

[論 文]

Charles Longfellow's Twenty Months in Japan:

A glimpse at the journals, letters, and photographs of the poet's son,
and their significance among other writings in our understanding
of the Euro-American experience in Meiji Japan

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Abstract. Charles Longfellow, son of the famous poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, traveled to Japan in 1871 at age 27, where he would end up staying for twenty months. An avid adventurer and active globe-trotter, Charley had already traveled to Europe and other parts of Asia by the time he set off for Japan, a country with which he had long been fascinated. He arrived in Yokohama with no real purpose, but was armed with the good connections of his father and fortified by ample financial means to enjoy himself to the fullest. The combination of these two circumstances made it possible for the affable Longfellow to not only enjoy the sights and pleasures available to the increasing number of Euro-Americans traveling to Japan, but also opened the doors for a number of extraordinary experiences. He wrote about these experiences in his private journals as well as in letters home to his family, and his irreverent wit and lively sense of humor make for acute and quite honest observations on things such as his audience with the Meiji Emperor, his travels in Hokkaido, cultural events such as festivals and sumo wrestling, and all kinds of pleasurable pursuits. The large number of photographs he amassed during his stay document not only the sights of Japan, but also his personal experiences such as dressing in various Japanese costumes, building his own home, and enjoying the company of women. This paper highlights some of his writings and photographs and suggests that among the plethora of writings by Euro-Americans in Japan during this period, these are valuable resources for our understanding of Meiji Japan and the Euro-American experience within it.

Charles Longfellow, son of the famous poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, had a zest for adventure from childhood and was fascinated with Japan from an early age. Influenced by the current popularity of all things Japanese and encouraged by friends and relatives of the Longfellows who had already visited the country, in June of 1871, at the age of twenty-seven, he took his first trip to Japan, where he remained for twenty months. All his life,

Charley, as he was called, apparently had no ambitions to settle down or take up any kind of career and seemed to avoid serious endeavors if in any way possible, and this is evident in the way he spent his time in Japan. His witty charm made him a popular and lively member of all of his traveling and social parties, and he enjoyed life and his pursuit of leisure to the fullest wherever he went. His father's connections and his inherited means made it possible for him to lead a very lavish lifestyle in Japan, becoming acquainted with people of status, both Japanese and foreign, traveling within the country beyond the usual limitations for foreigners, building his own home, enjoying the pleasures of teahouses and theater with lively abandon, and amassing an enormous collection of art and curios to bring home along with his extensive Japanese tattoos.

The vast majority of Euro-American visitors to Japan during this period fell into the two categories of those who were in the country to work and those who were travelers.

The late 19th century was a time during which ever-increasing numbers of Europeans and Americans traveled the globe for leisure purposes in search of adventure, knowledge, and improvement of health... It was during this period that Japan opened up to relations with the West and the world, and the once secluded nation became the focus of interest to people all over the world. Numbers of businessmen, scholars and specialists, together with government officials and representatives from Europe and North America found themselves in this newly opened yet still exotic country, and travelers soon added Japan to their itineraries. (Nootbaar, 2003:83)

The Westerners in Japan for work fell under four broad categories: the foreign diplomat, the invited specialist, the missionary, and the businessman. Two well-known examples of diplomats would be Ernest Satow, who was with the British Japan Consular Service from 1862-1882 and British Envoy for five years from 1895, and Charles De Long, American Envoy to Japan from 1869 to 1874. Good examples of invited specialists, who were brought to Japan on the invitation of the Japanese government or private industry to work in the fields of education, industry, and technology, etc. and include American William Clark, a leader in agricultural education who was brought over to help found the Sapporo Agricultural College in 1876 for eight months, and Edward Morse, an American zoologist who was invited as the first Professor of Zoology at Tokyo Imperial University after coming to the country in 1877 to study brachiopods, and then went on to make a name for himself in many areas on the study of Japan. There were many Euro-American businessmen in Japan during this time, including any number of merchants and tradesmen who were long and short term residents, primarily catering to the foreign community, and the number of Christian missionaries in the country continued to rise as modernization progressed.

