Photography

Nakamura Fumiko

Photographic techniques were introduced from the West to countries of Asia, starting from China and Japan, after the 1840s. Eventually, photographs with "exotic" touches were taken and sold to foreign customers at treaty ports. For example in Japan, the "Yokohama shashin" or Yokohama-style photography, based on motifs of Japanese scenery and culture such as *geisha*, became particularly popular. These photographs were staged images of Japan taken to respond to the visual expectations of the outside world, but photographs were also used to define the nation's domestic identity. Images of statesmen were taken and distributed widely, and thus photography was profoundly related to modern nation-state building.

I will refrain from discussing in detail the development of photography thereafter, but will mention that photography continues to have an actual presence in society today. For example, photographs that are taken with smartphones and shared on social media have great meaning for political protests that are currently occurring around the world. This is because through photographs, actions and voices can garner attention and gain approval of a wide variety of people. Meanwhile, some areas in the world prohibit participants of demonstrations and rallies from wearing masks so as to make identification by camera easier. Multiple aspects of photography are hereby revealed—the dissemination and spreading of information, the stirring of emotions, and ideas of surveillance and control.

Felice Beato, *Woman with Tea Set Playing the Koto*, ca.1860, Metropolitan Museum
Albumen silver print from glass negative with applied color