successful: as we will see, the passages on travel in their travel accounts form a *mise-en-abyme*, a self-reflexive image that reveals the artifice of the larger representation. More, the locals at times undermined the visitors' confident narratives in *Promenades japonaises*.

That Western expansion worked hand in hand with growing infrastructure in the non-West needs little elucidation here. The French businessman and champion of impressionist painting, Théodore Duret, for example, marveled at the speedy passage from Bombay to Europe via the Suez Canal.¹⁹ Duret and Enrico (Henri) Cernuschi, founder of the Musée Cernuschi in Paris, made a tour of Asia in 1871. They went by ocean liner from Liverpool to New York, a transcontinental train to San Francisco, and a steamship to Yokohama.²⁰ So developed were the international shipping lines in Asia that Duret, not without regret, likened them to the omnibuses of Paris.²¹ The technologies of movement detracted from the alterity he expected to find.

Duret's attentiveness to circulation began at home, where Europeans not only met new modes of transportation on a regular basis but also found copious representations by Émile Zola, Honoré Daumier, Claude Monet, Édouard Manet, and Gustave Caillebotte, among other artists.²² Traffic, as many have remarked, had an emblematic function in nineteenth-century French culture. Larry Duffy highlights a passage in Zola's *La Curée* of 1871 in which every character is identified with his or her conveyance: Madame de Lauwerens in a perfectly harnessed *victoria*; Mesdames Guende and Teissière, a *coupé*; even little Sylvia, a *blue pram*.²³ Zola took the railway as his major theme in *La Bête humaine*, including long descriptions of the Gare St-Lazare painted by Monet in the mid-1870s.²⁴ Not only did these artists represent new

technologies of mobility, they lived on the railway's very arteries: Manet's studio and Caillebotte's apartment were on streets radiating from the station, Monet commuted by rail between Argenteuil and Paris.²⁵

The lesser-known individuals in this essay took this sensibility and experience with them on their journeys to Japan. Guimet, Régamey, Duret, Hübner, Krafft, Bird, and the American Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore each produced catalogues of indigenous transport. They were struck above all by the newly invented *kuruma*, a two-wheeled rickshaw also called *jinrikisha*, pulled by a runner in front and pushed, on occasion, by one behind. Indeed, Scidmore's memoir of 1891 had as its title *Jinrikisha Days in Japan*.²⁶ To armchair travelers this conveyance was visually available in the photographs of Felice Beato.²⁷

Transportation was a key part of Japan's modernization in which the West played both material and motivational roles. One of Commodore Perry's official gifts to the Shogunate in 1854 was a toy train, complete with several miles of track. The American delegation recounted its impact: the Japanese gathered by the hundreds to look at "the repeated circlings of the train with unabated pleasure and surprise, unable to repress a shout of delight at each blast of the steam whistle," so the record goes.²⁸ Under the new Meiji government Japan began to build its own railway in 1870 with the help of British engineers. Two years later, the emperor inaugurated the initial track of eighteen miles connecting Tokyo and Yokohama. By 1890, the network covered 1,000 miles, and 5,000 in 1902, still far behind the 25,000 miles across France and 36,000 in Germany at the time. (But Japan would overtake Western pioneers in 1964 when concerned parties went to study the Japanese bullet train that set the international standard for high-speed rail travel.²⁹)

In the 1870s, a visitor's first impression of Japanese port cities was the throng of steamships, battleships, trains, and horse-drawn omnibuses not unlike what one found in Europe. Local image-makers treated the theme in such abundance and assorted media that cannot be reproduced here for lack of space.³⁰ Utagawa Hiroshige II presented machine and animal powered vehicles of every kind in *Thirty-One Views of Modern Tokyo* of 1874; his *Picture of the Steam Engine Railway in Yatsuyama, Tokyo*, showed pedestrian traffic, wheelbarrows, donkey carts, horseback riding, horse-drawn carriage, sailboat, liner, and mechanized battleships.³¹ Utagawa Yoshitora also depicted the juxtaposition in his woodblock print of 1872, *Railway Timetable (Tetsudo dokiannai)*: a coolie in the foreground ferries a Japanese lady in a rickshaw, running parallel to a train in the middle ground and modern ships in the distance. Presiding above the three horizontal bands of movement is a schedule of the Yokohama-Tokyo line.³² Whether an ox-drawn wagon or *jinrikisha*, an English carriage or train, each was a symbol of identity and class.³³ Hiroshige III repeatedly put the Shinbashi rail station in his series on famous places (*meisho-e*) of Tokyo.³⁴ More than the well-known European representations of mobility, Japanese images (including texts, songs, even board games) were invested with national and political sentiment: industrial capitalism plus communications infrastructure equaled Japan's identity and representation as a new power.

If local residents took easily to the varied conveyances, Westerners endured with difficulty the change from ships and trains to fellow, if foreign, human beings as beasts of burden. The much-traveled Isabella Bird was alarmed when changing from steam engine to non-mechanical power.³⁵ A trip on "an admirable, well-metalled, double track railroad" from Yokohama heightened her shock at the "hundreds of *kurumas* [rickshaws], and covered carts with four wheels drawn by one miserable horse..." awaiting her in Tokyo.³⁶ She illustrated the

rickshaw in *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan*.³⁷ The novelty of local transport, whether the *jinrikisha* or the palanquin (*kago/cango*) and even more, the myriad contacts between passengers and porters were captivating. Bird often noted her interactions with coolies, for example, who “did all they could to help me; lifted me gently from the horse, made steps of their backs for me to mount.”³⁸ In the same vein Hübner provided an image of himself seated in a cango resting on the shoulders of two almost naked men (fig. 8.1).³⁹ A decade later, Krafft photographed a member of his entourage in the same pose in the same vehicle.⁴⁰



8.1 “Travelling in a Kangho,” in Joseph-Alexandre Hübner, *A Ramble Round the World, 1871* (London: Macmillan and Co, 1878), 236. Image in the public domain.