These residents of Japan often published documents or journals of their stays in Japan, and many have been recorded and researched in great detail. In the case of the diplomats and the invited specialists, the experiences they had in Japan and the way they were recorded for publication were by necessity limited by the constraints of their positions. For example, a diplomat who spent much of his time in teahouses with geisha would not include such information in his journal or autobiographical account, but rather he would limit his writings to official diplomatic endeavors and personal experiences suited to his station. An example of this is Christopher Pemberton Hodgson, the first British Consul in Hakodate, who came to Japan after the opening of the treaty ports but before the Meiji Restoration, and who published *A Residence at Nagasaki and Hakodate in 1859-60 with an Account of Japan Generally and a Series of Letters on Japan by His Wife* (1861). A foreign specialist would write about his field of specialty and matters related to it, and also be bound by position and dignity in what he wrote. An example would be Basil Hall Chamberlain, a British Professor at Tokyo Imperial University and one of the earliest Japanologists, who published *Things Japanese* (1890). A missionary's account would be bound by the dictations of his church, and he would focus his account on observations and interactions relevant and in keeping with his obligations to his church. One missionary in Japan at this time was British Reverend George Smith, who published *Ten Weeks in Japan* in 1861. Businessmen would have had more freedom to write on their experiences, but most of these would have been limited to the treaty ports or foreign settlements and would have a limited scope. Edward House was known as the first American journalist working in Japan as a regular newspaper correspondent and edited Tokyo's first English language newspaper, so his writings would have been targeted to the needs of his readership and the demands of his publishers. And as a subset of these four categories of Euro-Americans in Meiji Japan would be the wives or other family members who accompanied their husbands to Japan and their published observations, most notably diplomats' wives and other family members. These would include Mary Fraser, wife of British Minister to Japan, Hugh Fraser, who in 1910 published *A Diplomatist's Wife in Japan: Letters from Home to Home* on her life and experiences in Japan from 1889 to 1894 (Sterry:19), and Eliza Scidmore, who accompanied her brother the diplomat George Scidmore during his post in Japan from 1885 and published *Jinrikisha Days in Japan* in 1891.

During this period there were also a great numbers of travelers from Europe and America visiting the newly opened nation of Japan. In fact, "From small beginnings in the late 1850s when the treaty ports were opened to the hordes of Cook's Excursionists from the 1880s into the twentieth century, thousands travelled to Japan and many wrote of their experiences" (Sterry:1). Perhaps the most well-known of these was Isabella Bird, whose travelogue *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan: An account of travels in the interior, including visits to the aborigines of Yezo and the shrines of Nikko and Ise* (1880) remains the most comprehensive

account of Japan, its land, and its people during the early days of the Meiji Period. Others include accounts such as Henry Craven St John's *Notes and Sketches from the Wild Coasts of Nipon* (1880), L.C. Goodwin's *A Winter in Japan and China* (1890), and Walter Del Mar's *Around the World through Japan* (1902), among literally hundreds of titles published between the late 19th century and early 20th century, before war brought world traveling to a standstill.

There were so many travel books written on Japan during this period that Basil Hall Chamberlain, in his 1905 book *Things Japanese* “quoted Wenckstern's *Bibliography of the Japanese Empire*, which ‘contains a great many thousands of entries, from which it may be inferred that *not* to have written a book about Japan is fast becoming a title of distinction” (Serry:1-2). In the late 19th century, keeping a journal of one's travels and then publishing a book of it was almost the equivalent of sharing photo albums and travel stories with friends in the 20th century, or posting blogs or social media entries on one's travels in the 21st century. It is therefore fascinating that Charley Longfellow did not publish his. He possessed his own camera and took a great number of photographs himself, and on top of this he purchased photographs of many of the places he visited, just as people would buy picture postcards in the coming years. His journal was, however, sparse and sporadic, being short comments at times while in detail at other times. Many of the most detailed reports of his adventures and experiences are in the letters he wrote home to family, and it is apparent that the accounts he shared with them were tailored to what he wanted them to know and how he wanted to appear to them. His personal journals are more candid in places, and some were clearly not meant for public viewing, and both his journals and letters are written with little care for grammar and punctuation. It is not known whether he had any idea to publish his photographs or write a book about his stay in Japan when he set out on his journey, but it appears he was looking for no more than an adventure in an exotic place that was currently the topic *du jour* amongst the educated elite in his family's circle of friends and acquaintances.

