

RE-IMAGING JAPAN: PHOTOGRAPHING A “NEW CULTURAL NATION” UNDER THE  
ALLIED OCCUPATION, 1945-1952

by  
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## DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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Doctor of Philosophy

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Title: Re-Imaging Japan: Photographing a “New Cultural Nation” Under the Allied Occupation, 1945-1952

This dissertation examines the role that photography played in re-imaging Japanese cultural identity during the Allied Occupation of Japan (1945-1952). It argues that photographers viewed the camera as a tool with which they could engage the postwar discourse on Japanese culture and identity. Eager to renounce the militarism and ultra-nationalism that had previously pervaded society, photographers endeavored to re-image Japan as a “new cultural nation” (*shin bunka kokka*). Inspired by American photojournalism and European human-interest photography, photographers captured telling scenes of Japanese society and culture. Photographers invoked symbols of tradition (e.g., rural villages, cherry blossoms, Buddhist monks) as well as icons of modernity (e.g., trendy fashions, movie theaters, urban neighborhoods). They photographed men and women at work, at home, and enjoying moments of leisure, and they snapped children at play. Photographers documented social and economic recovery, and they also captured scenes of poverty and material deprivation. Their photos illuminated changing social values and gender roles, foreign cultural influences, and life under the Occupation.

As they took pictures of their postwar world, Japanese photographers also quietly addressed the authority of the Occupation, sometimes positively and at other times critically. Images of brawny Japanese athletes who competed—and (sometimes) won—against the U.S. on a world stage connoted an implicit challenge to America authority. At the same time, photos of

American GIs in uniform strolling along Japanese streets and training on military bases projected American dominance in Japan. Most American photographers, on the other hand, tended to tout the Occupation as a transformative intervention aimed at helping Japan recover from the devastation of war and embrace the supposedly superior American way of life.

In the turbulence of the first postwar decade, Japanese and American photographers were extraordinarily active in documenting and interpreting the complex engagement of Japan with America. By taking a close look at the photographs taken by the Occupied Japanese and the Occupying Americans alike, we gain valuable insight into how they perceived, experienced, and documented each other at the moment of this epochal historical encounter.

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To Gilbert

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## CHAPTER I

### PHOTOGRAPHY AND JAPAN IN THE EARLY POSTWAR ERA

In 1948, the *ARS Shashin Nenkan* (*ARS Camera Annual*) released its first annual since publication had been suspended, due to the war, in 1943. Previously, for nearly twenty years, it had featured prizewinning photos by professionals and amateurs, in addition to essays on photographic trends in Japan and abroad, developments in amateur photography, the activities of prominent professionals, and updates on the latest photographic equipment. In some years, ARS also published transcripts from roundtable discussions convened by renowned photographers and critics. From photographs to essays to roundtable discussions, the annuals captured the state of Japanese photography in any given year.

When the call went out to amateurs to submit their images to the first postwar issue of *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, the editors feared that few would heed the call. Fujikawa Toshiyuki, in a roundtable discussion on the annual printed in *Kamera* magazine, confided later that, due to the “abysmal state of society at the time,” the editors had not expected many people at all to submit work for consideration. But to his surprise, the annual received nearly 2,500 submissions from amateurs across Japan.<sup>1</sup> To Fujikawa, the overwhelming response demonstrated photography’s “unexpectedly quick recovery” (*shashin saiki kono igai ni hayakatta koto*) after the war.

The 1948 annual presented several masterpieces in art photography, ranging from still life to nature landscapes to abstract compositions. It included photos of romantic coastal landscapes, snow-covered mountains, and serene temple rock gardens. There are also numerous snapshots of everyday life in postwar Japan: children in light summer kimono (*yukata*) at a festival (*matsuri*), people trudging through snow in the rural north, a man selling magazines on a

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<sup>1</sup> Roundtable discussion, “Arusu shashin nenkan ōbo sakuhin ni miru: Sengo no amachua shashin-kai,” *Kamera*, January 1948, 29-33.

city street, and a woman drinking tea in a *tatami*-clad room. Other photos show mothers with children in tow, men and women harvesting ripened rice stalks (fig. 1.1), women posing for portraits in trendy Western-style fashions, and a boys' baseball team, their white uniforms smudged with dirt. The issue included images of urban cityscapes, with multi-story buildings and streets filled with gleaming automobiles, but it also included images of people living in *barakku* (shacks built out of debris from the bombed ruins) and rebuilding their homes and businesses that had been destroyed by war (fig. 1.2). Together, the photographs in the 1948 *ARS Shashin Nenkan* present readers with a composite portrait of Japan and its people in the early postwar that captures its complexity.