Guimet described his new sensations of movement in *Promenades japonaises*.⁴¹ His first ride in the *jinrikisha* was made uncomfortable by an awareness of the runner’s strain, yet he soon became a convert to the rickshaw, which he preferred to other modes.⁴² Régamey, former pupil of François Lecoq de Boisdaudran and illustrator for *L’Illustration*, *Le Monde illustré* and the *Illustrated London News*, recorded his tour of Asia with Guimet. He made a thumbnail sketch of the latter traveling by rickshaw. No background of any kind is given except for small clouds of dust around the rear porter.⁴³ Here, as elsewhere, the anonymity of the native figure points to uneven social relations between foreign employer and local employee.

“One of the myths of modernity is that it constitutes a radical break with the past,” writes David Harvey.⁴⁴ Indeed, our interest in the web of railroads and the Métro stretching below the Paris macadam leads us to see a historic rupture in the nineteenth century, whereas human and animal traction in the capital co-existed for many decades with the steam engine. The Prefecture of the Seine established the *Compagnie générale des omnibus* in 1855 (a predecessor to the RATP) to regulate the chaotic traffic of hippomobiles.⁴⁵ Such an organization was preceded a century before when the reformist *Contrôleur général des finances*, Jacques Turgot, tried to put order in a set-up that left the kingdom’s biggest mercantile centers poorly connected in the 1760s.⁴⁶ Among the vehicles found on French roads were the *brouette*, *camion*, *carabas*, *cariolle*, *carrosse*, *chaise*, *chariot*, *charrette*, *fourgon*, *guimbarde*, *guinguette*, *gondole*, *berline*, and *diligence*, in addition to donkey, mule and horse, not all of which had disappeared from metropolitan boulevards.⁴⁷ Known since Roman times, the *palanquin* or

chaise à porteurs carried by two men was in use in the early seventeenth century.⁴⁸ Louis-Sébastien Mercier observed its perils a century later in *Tableau de Paris*.⁴⁹ This pre-modern mode was still employed according to Walter Benjamin who claimed that in 1867 “an entrepreneur could still cater to the comfort of the well-to-do with a fleet of five hundred sedan chairs circulating the city.”⁵⁰ Other sources confirm its use. A Madame Celnart complained that *élégantes* in the provinces were subjected to this archaic mode in 1863; the *Grande encyclopédie* noted that *chaises à porteurs* circulated on the quieter streets of the capital in the 1830s and continued elsewhere as late as 1888.⁵¹ Other archaic means persisted in the transport of goods. For one, the primordial handcart lasted well into the twentieth century. Eugène Atget’s photograph of 1899 shows a *chiffonnier*, the pre-industrial ragpicker, pushing a loaded *voiture à bras* on Haussmann’s avenue des Gobelins.⁵² He photographed a large advertisement for the hire of such equipment as late as 1923.⁵³

It is useful to consider as well the reactions of Japanese travelers to Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century. Individual accounts exist, but the report of the Iwakura Embassy to the U. S. and Europe in 1871-73 is the most telling. The information on all aspects of Western nations collated by Kume Kunitake, personal secretary to foreign minister Prince Iwakura Tomomi, would subsequently play a key role in Japan’s move to a modern industrial state.⁵⁴ Like his Western counterparts in Asia, Kunitake was attentive to every mode of traffic on his journey. He emphasized the role of infrastructure in a nation’s wellbeing by comparing it to the circulatory system of a healthy body. In any country on their tour, he wrote, “the condition of its roads would reveal to us immediately whether its government was vigorous or in decline and whether its industry and commerce were active or sluggish.”⁵⁵ His view of France was the most favorable: as world leader in manufacturing the nation “rivals Italy in

sculpture and oil-painting, and competes with Britain in large-scale engineering works such as steam-powered iron warships, cannon and rifles, and buildings and bridges.”⁵⁶ In Paris, the delegates examined key institutions, including the manufactures of Sèvres, the military academy of Saint-Cyr, the mint, the Bibliothèque nationale, among many others.⁵⁷ Kunitake observed the capital’s tree-lined, gas-lit boulevards, whose smooth pavement of gravel and heated tar he duly noted.⁵⁸ Yet of all the feats of modern engineering it was waste removal that most impressed the Japanese. The vast network of underground tunnels, pipes, and telegraph cables in the Paris sewage system was complete with “walkways... paved in stone, with rails laid on them for hand-pulled trolleys,” he reported. At the end of their tour, “after reaching a large main tunnel [in two such trolleys], we climbed into a boat which carried us about a hundred paces before it emerged into the open air...” The sewers, Kunitake declared, were “one of the most awe-inspiring sights of Paris.”⁵⁹

Contemporary Europeans had different reactions to the new modes that changed their lives. Above ground not everyone embraced the steam engine. Decades before Monet and company, Daumier depicted all forms of traffic on land, water and air, giving special attention to the train.⁶⁰ *Un premier voyage en chemin de fer* showed a group of well-off passengers in the 1840s rapt in anxiety rather than marvel.⁶¹ Three men and a woman each wore a grim expression, mouths turned down, fingers tight around canes and parcels as they endured this initiation. No one looked out the window; no one enjoyed the new physical and visual experiences offered by mechanization. Daumier’s *Impressions et compressions de voyage* showed another traumatic encounter. On the roof of a train one man was knocked onto his backside, limbs in the air as the locomotive began its march across a landscape denoted only by horizontal lines. Another in coattails leapt, or was thrown, from the covered compartment into

open wagons of squashed customers whose outstretched arms, flying hats and grimaces indicate anything but comfort.⁶² In many such drawings and paintings Daumier showed how modern transport aggravated anxieties of class, gender and social relations in rail travel.⁶³