In lieu of publishing an account of his travels, Charley took and bought photographs, and purchased many things to bring back home. The number of artworks and curios he bought during this time and brought back to Cambridge, and which were given to friends and relatives and also displayed throughout the Longfellow House, made him well-known as a collector of Japanese things at a time when it was all the rage. However, his letters, journals, and photographs from these travels were essentially unknown until 1994 and unpublished until 1998. These materials shed light on not only how Charley spent his time in Japan, but through them we can get a glimpse at his charming and witty personality as he tells his stories and documents his rather remarkable experiences.

Precisely because they were not intended for publication, unlike the many other better-known accounts, his writings and photographs are significant for their candidness and casual nature. Charley was a young playboy, in Japan with good connections and available funds, and he was there purely to have fun. As a consequence he fell into a number of experiences that made his sojourn in Japan unusual and fascinating to the modern scholar of Victorians in Meiji Japan as well as to those with interest in the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. While full of humorous anecdotes and acutely honest observations, is safe to say that his journals and letters home focused on the more impressive experiences of his audience with the Mikado, travels to Hokkaido, the distinguished people he socialized with, as well as the building of his house in Tokyo, all things meant to impress his family and make himself seem important.

From the photographs, however, not only do we see the places he visited and the people he met, we can infer other aspects of his life in Japan, for example that he spent a great deal of time with certain teahouse girls. He does mention parties at the teahouses as being one of his great pleasures, but although at least one of these women is believed to have been his mistress, he never mentions this aspect of his life in Japan in either his letters or journals. We also know from the photographs that he was extensively tattooed during his time there in the traditional Japanese manner. Charley clearly had an image he was trying to portray, but in many respects the person he was to his family back home differed from the persona he cultivated in his life in Japan.

This observation will focus on Charley Longfellow's first and longest sojourn in Japan, for 20 months from June 23, 1871 to March 13, 1873, and will look at the rather extraordinary experiences he had during this time which were documented in his journals and letters home to his sisters and in photographs. These materials offer unique insight into Japan only three years after the start of the Meiji Period, and in particular Charley's participation in an audience with the young Emperor as well as his travels to Hokkaido and the interior of Japan, both of which were made possible by the influence of his father's name. He also describes with lively candor such activities as sumo wrestling and festivals, pleasure boating and teahouses. In reading these accounts, Charley's irreverent wit, carefree attitude, and lavish lifestyle are evident and give understanding to what he then doesn't allude to in his accounts, namely his mistresses, his tattoos, and the financial difficulties which eventually forced him to leave the country.

Charley Longfellow announced his departure for Japan to his father by telegraph from San Francisco on June 1, 1871, with the message, "Have suddenly decided to sail for Japan today. Good bye. Send letters to the Oriental Bank Corporation, Yokohama" (Laidlaw:22). Spending his 27th birthday on board the *Idaho*, he arrived in Yokohama on the 25th of that

month, far from home and with the idea of spending several weeks in the country which had newly opened to visitors. This was not the first of Charley's adventures. Always restless and adventurous, he had run away from home to enlist and serve in the Union Army in March, 1863, at age 18, being discharged for medical disability the following January for an injury to both shoulders inflicted the previous November. After a period of recovery, he spent the next few years yachting and traveling, with extended visits to various parts of Europe, and a year-long journey to India and the Himalayas, by way of Alexandria and the Red Sea, before heading back to Europe again.