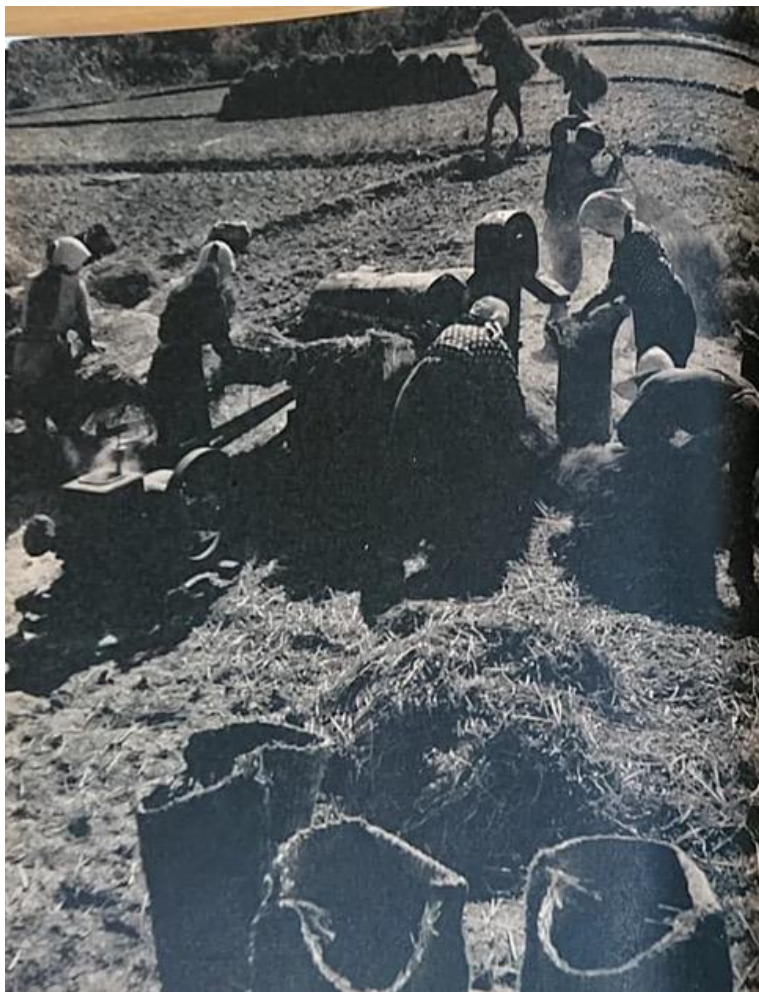


Figure 1.1. Okazeri Kiyoshi. “Harvesting” (Toriire). *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, 1948.



Figure 1.2. Saeki Keisaburō. “Rebuilding” (Saiken). *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, 1948.

Given that ARS published the annual in 1948, it is also important to note what *did not* appear in the photos, at least in any overt representation: namely, the American-led Allied Occupation of Japan (1945-1952). There are no GIs in uniform walking down city streets or standing guard in front of buildings requisitioned for the Occupier’s use. Neither are there pictures of MacArthur emerging from GHQ (General Headquarters) or American flags fluttering above Occupied buildings. At first glance, in fact, it would have been hard to discern from this diverse collection of photos that Japan was under foreign military occupation at all. But a closer inspection of the photographs reveals subtle clues to America’s presence—and its cultural influence: jeeps parked in Marunouchi (the location of GHQ) (fig. 1.3), a Japanese woman holding design sketches of Western fashion (fig. 1.4), a child with blonde pigtail braids, and a *pan pan* sex worker loitering in an urban street.<sup>2</sup> Even though images of GIs and other Allied

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<sup>2</sup> The etymology of the term *pan pan* is unclear; however, according to one source, Imperial Japanese troops used “*pan pan*” to refer to native prostitutes in Japan’s South Pacific island colonies. Following the arrival of Allied Occupation forces, the term was adopted to designate sex workers whose clientele were American GIs. According to

personnel were absent from the annual, in short, other symbols of the Occupation lurked within its pages, indicating not only the Occupier's pervasive presence in Japanese cities, but also the American influences that were steadily infiltrating Japanese culture.