Guimet went to Asia to complete a survey of Eastern religions and collected books, artifacts, and art objects that formed the core of the Musée Guimet in Paris.⁶⁴ He hired a fleet of seven *jinrikisha* and fourteen coolies to go from Tokyo to Nikko and Tokyo to Kyoto.⁶⁵ The contracted fee for a tour with Régamey, escorted by three interpreters and a cook, shows that transportation was as organized in Meiji Japan as in contemporary Europe. A British guidebook of 1881 that published standardized fares by rickshaw to popular destinations further suggests an orderly structure.⁶⁶ Bird would write approvingly of the Japanese Land Transport Company that arranged tours at fixed rates and protected travelers from “difficulties, delays, and extortions” on the road.⁶⁷ A picture emerges of an organized infrastructure.

Recent cultural geographers argue that mobility is an embodied experience that can be understood only when corporeality and representation are both taken into account.⁶⁸ Nowhere is it more valid than in this set of European images of travel in Asia. Guimet first adopted the pseudo-ethnographic mode common to travel accounts. He related in detail the attire, habits, gesture, and manner of the porters with whom he spent his days. A passage in his chapter on “What the Djinrikis Eat” gives his tone:

We had hardly arrived when our men wiped the imperceptible sweat from their bodies with the little blue cloth that covers their head. This piece of cloth plays a big role in the life of the Japanese. It is a wash cloth in the morning, when dry, a head cover for both men and women, transformed into hoods, mitre, night caps, diadems, medieval beret, masks, and even

shoulder pads for carrying heavy loads.⁶⁹

Bird wrote in the same quasi-ethnographic vein in 1878: “These kuruma-runners wore short blue cotton drawers,... short blue cotton shirts with wide sleeves, and open in front, reaching to their waists, and blue cotton handkerchiefs knotted round their heads,...”⁷⁰

In this contact between non-equals, the Japanese had no name or identity, forming an undifferentiated group. Yet their very physicality compelled the traveler’s attention. The visitor’s detached, pseudo-scientific observation was a method of assimilation, even a coping mechanism in the face of alterity. Guimet resorted to an image of classical antiquity, one that shaped his view of Japan before he even disembarked in Yokohama harbor. References to Titus, Brutus and Cicero turned the dress of local stevedores into “Latin robes”; their “fine, delicate and pure features” appeared as “not at all Asiatic.”⁷¹ Once on land, he saw Plato and Socrates among native schoolboys.⁷² He was not alone in this classicizing view. Hübner would assert that only travel in Japan during the summer, “surrounded by men with little or no clothes” gave him a better understanding of the great sculptures of Attica and Corinth.⁷³ Guimet declared that the artists in the École de Rome were wasting their time, for “it is here that they can study the human form in action. To see antique statues is good; to see living statues is better.”⁷⁴ Both visitors found Graeco-Roman features in Japan in the most unlikely places. They used familiar models to handle unfamiliar, foreign bodies.

Bird reported the very opposite physiognomy: she saw only “small, ugly, kindly-looking, shrivelled, bandy-legged, round-shouldered, concave-chested, poor-looking beings...”⁷⁵ In contrast to Hübner, she was struck time and again by the “miserable *physique* and the national defects of concave chests and bow legs.”⁷⁶ The disparity reflects the mutual

impact of gender and the materiality of travel. The Englishwoman lacked the freedom of her male counterparts to see Japanese men as Greek gods and athletes. Their proximity demanded from her a different course. Whereas the French pair could risk a (homo)eroticism in their depictions, Bird had to be discreet about those who mediated her every step. She preempted any hint of impropriety by insisting that all Japanese men were “hideous.”

~~[insert figs. 8.2 and 8.3 here—landscape]~~



8.2 Félix Régamey, illustration of *jinrikis* at rest, in *Promenades japonaises: Tokio-Nikko* (Paris: G. Charpentier, 1880), 277. Image in the public domain.