His hasty decision to travel to Japan was, therefore, perhaps not surprising to his father and other family members, made from the West Coast after another adventure which took him across the continent of America and into the Wild West. He had intended to travel to China and Japan from India when he was there in 1869-70, and had formed a fascination with Japan in his childhood. "A sketchbook kept by his family dating from 1855 to 1860 includes Charley's tracing of the cartoon "Japanese Manners" that had appeared in the December 18, 1858, issue of *Harper's Weekly*" (Guth:44). Prominent Boston homes of the time, including his own, displayed objects of Chinese and Japanese arts and various curios, and with the opening of the country by Perry in 1853 and the Japanese Convoy to the United States, Japan was much in fashion and favor in the Longfellow family's circle. As well, the Longfellows were personally acquainted with a number of people who had traveled to Japan in the early days of its opening to the West, including Lieutenant George Henry Preble, who had accompanied Perry's expedition to Japan, Bayard Taylor, Richard Henry Dana, Jr., Raphael Pumpelly, and others in Boston who were involved in trade with Japan, as well as "his friend Kirk Lothrop, a partner in Walsh Hall and Co., with whom he shared an enthusiasm for sailing, (and who) would be the first person to greet Charley when he disembarked in Yokohama on June 23, 1871" (44).

Charley spent his first few weeks in Japan as any tourist would, sightseeing in and around Yokohama, and then heading to the hot spring resort of Miyanoshita, at the foot of Mt. Fuji and already a popular destination for Western visitors. He was enamored with the country and its people immediately. Upon return from this trip in his first letter home to his sister Alice, dated July 20th, Charley describes the Japanese as being, "from what I have seen of them a mighty nice people and very good natured- except an occasional soldier or retainer of some swell Daimio or prince, who when half right tries his hand at carving a stranger" (Laidlaw:26-7). The same letter describes the country of Japan as being, "without any exception the prettiest country I have ever seen" (27).

It was on Charley's visit to Miyanoshita that he and his companions met Iwasaki Yataro, an influential businessman, and Yamanouchi Yodo, a former daimyo whom Charley refers

to as the Prince of Tosa. His journal notes that they “spent evening and dined with him. Had singing, music and dancing by his own girls” (Laidlaw:24) And it was together with Iwasaki that he was introduced to the pastime of pleasure boating in Tokyo, which became one of his favorite ways to pass time. Always trying to impress his family by mentioning the prominent people he was in contact with, his next letter to Alice, on August 3rd, goes into great detail on his first experiences in the city of Yedo (Tokyo), with his rich descriptions painting a vivid picture of his surroundings and his pleasure among them, including the pleasure boating which he was treated to by his new friend Iwasaki:

Besides the scenes in the streets which are always curious and interesting, there are a great many magnificent temples to visit and tea gardens where the “young Japan” delight to spend the day lazing off on cool straw mats in loose dressing gowns, smoking, singing, reading aloud to each other, and listening to the singing girls they often bring with them. Our evenings have been spent drifting about on the river, which is most refreshing after the heat of the day and is most amusing- as the water is covered with hundreds of boats, each one lit by a large round paper lantern and filled with pleasure seekers. I must say the Japanese know how to enjoy themselves most rationally (Laidlaw:28).

Charley's good connections and financial means made these experiences possible, and his affable personality and adventurous spirit made him a very popular companion for both new generation young Japanese and for many of the Westerners in Japan at the time. He took advantage of two particularly fortuitous opportunities which he wrote about in good detail and which offer the modern reader insight into two very different aspects of Meiji Japan. The first of these is his rather arbitrary appointment as acting secretary of the Hawaiian mission less than two months after his arrival in the country, which immediately led to an audience with the Meiji Emperor. He describes the circumstances of his appointment in a letter to his sister Alice, dated August 14th, 1871:

One day about a week ago... I received a note from Mr. De Long, our Minister to Japan, saying he wanted to see me. So I rode up to his house, and almost the first thing he said was would you like to see the Mikado. Of course I said yes, and he appointed me acting secretary of the Hawaiian mission- of which he is the head- to form a treaty of amity and commerce between Hawaii and Japan. So that if this is badly written, you must excuse it on account of my new nationality (Laidlaw:33).