Figure 1.3. Iwamoto Keitarō. “A Morning in Marunouchi” (Marunouchi no asa). *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, 1948.

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Sarah Kovner, most Japanese today associate them strictly with Occupation personnel due to visual and literary representations of *pan pan*. For more, see Sarah Kovner, *Occupying Power: Sex Workers and Servicemen in Postwar Japan* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013).



Figure 1.4. Miyake Kiyoshi. “Modern Woman” (Kindai josei). *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, 1948.

Photographers were extraordinarily active and astute in documenting and interpreting Japan’s recovery from war and the complex engagement between Japan and the U.S. in the immediate postwar. This dissertation examines the role that their photographs played in re-imaging Japanese cultural identity after Japan’s defeat in war and during its subsequent Occupation. In this study, I use the term “re-image” to describe photographers’ attempts to visualize a new Japanese culture in the early postwar. “Image,” as a verb, means “to make an image of; to photograph.” By arguing that photographers “re-imaged” Japanese culture and society, I place emphasis on the creation of a “new” image of Japan formed in contrast to notions of Japanese-ness that predominated in the wartime and prewar eras. This dissertation, then, considers how Japanese photographers imagined their role as documentarians at this pivotal moment in their nation’s history; what subjects they recorded, and what trends and techniques

they employed to photograph these subjects; what new image(s) of Japan emerged from their photos; and what effect the Occupation had on photographic production and the circulation of images.

This dissertation also investigates the photographs of American military and civilian personnel and photojournalists who lived in Japan during the Occupation. How did these photographers represent Japan? How did these representations differ from images the Japanese took of themselves? How did American photographers portray the Occupation, and what does this reveal about American ideas of the Occupation's role in Japan? Examining the images that Japanese and American photographers took of each other gives us a sense of how they perceived one another; and it also offers us clues to how Japanese photographers tacitly challenged American authority, thereby revealing that Occupation hegemony was anything but monolithic and absolute.

The Japanese photographers examined for this study lived at a time of intense social upheaval. Two words define life in Japan immediately after the war: *yakeato* (burned ruins) and *kyodatsu* (a mental state of numbness and despair). The American bombing raids that had targeted 66 cities left over 8 million people homeless.<sup>3</sup> Millions faced starvation as people relied on black markets that sprang up across cities to supplement meager food rations.<sup>4</sup> Prostitution became a steady source of income for many women, while orphaned children shined shoes or found jobs with the local *yakuza* running the black markets, and while visibly wounded, white-

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<sup>3</sup> Bartlett E. Kerr, *Flames over Tokyo: The U.S. Army Air Forces' Incendiary Campaign Against Japan, 1944-1945* (New York: D.I. Fine, 1991), 280-281.

<sup>4</sup> Sixty thousand black market stalls blanketed Tokyo by the beginning of 1946, most of them at or near the major train stations in the city. See Edward Seidensticker, *Tokyo Rising: The City since the Great Earthquake* (New York: Knopf: Distributed by Random House, 1990).



robed repatriated soldiers begged in the streets.<sup>5</sup> Throughout the late 1940s, over 6.6 million soldiers and sailors were repatriated from Japan's former empire, exacerbating the severe material shortages and rampant economic inflation that affected almost every aspect of society.<sup>6</sup> The precariousness of society produced numerous social problems: many found outlets of escape in alcohol and drug abuse, and rates of robbery and theft increased dramatically from prewar levels.<sup>7</sup>

As Japanese citizens struggled to rebuild from the *yakeato* of the early postwar, the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) went to great lengths to ensure that the war Japan had waged would be its last by pursuing demilitarization and democratization policies: promoting land reform and redistribution, dismantling industrial and financial conglomerates (*zaibatsu*), introducing universal suffrage, and writing a Japanese Constitution. Article Nine of the Constitution renounced war and banned Japan from maintaining any type of armed forces. The Emperor disavowed his divinity, transforming him from a divine sovereign over Japanese subjects to a figurehead who drew his power from the sovereignty of the people. In short, SCAP instituted sweeping reforms to dismantle Japan's military government and set the stage for the creation of a new democratic polity.