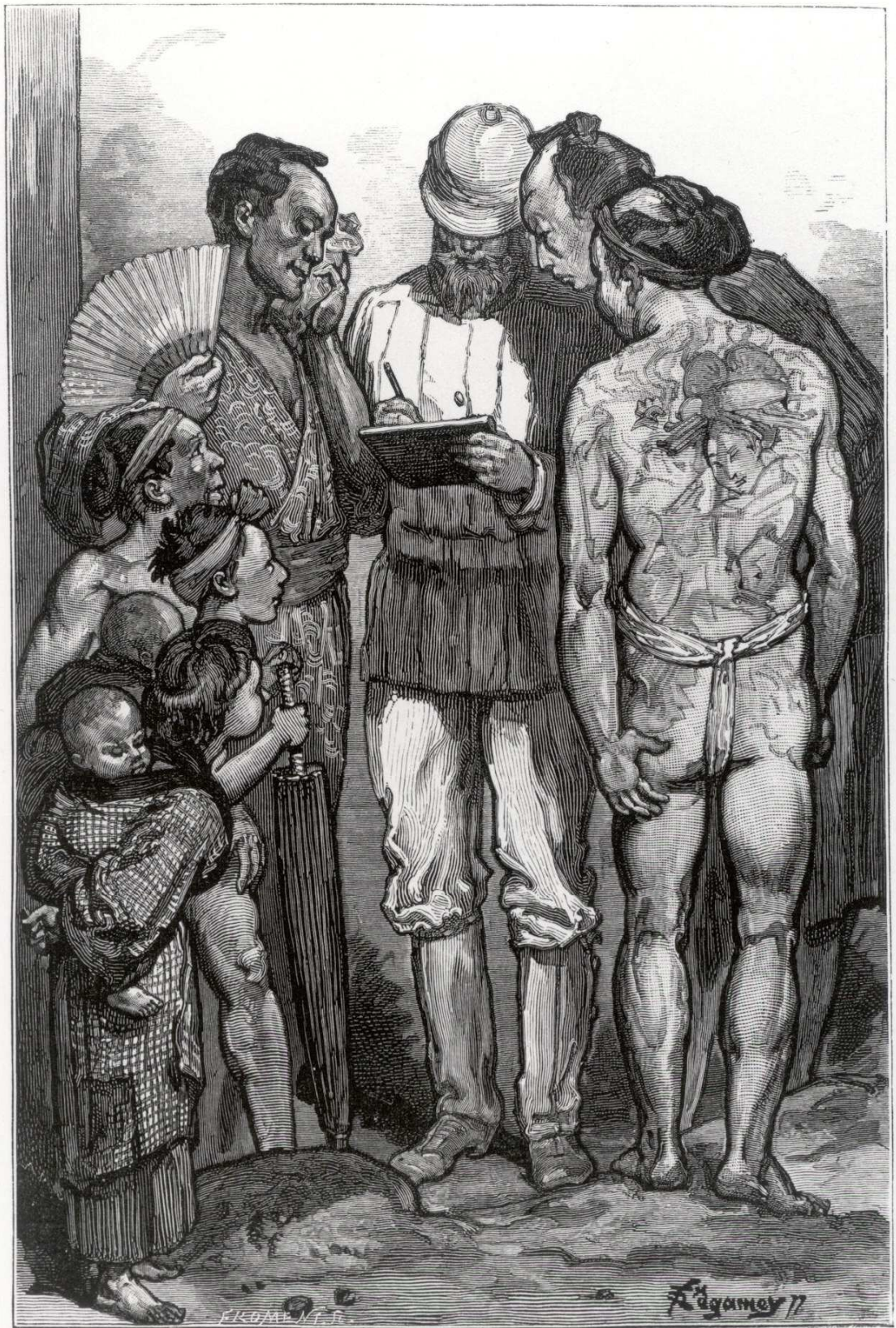


8.3 Félix Régamey, *The Sacred Bridge and the Ordinary Bridge at Nikko*, 1876-78, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown. Paris, Musée Guimet, MG 4796. Photo: Réunion des musées nationaux/Art Resource, New York.

Yet contrary to stereotypes, the Eastern male in travel imagery was not always the passive feminine Other to Western virility. We see this in Régamey's representation of the porters at their meal: six men endowed with Olympian chests and limbs are displayed around a hearth, attended by two women (fig. 8.2). The figures and poses recall the *académie*, an exercise familiar to French artists.⁷⁷ And as in the *académie* no identification is necessary or desired. The emphasis on an idealized hyper-masculine physique shows the Japanese men as identical members of a team. The seated pair on the left is mirrored by the pair on the right; the

crouching figure is matched by his opposite number across the hearth. The vigor of the bodies at rest presupposed the same bodies at work; and when shown at work, carrying Guimet in a cango in *The Sacred and Profane Bridges of Nikko*, their robust forms are manifestly based on a Graeco-Roman template (fig. 8.3).⁷⁸

We can see the reaction of Hübner, Guimet and Régamey as a variation on Delacroix finding Greeks and Romans at his doorstep in Morocco—a form of classicizing primitivism.⁷⁹ Or what the anthropologist Johannes Fabian termed a “denial of coevalness,” a refusal of the contemporaneity of the Other in relation to the self that confines the former to a lasting archaic state.⁸⁰ But resorting to classical antiquity was a deficiency on their part, an inability to abandon habitual ways of seeing and describing. The Western canon turned out to have its limits when the non-Western body was covered in native emblems, hence doubly foreign. We find this moment of destabilization when the Frenchmen came across what Guimet characterized as “other *djinrikis* of a superb form.”⁸¹ These exotic creatures gathered to examine Régamey sketching with Charles Wirgman, a British illustrator based in Japan who briefly joined their excursion.⁸² Régamey used Wirgman as a proxy for himself in his representation (fig. 8.4).⁸³ An inscription of difference, the artist is shown as engaged in the typically European practice of sketching before the motif, *en plein air*.



8.4 Félix Régamey, illustration of tattooed porter, in *Promenades japonaises* (Paris: G. Charpentier, 1878), 160. Image in the public domain.

Despite the power inherent to Western exploration, the image betrays the laboring body's unexpected challenge to representation. In Guimet's text the hierarchy between Western observer and native object is maintained in such remarks as "among the drudges who stopped to give their advice were naked men whose torso and back were decorated by artistic tattoos."⁸⁴ The relationship of viewer and viewed is more ambiguous in the illustration, made so in part by Régamey's handling of multiple viewing positions. The coexistence of local and foreign offers a self-reflexive scene, a moment of mutual curiosity. The onlookers are enthralled by the intruder's notations on paper, just as Régamey, standing outside the image, is captivated by the drawing on skin.⁸⁵ The viewer exterior to the scene, like the children excluded from the central action, are denied access to the sketch. In any case we are drawn to the tattooed figure who commands far greater interest. His nakedness, commented by all travellers, identifies the laboring body. His metaphorical garb of colorful animals and figures signifies class.⁸⁶

This body made Western antiquity an inadequate model, leaving Régamey to struggle for the first time in Japan: the tattooed porter's left hand is badly drawn, the foreshortening of fingers awkward, the thumb splayed. His arm seems distended and his elbow narrows where it should not. The marked torso forced the Parisian to attend to morphology at the cost of the fluency of drawing that he demonstrated elsewhere. The challenge led to the compressed group on the left, a jumble of heads and fragmented limbs that cannot be easily traced to their owners,

and on the right, the giant leaning over the artist's shoulder. In this representation the traveler lost command. The awkwardness of the drawing is a mark of local resistance to easy pictorial assimilation.