The actual audience with the Emperor took place less than a week later, and Charley's description of it, while irreverent in places, gives the modern reader a very thorough account of the event, valuable to readers as being the last appearance of the Meiji Emperor

in official court garb (Guth:46), taking place less than three years after the Emperor's so-called restoration and before many of the Western or modern transformations were effected within the Imperial Palace. Both his wit and his keen observational sense can be seen in this short excerpt, which describes the few minutes spent in a waiting room with various ministers in attendance:

After a few minutes conversation and very little information gained, the council of state came into the room headed by Iwakura [Tomomi], the real emperor of Japan, and whose will is law. He had a bad face, hooked nose and deep-set wicked eyes. They were presented one by one to Mr. De Long, who had a word for all, and then to us, who hadn't a word for any (Laidlaw:34).

He goes on to describe the Emperor himself, then only age 18, with the same candor when they first catch sight of him in the audience chamber:

At the end of the central room is sort of a rose-colored satin tent or bonbon box, in the centre of which is seated a young man of twenty, with an oval and not particularly brilliant face, a queer sort of conical cap strapped on his head, and arrayed in heavy silken robes- red and straw colored, if I remember rightly. This was the Mikado, who a few years ago was not visible to human eyes, except those of a few priests- his own princes being only allowed to know that he was on one side of a screen while they stood on the other (34).

Charley's own duty as acting secretary of the Hawaiian mission was that he, "held the letter from the king of Hawaii [Kamehameha V] and handed it to (De Long) at the proper moment. He then advanced and gave the letter into the Mikado's own hand... I could hardly keep from laughing out at being introduced as Hawaiian secretary" (34-5).

Indeed luck of timing and the grace of good connections made this quite exceptional experience possible for Charley, and it also provided him with another opportunity only available to diplomats. U.S. Minister De Long invited him to take part in an expedition by members of the American mission to Hokkaido, then known as Yezo (or Yesso), and into the Ainu interior and back down through Honshu to Tokyo, which they departed for less than a month later, on September 6, 1871.

The first seven days were spent in Hakodate, and like elsewhere, Charley had no trouble finding ways to enjoy himself. The second night, September 9th, they went ashore to have a look at a festival that was taking place, where they came upon a stage play being acted. Enraptured with the ambiance, Charley remarked in his journal that, "The Japanese seem

to enjoy themselves more at the theatre or in a tea house than any people I have ever seen, taking off most of their clothes to be completely at their ease, smoking, chatting, and eating" (Laidlaw:45). After scarcely more than two months in the country, Charley was clearly familiar with and fond of the pursuit of pleasure in Japan.

Two days later, on September 11th, Charley's journal contains a thorough description of the sumo wrestling match they observed. His account is peppered with his usual wit, such as where he observes the pre-match rituals:

They then stamped first one leg then the other, slapping each with the palm of their hand as much as to say "see what a muscular chap I am." Then they squatted like frogs one in front of the other, the legs well apart, while the man with the wooden fan stood close to them (49).

Charley concludes his report of the sumo matches unimpressed: "Most of these fellows were splendidly developed, but I can't think that a good European or Indian wrestler would be too much for them" (50).

This week in Hakodate was spent enjoying the various pleasures, but the party was also anxiously awaiting and preparing for their departure for the Ainu country. After commencing this journey, they traveled through the interior of Hokkaido for twenty days, fifteen of which were in Ainu territory, riding or walking up to forty miles every day. Charley had much to say about the scenery and about the Ainu people, giving quite detailed descriptions of both. They were a much mystified tribe to both Westerners and Japanese of the time, and very few people would have had the opportunity to ever see them. His observations match those of his contemporaries, describing the women as being, "strongly built, with thick black hair cut so as to show the back of the neck, but nearly a foot long on the sides and curving forward... They have a large pointed moustache tattooed around their lips, the lower as well as the upper, and a tattooed line connects their eyebrows" (62). He describes the tattooing on their arms and backs as well, and notes that, "their bodies are not very hairy, only a little growing between their bosoms, down their backs, and on their legs" (62). The men, he observed, "are very different, being mostly covered with hair... I have taken a great fancy to them with their long unkempt hair and beards, and often very fine faces- though dirty" (62). He continues his journal by describing their clothing, houses, and villages in a way that makes obvious his fascination towards these people and their surroundings.