In addition to an American-imposed political system, SCAP endeavored to democratize Japan by establishing American "cultural hegemony."<sup>8</sup> In one instance, Occupation officials,

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<sup>5</sup> Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present*, third edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 226.

<sup>6</sup> Takemae Eiji, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2003), 110.

<sup>7</sup> Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan*, 227.

<sup>8</sup> Ochi Hiromi, "What Did She Read?: The Cultural Occupation of Post-War Japan and Translated Girls' Literature," *F-GENS Jānaru: Frontiers of Gender Studies* 5 (2006), 359-363. Ji Hee Jung, "Seductive Alienation: The American Way of Life Rearticulated in Occupied Japan," *Asian Studies Review* 42:3, (2018): 498-516.



keenly aware of the power of entertainment, used Hollywood film to offer up American culture as a benchmark of civilization and cultural enlightenment, believing that it offered “the best guidebook with which to learn about American culture.”<sup>9</sup> As well, SCAP’s Civil Information and Education Section (CI&E) screened documentary films that educated Japanese audiences on American government, technological advances, and popular forms of recreation and entertainment. However, as Tsuchiya Yuka notes, Japanese audiences were less attentive to the documentary films’ political messages than they were to “the material prosperity of American society and its comfortable ‘civilized’ life,” which they hoped to emulate.<sup>10</sup>

At the same time, of course, SCAP placed heavy censorship constraints on Japanese film, photography, and other media. In November 1945, the Occupation banned 236 Japanese films under the Memorandum Concerning the Elimination of Undemocratic Motion Pictures.<sup>11</sup> Photography magazines were kept in line by strict censorship practices that forbade editors from publishing any critical or negative portrayal of the Occupation. But because SCAP withheld exact guidelines for what could and could not be published from the Japanese media, magazine editors practiced self-censorship rather than risk incurring severe penalties for violating censorship edicts.

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<sup>9</sup> Kitamura Hiroshi, “America’s Racial Limits: U.S. Cinema and the Occupation of Japan,” *The Japanese Journal of American Studies* 23 (2012): 141. Kitamura builds on research that examines SCAP’s efforts to control cultural expression in order to influence Japanese public opinion.

<sup>10</sup> Tsuchiya Yuka. “Imagined America in Occupied Japan: (Re-)Educational Films Shown by the U.S. Occupation Forces to the Japanese, 1948-1952,” *The Japanese Journal of American Studies* 13 (2002): 193-213.

<sup>11</sup> At the same time, the CI&E released a list of themes that would be banned under the Occupation, including militarism, anti-democratic sentiments, revenge as a motive, nationalism, anti-foreign sentiments, distortion of historical fact, racial or religious discrimination, feudal loyalty, suicide, subjugation or degradation of women, the triumph of brutality, violence, evil, exploitation of children, and anything that went against the Potsdam Declaration or SCAP directives. The application of these rules was highly arbitrary, to say the least. For example, the CI&E censored sword fights because swords conveyed themes of revenge and loyalty in Japanese cinema. In contrast, censors allowed the depiction of gun violence because gunfights were used to administer justice and restore order in Western cinema. See Hirano Kyoko, “The Banning of Japanese Period Films by the American Occupation,” *Japan Society of Image Arts and Sciences* 1 (1987):197.

From the radical reforms that the Occupation enacted, to the prohibitions it placed on Japanese society and cultural production, and on to the idealized “American way of life” upheld as the model for democratic societies, America was a looming presence in early postwar Japanese society. This presence, together with the sudden collapse of Japan’s empire and its defeat in war, caused those living in 1945 to feel that their way of life had been turned completely upside down.<sup>12</sup> Japan’s defeat after nearly a decade of total war resulted in the destruction of its political, social, and cultural institutions, forcing the Japanese to reconsider their national and cultural identity. Against this background—despite material shortages, rampant inflation, and the Occupation’s surveillance of the media—Japan’s photo world flourished.