Insofar as European visitors wanted to uphold the power associated with mobility, masculinity and modernity, and the unequal relations between employer and employee, they were not always successful. The engraving of Hübner in a cango, Krafft's photograph of a traveler in Japan, and Régamey's painting of Guimet in *The Sacred and Profane Bridges of Nikko* each present reversals, of which the European travelers were unaware. Local transport, the object of scrutiny, overturned Western imagery in the most fundamental way. The porters' stride in Régamey's canvas highlights Guimet's folded, defenseless body, a mere parcel for the artist's strapping natives. The pair's somatic experiences challenged the power intrinsic to representation; both writer and illustrator lost their authority.

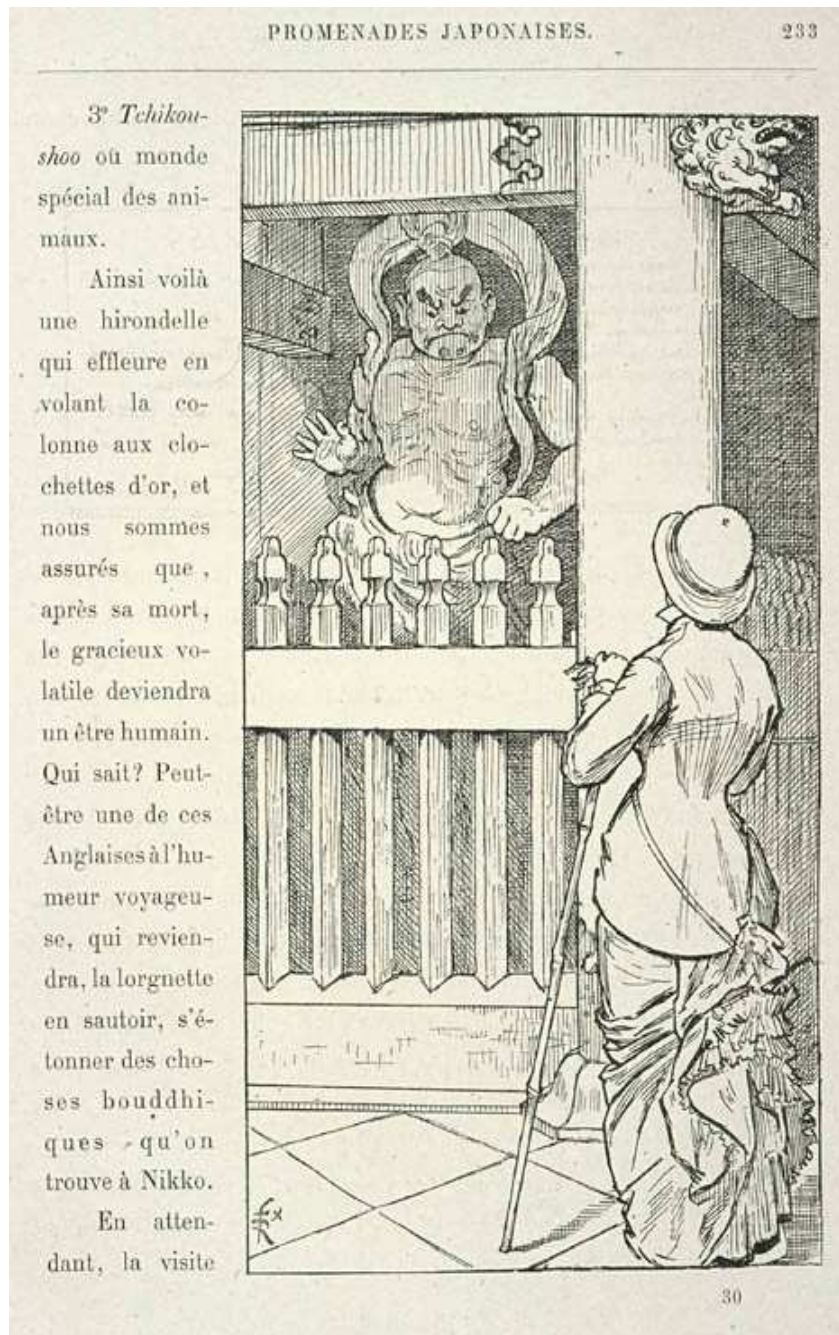
As for Hübner's image, an icon of Parisian modernity comes to mind here, surprisingly yet unavoidably: Manet's *Olympia* (fig. 4.1). The venues are different, of course, as are the acolytes (though non-Western both), but the bearing is the same, the left leg over the right, and the top foot shod. Olympia famously looks at the viewer, while the passenger gazes into the distance. Her left hand conceals her sex, whereas Hübner's grips a fan. The unnamed artist put this item at the center of the latter image, letting its implications radiate outward. The fan's shape rhymes with the posture, the left edge parallel to the torso, the right, to the lower leg. It is a synecdoche of a body repeatedly collapsed and unfolded, hemmed in by the fan-shaped chair. As Susan Hiner has recently shown, fans had strong erotic resonance in the nineteenth century, associated with idols of female sensuality such as royal mistresses and Venus herself, and much

employed as instruments of seduction.⁸⁷ In Hübner's hand, it was a transvestic object that highlighted the exchange of gender roles when Westerners ventured east.

Hübner's physical suspension echoes a suspension of class, gender, and identifiable setting abroad, in contrast to *Olympia* on firm ground in Paris, on a bed that fills half the canvas. There are two transpositions here: his reclining body takes on *Olympia*'s gender, the Japanese coolies share her nakedness as class.⁸⁸ Manet's painting, long identified with Paris and modernity, shows through contrast the extent to which travel to the other end of the world disturbed the familiar algorithm of power, gender, and race: the Austrian diplomat had no idea when he climbed into the cango that it would turn him into an odalisque. The oblivion of travelers and their illustrators is the subaltern's inversion. And it is a double one: the native effectively ventriloquized the foreign ventriloquist, letting him picture his own undoing. The subaltern became an upright, hyper-masculine (if still un-individuated) figure, whereas the passenger was feminized in repose.