He also observes the people themselves to be somewhat different than what he had believed, and shows them in an air of awe and respect:

The Ainus seem a very quiet, amiable people, notwithstanding their wild looks. And on our entering their towns, they kneel down and make motions with their hands as if throwing dirt on their heads, and then stroke their long beards. But to see an Ainu in his glory is when he is racing across country on a native pony, hair and beard streaming, and with legs and arms going as hard as they can fly... We had heard that the Japanese treated the Ainus very badly and as being very much their inferiors, but, [from] what we have seen of the two together, they got on capitally, working and joking together (63-4).

Charley's most critical comments on his travels in Hokkaido were reserved for the Japanese officials, guards, coolies, and even the local horses with whom they were forced to travel. While he had high praise for the service and attention they received in the beginning of their journey, on the ninth day in the interior he remarks that, "We have found out their system of lying and pay no attention to them... They and all the town officials we have met {are} a brazen set of liars, never showing any signs of shame or embarrassment when detected" (70). In a letter to his sister Alice from Hakodate, dated Oct. 10th, 1871, before they headed back overland to Yedo, he writes:

I don't like the Japanese as much as I did. Now that I know them better, I find that they are liars, mean, and their heads are the opposite of being level- doing the most childish and ridiculous things to look smart- and a great many imitating Europeans like monkeys (76).

Perhaps it was his exhaustion from the trip and the frustrations that must have arisen during it, because in general Charley maintains enthusiastically positive about Japan and its people. After the month-long journey back to Yedo, he remarked: "And [we] were soon fast asleep in the hotel- after a most delightful two month's excursion, having seen in that time more of the interior of Japan than almost any foreigner- in all travelling four hundred miles in Yesso and five hundred in Nippon. And everything {went} on as pleasantly as possible" (105).

After returning from this journey, Charley spends some time in Yokohama, and then traveling to Osaka and Nagasaki. Before he leaves, he mentions in a letter that, "this child is on the verge of settling in Japan- Yedo, for instance, for the winter- even having entered into negotiations for a nice little house... When it comes to leaving Japan, one finds how strong the fascination about the place is, and it's like pulling teeth to go" (106). What is most interesting about his decision to get a house and stay longer in the country is that he plans to do so in Yedo (Tokyo), which was only recently open to foreign settlement in the small area of Tsukiji.

Like many of his contemporaries, Charles worried about traditional Japan vanishing with the influence of the West, as evidenced by remarks such as, “I can’t leave the nice old place, and in a year or two it will all be spoilt” (113). He is fascinated the traditional festivals and cultural events he observes, and he even makes an effort to learn Japanese. He remarks in a letter dated March 15th, 1872 that, “as I get to know more of the language, it is pleasanter and more interesting, if possible, every day” (128). Indeed, he must have, by this time, become firmly enamored with the carefree pleasures of Japanese life:

Charley led a life of cultivated leisure in Japan. The words *ukiyo*, floating world, or *ukiyo-e*, pictures of the floating world, were not part of his vocabulary- or indeed of most Japanophiles of the time- but the life he led in Japan between 1871 and 1873 might well have led Japanese to characterize him as a “man of the floating world” (*ukiyo otoko*). He certainly had all the qualities of the Japanese bon vivant. Stylish, witty, and urbane, he moved smoothly in many circles. He took an interest in the arts and had ample funds to form a personal collection. He enjoyed all manner of food and drink. He delighted in Kabuki theater. He was a big spender. He was also a connoisseur of women (Guth:45-6).