One last image here demonstrates the troubling of the visual myths of gender and power when Europeans left home. In *Promenades japonaises*, Guimet and Régamey observed the advent of women travelers, "Englishwomen with a taste for travel," (perhaps Bird or one of her consœurs), equipped with fetish binoculars (fig. 8.5). Régamey depicts one such specimen, clad in the pith helmet of Westerner explorers. This odd apparition appears to startle even the god at Nikko. Is it her gaze or her long bamboo stick, not unlike those used by Japanese coolies, that caused alarm? No *Olympia* she, the lady is erect and poised, in contrast to her male colleagues. Guimet and Régamey showed in their work that West and non-West no longer matched up neatly with the polarities of active masculine and passive feminine. They inadvertently pictured

the shifting relations between men and women in the metropolis, even more evident on the road, in motion.



8.5 Félix Régamey, illustration of an Englishwoman, in *Promenades japonaises: Tokio-Nikko* (Paris: G. Charpentier, 1880), 233. Image in the public domain.

Representations found in the above travel narratives have been little examined, yet they offer material to reconsider modernities and their images. Traffic offers an important perspective to reexamine Paris as capital of the nineteenth century. Whereas artists in France could assertively represent new forms of mobility, their roving contemporaries found their skills tested. The Europeans who journeyed to Asia took part in global expansion, but they also participated in unsettling normative depictions of East and West. By taking seriously individual experiences of the so-called periphery, we can explore their impact on metropolitan representation. The physicality involved in travel and the disturbing closeness of native laboring bodies were key to such reversals.

Attention to somatic experiences advances our conceptualizations of history: the personal and physical had a constitutive role in historical processes. Modernity was an invention, a product of material forces whose imagery was neither uniform nor uncontested. Paris was the capital of vanguard modernist painting to be sure, but outside the aesthetic realm and into the political one with which representation is enmeshed in no easy way, the affirmation can only be equivocal. By literally traversing unfamiliar terrains of the non-West individuals took part in unsettling the ratio of power, modernity, Asia and Europe both within and beyond the artistic register.

¹ I thank Holly Clayson and André Dombrowski for their editorial remarks on my text, and Allan McLeod for his critical reading and many references.

² A longer, more fully illustrated version of this essay can be found in Ting Chang, *Travel, Collecting, and Museums of Asian Art in Nineteenth-Century Paris* (Farnham, Surrey, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 73-110.

³ Émile Guimet, *Promenades japonaises* (Paris: G. Charpentier, 1878); and idem, *Promenades japonaises: Tokio-Nikko* (Paris: G. Charpentier, 1880).

⁴ For brevity, I will use the terms “the West” and “Western” to designate Europe, North America and Australia, “the East,” “East Asia,” and “Eastern” to designate principally China and Japan.

⁵ For a rich and recent biography see Hervé Beaumont, *Les Aventures d'Émile Guimet, un industriel voyageur* (Paris: Arthaud, 2014).

⁶ I thank Melissa Hyde for helping me to think through this issue.

⁷ My notion of the “histoire du vécu” extends the “histoire des mentalités” practiced by French historians from the 1970s onward who examined daily lives and habits, as Roger Chartier put it, “the always collective mentality that regulates, without their knowing it, the representations and judgment of social subjects.” I emphasize instead the somatic experiences and individual negotiations of modern life. See Roger Chartier, “Intellectual History or Sociological Theory? The French Trajectories,” *Modern European Intellectual History: Reappraisals and New Perspectives*, eds. Dominick LaCapra and Steven L. Kaplan (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982), 13-46. Also Lynn Hunt, “French History in the Last Twenty Years: The Rise and Fall of the *Annales* Paradigm,” *The Annales School: Critical Assessments*, ed. Stuart Clark, 4 vols. (London: Routledge, 1999), 1: 24-38.

⁸ Alan Trachtenberg, preface to Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: Trains and Travel in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), xiv.

⁹ Brad S. Gregory, “Is Small Beautiful? Microhistory and the History of Everyday Life,” *History and Theory*, vol. 38, no. 1 (February 1999): 105.

¹⁰ Recent work in British imperial history emphasizes the human dimension in making empire. The engagement with local material cultures by figures both renowned and obscure is the approach taken by Maya Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Conquest and Collecting in the East 1750-1850* (London: Fourth Estate, 2005).

¹¹ Alf Lüdtke, ed., *The History of Everyday Life*, trans. William Templer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995). I thank Jean-Paul Zuniga for this reference.

¹² Gregory, “Is Small Beautiful?,” 100-110; Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen* of 1949 first offered a three-tiered conception of historical time comprising “structure” (the *longue durée*), “conjuncture” (middle term of decades), and “événement” (an event in the short term).

¹³ I draw on Michael R. Auslin, *Negotiating with Imperialism: The Unequal Treaties and the Culture of Japanese Diplomacy* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2004).

¹⁴ Robert Lee, *France and the Exploitation of China, 1885-1901: A Study in Economic Imperialism* (Hong Kong and New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); and Richard Sims, *French Policy Towards the Bakufu and Meiji Japan 1854-95* (Richmond, Surrey: Japan Library and Curzon Press, 1998).

¹⁵ Brigitte Koyama-Richard, *Japon rêvé : Edmond de Goncourt et Hayashi Tadamasu* (Paris: Hermann, 2001), 162; and W. G. Beasley, *Japan Encounters the Barbarian: Japanese Travellers in America and Europe* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 146.