He appears to spend much of his time in leisurely pursuits with Japanese, especially several specific young women. And although he never mentions the subject in writing, we know from his photographs that he spent a great deal of time with some geisha from a particular tea house. We also know that he was extensively tattooed in the traditional Japanese manner, first during his twenty month sojourn and again on a subsequent visit. Both of these intriguing details of his life in Japan are made evident in his collection of photographs.

Charley’s albums of photographs provide perhaps the most fascinating glimpse into how he spent much of his time in Japan. He amassed a great number of photographs while he was in Japan, and these can be divided into those which he purchased and those which he had personally commissioned. Among the purchased photos are a collection of “fifty-six genre and forty scenic views of Japan” (59), which he bought from the well-known photographer Beato. Charley put these photographs in a Japanese-style album, with his name inscribed in *hiragana*. This personal touch was given to a collection of photographs which were decidedly impersonal, being prints of the same tourist views and traditional cultural scenes that were commonly purchased by visitors to Japan in those days. Another album was purchased in Hokkaido to commemorate his travels there, made by an unidentified “Nogootchi”, but was comprised of photographs of places in Hokkaido that he did not himself visit.

The other photo albums Charley returned home with are of more interest. They, too, are of the traditional Japanese style, with brocade covers and Charley's name inscribed in *hiragana* on the covers. These albums contain photographs by several different photographers which were commissioned by Charley himself and give a meaningful insight into who he was, or was trying to appear to be, during his twenty month sojourn. One album opens with a picture of himself, lying in the garden of the Tokyo home he had built, dressed in kimono. Six of the photographs in this album are of his various residences while he was in Japan, and one photograph shows twelve Japanese men and women whom he identifies as "my servants" (76). Whether they were actually in his employ cannot be verified, but it seems likely that he stretched the truth about his circumstances on more than one occasion. Charley was quite proud of the home he eventually built and settled in, and along with the photographs, he described it in detail in letters home. In describing some photographs of three young women in his garden, he tells his family that they are, "some officer's daughters who happened to drop in" (Laidlaw:174). We do not know whether this remark was made tongue-in-cheek or more likely was an outright lie, but we know from other photographic evidence that they were actually women from the teahouse he frequented and with whom he spent much of his leisure time.

One woman who appears in a number of his personal photographs is identified as Ohannasan, a geisha with whom Charley may have had a special relationship. "She seems to have occupied a special place in his affections since he later displayed her portrait in his bedroom in Cambridge. He also made a point of seeing her and a young woman named Osarto, who may have been their daughter, when he revisited Japan in 1885 and 1891" (Guth, 2004:80). He never mentioned Ohannasan or any of the other women he spent time with in his writings, so one can only speculate as to what kind of relationship he had with anyone. He was a playboy, though, and it was quite common in those days for even married Euro-Americans to have Japanese mistresses, so it can be assumed that at least some of the many women in his photographs were romantic or sexual partners of Charley's.

Another aspect of Charley we see through his photographs is that he was immersed in Japanese culture in a way uncommon for most Euro-Americans in Japan at the time and played at being Japanese. In one he is dressed as a samurai, with sword and fan, and in another he is dressed as a traditional Japanese actor, wearing kimono and geta and holding a parasol. In yet another he is dressed as a carpenter and seated with a teahouse geisha also dressed in the same costume. He is depicted at his home and while traveling wearing kimono as well, indicating an infatuation with traditional Japanese life and leisure. It was during these twenty months that Charley went a step further and had a large carp, stretching from his shoulders down below his waist, tattooed on his back. He later had a

second tattoo, the image of the Kannon diety, carved on his chest during his second visit to Japan, as well as a geisha, a dragonfly, a bird, and more covering his arms.

Tattooing was common in all classes in pre-modern Japan, but the practice was banned by the Meiji government as part of their “civilization and enlightenment” measures around the same time that Charley got his first one. It did not die out, though, and tattooists took advantage of the growing foreign tourist trade by advertising in guidebooks and offering their services at souvenir shops. In fact, “having himself tattooed in Japan in 1872 put Longfellow at the vanguard of a craze that later swept the British aristocracy and fashionable American society” (Guth:150).