¹⁶ Auslin, *Negotiating with Imperialism*, 176-200.

¹⁷ See Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie, eds., *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895-1945*

(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

¹⁸ Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, eds. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271-314; and idem, *Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Towards a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1999), 255.

¹⁹ Théodore Duret, *Voyage en Asie* (Paris: Michel Lévy, 1874), 359-60.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 4, 203-204.

²² Juliet Wilson-Bareau, *Manet, Monet, and the Gare St. Lazare*, exh. cat. (Washington, D. C.: National Gallery of Art; and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

²³ Larry Duffy, *Le Grand Transit Moderne: Mobility, Modernity and French Naturalist Fiction* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2005), 91.

²⁴ Wilson-Bareau, *Manet, Monet, and the Gare St. Lazare*, 105-106.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 47, 77-80, 103-106.

²⁶ Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore, *Jinrikisha Days in Japan* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1891).

²⁷ Felice Beato's hand-colored photographs were published in 1884 and in 1891 as *Album de 81 photographies rehaussées de couleurs de personage et sites du Japon*. A photograph of a Japanese passenger in a *kago* and a lady in a *jinrikisha* (rickshaw) are reproduced in Bernard Marbot, *Objectif Cipango: Photographies anciennes du Japon*, exh. cat. (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 1990), 40.

²⁸ Steven J. Ericson, *The Sound of the Whistle: Railroads and the State in Meiji Japan* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1996), 4.

²⁹ Ibid., 4, 26.

³⁰ See Jilly Traganou, *The Tōkaidō Road: Traveling and Representation in Edo and Meiji Japan* (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004).

³¹ Reproduced in Chang, *Travel, Collecting, and Museums of Asian Art in Nineteenth-Century Paris*, 88.

³² Reproduced in John W. Dower, *Yokohama Boomtown: Foreigners in Treaty-Port Japan (1859-1872)*, accessed at http://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f.027/yokohama/pdf/yb_essay.pdf.

³³ Takashi Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 21.

³⁴ Examples from Utagawa Hiroshige III's *Tokyo meisho* series can be seen at the website <http://www.myjapanesehanga.com/home/artists/utagawa-hiroshige-iii-1842-1894/steam-train-at-shimbashi-station>.

³⁵ See Lila Marz Harper, *Solitary Travelers: Nineteenth-Century Women's Travel Narratives and the Scientific Vocation* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Press, 2001), 133-74.

³⁶ Isabella Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan*, 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1881), 1: 26-9.

³⁷ Ibid., 1: 82. Reproduced in Chang, *Travel, Collecting, and Museums of Asian Art in Nineteenth-Century Paris*, 81.

³⁸ Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan*, 1: 344.

³⁹ Joseph-Alexandre Hübner, *A Ramble Round the World, 1871*, transl. Mary Herbert (London: Macmillan, 1878), 236.

⁴⁰ Reproduced in Chang, *Travel, Collecting, and Museums of Asian Art in Nineteenth-Century Paris*, 82.

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- ⁴¹ The experiences of using native vehicles were systematically treated by Western travelers to the East: see Engelbert Kämpfer, *Kämpfer's Japan: Tokugawa Culture Observed*, transl. Beatrice M. Bodart-Bailey (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 270-438.
- ⁴² Guimet, *Promenades japonaises*, 59.
- ⁴³ Keiko Omoto and Francis Macouin, *Quand le Japon s'ouvrit au monde* (Paris: Gallimard and Réunion des musées nationaux, 2001), 64.
- ⁴⁴ David Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), 1.
- ⁴⁵ Jean Gay, *L'Amélioration de l'existence à Paris sous le règne de Napoléon III* (Geneva: Droz, 1986), 155; and Michael Marrinan, *Romantic Paris: Histories of a Cultural Landscape, 1800-1850* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 318-20.
- ⁴⁶ Patrick Marchand, "Turgot et les messageries: Vers un nouvel ordre du transport public," *Le Voyage en France 1750-1914*, eds. Jean-Denys Devauges and Didier Masseur (Compiègne: Société des amis du Musée national de la voiture et du tourisme, 2000), 17-25.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid.
- ⁴⁸ *Grande encyclopédie: Inventaire raisonné des sciences, des lettres et des arts*, 31 vols. (Paris: H. Lamiraut, 1885-1902), 10: 219; and Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*, 74: note 6.
- ⁴⁹ Louis-Sébastien Mercier, *Tableau de Paris* (1781-88) (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1979), 77-9.
- ⁵⁰ Walter Benjamin, "The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire," *The Writer of Modern Life: Essays on Charles Baudelaire*, ed. Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA, and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 84.
- ⁵¹ Philippe Perrot, *Fashioning the Bourgeoisie: A History of Clothing in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 227: note 34, citing Élisabeth-Félicie Bayle-Mouillard,

Nouveau manuel complet de la bonne compagnie, ou guide de la politesse et de la bienséance (Paris: Roret, 1863), 28. Also *Grande encyclopédie*, 10: 219-20.

⁵² Eugène Atget, *Un Chiffonnier le matin dans Paris, avenue des Gobelins*, 1899, in *Paris pittoresque*, first series, reproduced in Chang, *Travel, Collecting, and Museums of Asian Art in Nineteenth-Century Paris*, 87.

⁵³ Eugène Atget, *Notre-Dame vue de la rue des Chantres et de la rue des Ursins*, 1923, in *Art dans le vieux Paris* series (Musée Carnavalet, PH 003815), reproduced in *Atget, une retrospective*, exh. cat. (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France and Hazan, 2007), 153.

⁵⁴ Kume Kunitake, *Tokumei Zenken Taishi Bei-Okairan jikki*, 5 vols. (Tokyo: Hakubunsha, 1878). I use the latest translation of Kume Kunitake, *Japan Rising: The Iwakura Embassy to the USA and Europe*, eds. Chushichi Tsuzuki and R. Jules Young (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 472.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 215.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 229.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 219-20.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 239-40.

⁶⁰ Valérie Sueur-Hermel, ed., *Daumier: L'Écriture du lithographe*, exh. cat. (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 2008), 80, 124-5.

⁶¹ Marc Desportes, *Paysages en mouvement: Transports et perception de l'espace XVIIIe-XXe siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 2005), 124.

⁶² Daumier, "Impressions et compressions de voyage," *Le Charivari* (July 25, 1843), reproduced in Desportes, *Paysages en mouvement*, 127.

⁶³ K. E. Maison, *Honoré Daumier: Catalogue Raisonné of the Paintings, Watercolours and Drawings*, 2 vols. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1968), vol. 1: *Paintings*, nos. I-39, I-109, I-165, I-166, I-178, I-179; and vol. 2: *Watercolours and Drawings*, nos. 287-311; Bruce Laughton, *Honoré Daumier* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), 109-26; and Desportes, *Paysages en mouvement*, 122-32.

⁶⁴ Also see Ellen Conant, “The French Connection: Emile Guimet’s Mission to Japan, A Cultural Context for Japonisme,” *Japan in Transition: Thought and Action in the Meiji Era, 1868-1912*, eds. Hilary Conroy, Sandra Davis, and Wayne Patterson (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickson University Press, 1984), 113-46.

⁶⁵ Guimet, *Promenades japonaises: Tokio-Nikko*, 197.

⁶⁶ Ernest Mason Satow and A. G. S. Hawes, *Handbook for Travellers in Central and Northern Japan: Being a Guide to Tōkiō, Kiōto, Ōzaka, and Other Cities* (Yokohama: Kelly & Co., 1881), xix.

⁶⁷ Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan*, 1: 145.

⁶⁸ Tim Cresswell, *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World* (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), 4. Also Tanu Priya Uteng and Tim Cresswell, eds., *Gendered Mobilities* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008).

⁶⁹ Guimet, *Promenades japonaises*, 70. “A peine arrivés, nos hommes essuient la sueur imperceptible de leurs corps avec la petite serviette bleue qui orne leur tête. Ce morceau d’étoffe joue un grand rôle dans la vie du Japonais. C’est le linge de toilette qui éponge l’eau du bain matinal, puis, une fois sèche sur les épaules, c’est la coiffure des hommes et souvent des femmes; ils en font à volonté des capuchons, des mitres, des bonnets pour la nuit, des diadèmes, des bérets moyen âge à aigrette, des masques, des casques, des couronnes à torsades, des coussinets pour les fardeaux, etc., etc.”

⁷⁰ Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan*, 1: 81-82.

⁷¹ Guimet, *Promenades japonaises*, 12.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 29.

⁷³ Hübner, *A Ramble Round the World*, 269.

⁷⁴ Guimet, *Promenades japonaises: Tokio-Nikko*, 116.

⁷⁵ Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan*, 1: 27.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 1: 17; and Hübner, *A Ramble Round the World*, 269.

⁷⁷ Thanks to Pamela Warner for this remark.

⁷⁸ See Chang, *Travel, Collecting, and Museums of Asian Art in Nineteenth-Century Paris*, 73-110 for Régamey's other drawings of rickshaws and their drivers published in Guimet's two volumes.

⁷⁹ Eugène Delacroix, *Correspondance générale d'Eugène Delacroix*, ed. André Joubin, 4 vols. (Paris: Plon, 1936), 1: 329-30. For a recent analysis of Delacroix's Moroccan sketchbooks, see Elizabeth A. Fraser, "Images of Uncertainty: Delacroix and the Art of Nineteenth-Century Expansionism," *Cultural Contact and the Making of European Art Since the Age of Exploration*, ed. Mary Sheriff (Durham: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 123-51.

⁸⁰ Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 121.

⁸¹ Guimet, *Promenades japonaises*, 181: "Dans ce relais je trouve d'autres djinrikis d'un type superbe et dont le corps nu laisse voir des tatouages fort curieux."

⁸² The British artist Charles Wirgman, the correspondent for the *Illustrated London News*, published a series of pen and ink drawings entitled *Artistic and Gastronomic Rambles in Japan from Kioto to Tokyo by Tokaido* based on his journey. See Traganou, *The Tōkaidō Road*, 197. Wirgman, an occasional interpreter for the British legation, allegedly helped with the British contract to build the

Japanese railway. See John Clark, *Japanese Exchanges in Art, 1850s to 1930s, with Britain, Continental Europe, and the USA* (Sydney: Power Publications, 2001), 7-14.

⁸³ Guimet, *Promenades japonaises*, 161.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 161, 181. For a synthetic study of tattoos in the Japanese tradition see W. R. van Gulik, *Irezumi: The Pattern of Dermatology in Japan* (Leiden: Brill, 1982).

⁸⁵ For a discussion of the iconography of tattoos in nineteenth-century Japan, see Christine Guth, *Longfellow's Tattoos: Tourism, Collecting, and Japan* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004), 142-58; and Caroline Arscott examines the reception of Maori and Western tattoos in Victorian Britain in *William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones: Interlacings* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008), 138-49, 158-75.

⁸⁶ Local authors were discomfited by such nakedness in public. Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy*, 19, notes that the Tokyo police arrested 2,091 people for nudity in 1876. Elise K. Tipton, *Modern Japan: A Social and Political History* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 49, notes the ban on nudity for rickshaw coolies and day laborers.

⁸⁷ Susan Hiner, *Accessories to Modernity: Fashion and the Feminine in Nineteenth-Century France* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 145-77.

⁸⁸ T. J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1984), 79-146, first examined *Olympia's* nakedness as class.