Charley's tattoos were perhaps the ultimate in his penchant for flamboyancy and for flaunting not only his fascination with things Japanese but also his globe-trotting status. However, he was in fact living far beyond his means. A series of letters from his father Henry indicate the seriousness of his increasing debts, although Charley appears unconcerned. On November 7th, 1872, he sent a letter to his sister detailing the house he had built with photos indicating he was quite comfortable in his living situation, but by November 26th his father had written with deep concern about his financial situation. He was overdrawn to a great sum with no funds to cover the debt with, and Henry strongly advises his son that, “you must curtail your expenses, or you will get into great embarrassments. You should have made it a rule not to spend more than your income.” (Laidlaw, 1998:179) Increasingly frantic warnings from his father followed, but Charley apparently did not respond. He must have been feeling the acute pressure of his dire financial situation, though, and it is likely that his diminishing funds or even pressing debt collectors were the reason he somewhat abruptly left Japan in March of 1873. However, he did not head directly home, but rather spent a further year traveling in China, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Saigon, Bangkok, and Singapore, before finally returning to Cambridge on June 22nd, 1874.

Charley's tattoos were only a tiny part of his Japan souvenirs, and he sent so much back to Cambridge that, “in the 1870's Charles's collection of Japanese art probably was the largest in Cambridge, at a time when such objects were eagerly sought after by art lovers of the day” (186). These objects were given as gifts to many family members and friends, as well as being displayed in the Longfellow House. In the years following, he returned to Japan twice, once in 1885 for about seven months when he got further tattoo work and visited with Ohannasan and a girl who was possibly their daughter, and again for a shorter time in 1891. He never did do any type of work, preferring the life of the flamboyant globe-trotter and dilettante, spending “much of the rest of his life yachting and traveling to various parts of the globe” (186). He died of pneumonia in 1893 at the age of 48.

Although he gave away to family and friends many of his purchases, some of the curios Charley Longfellow brought back from Japan remain in the Longfellow House in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and many more are in the possession of the National Park Service but held in storage. More interesting to the scholar of Meiji Japan or Longfellow the poet and his son are Charley's journals, letters, and photographs, which are also available through the NPS at Longfellow House for research purposes. While he was written off and not taken seriously by many of his contemporaries because of his lack of occupation and his wanderlust, it is precisely these characteristics which led him to Japan and made possible the many experiences he had there.

The journals and letters of Charley Longfellow, left unpublished and even unstudied for over a century after his death, provide the reader not only insight into the lifestyle and personality of this son of the famous poet, but are also an honest and candid portrayal of the Japan of the early Meiji Period deserving of further scrutiny. While other accounts from Euro-American travelers, residents, and specialists published during the late 19th to early 20th century offer details on various aspects of Japan in this period, the simple fact that they were written for publication makes them useful to suit the agenda of their authors or the needs of their readers. As the son of the famous poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Charley was in the unique position of having the means and the status to open many doors for himself and to enjoy life to the fullest without care for money or career. This is evidenced in his writings, which show little reverence for protocol, even in the company of dignitaries, and a great fondness for the pursuit of pleasure. His accounts of his audience with the Meiji Emperor, after being arbitrarily appointed as acting secretary of the Hawaiian mission, and his travels to Hokkaido, where he wrote of his encounters with the Ainu and trip back down through the interior, are both valuable as experiences rare to most other visitors to Meiji Japan, and are more candidly described than in other published accounts. And his writings on his pleasurable pursuits, including activities such as pleasure boating and cavorting with geisha, are valuable documents of a side of Japanese culture which was either not experienced or not deemed appropriate to be written about by his Western contemporaries. Adding his photographs and collection of curios to his journals and letters, this is a significant addition to our understanding of Meiji Japan and the Euro-American experience within it.

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