Photography magazines, which had been forcibly merged or suspended during the war, restarted publication only a few months after Japan’s defeat. The magazines were integral to the revival of amateur and professional photography, providing a means of instruction to novices and circulating images among a nationwide network of photographers. Amateurs originally returned to art photography styles that had been suppressed by the wartime government, while the professionals who had been compelled to produce wartime propaganda returned to straightforward, documentary photography. By 1950, however, amateur and professional alike began to turn increasingly to documenting society, urged to do so by the realism movement spearheaded by Domon Ken (1909-1990), as well as a keen interest in American photojournalism and European human-interest photographers.

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<sup>12</sup> Sharalyn Orbaugh, *Japanese Fiction of the Allied Occupation: Vision, Embodiment, Identity* (Leiden; Boston: BRILL, 2012). However, recent scholarship has cautioned against defining 1945 as a point of total rupture, as evidenced by use of the term “transwar” to investigate continuities between pre- and postwar Japan. For example, see Jonathan E. Abel, *Redacted: The Archives of Censorship in Transwar Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), Michael P. Cronin, *Osaka Modern: The City in the Japanese Imaginary* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Published by the Harvard University Asia Center, 2017), Miriam Kingsberg Kadia, *Into the Field: Human Scientists of Transwar Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2020), and Max Ward and Reto Hoffman, *Transwar Asia: Ideology, Practices, and Institutions, 1920-1960* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022).

Photography proved to be a popular activity among Americans as well. As Lucy Herndon Crockett observed in 1949, “the Army of the Occupation is extensively armed—with Kodaks, Leicas and Speed Graphics.”<sup>13</sup> Many GIs took photographs to document their experiences in Japan, while others recorded Japanese society on assignment as military or civilian personnel. In addition, several American correspondents took up residence in Japan, submitting their photographs to *Life* magazine and other news weeklies, as well as to the *Pacific Stars and Stripes*—a daily newspaper that reports on the activities of the U.S. Armed Forces. And in one instance, photojournalist Horace Bristol (1908-1997) established his own photo agency: the East-West Photo Agency. Taken together, the American photographers who roamed Occupied Japan produced a rich visual archive of Japan under Occupation, and one that has remained largely unexplored until now.

#### Methods and Sources: Intertextuality and Photography Magazines

Few historians have systematically interrogated the photographic record of the Allied Occupation—and this is perhaps not that surprising. Since historians are traditionally trained to analyze written documents, they often lack the requisite visual literacy to offer compelling analysis of photographs. Moreover, contemporary society is so saturated with visual media that photographs are taken for granted, given little more than a fleeting glance in our day-to-day lives.<sup>14</sup> However, as Peter Burke asserts, images are actually important historical documents that

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<sup>13</sup> Lucy Herndon Crockett, *Popcorn on the Ginza: An Informal Portrait of Postwar Japan* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1949), 99.

<sup>14</sup> J. Robert Davison, “Turning a Blind Eye: The Historian’s Use of Photographs,” *The Past in Focus: Photography & British Columbia, 1858-1914* no. 52 (1981/82): 17.

“bear witness to past forms of religion, knowledge, belief, delight and so on,” and thus “allow us, posterity, to share the non-verbal experiences or knowledge of past cultures.”<sup>15</sup>

More specifically, an investigation into the production and consumption of photographs pursues an important avenue of research regarding questions related to how people and communities construct identity. The camera has been employed as a tool for self-representation since its invention in the nineteenth century. According to Kathryn Woodward, self-representation through photographic images enables us to “make sense of our experience and of who we are.”<sup>16</sup> This is because representation is a cultural process that employs signifying practices and symbolic systems “through which meanings are produced and which position us as subjects.” Symbolic systems of representation are also important for marking differences between “us” and “them.”<sup>17</sup> As cultural theorist Stuart Hall and others have argued, denoting difference is integral to the process of identity formation because it allows us to mediate our own self-image (i.e., what we *are*) against the “Other” (i.e., what we *are not*).<sup>18</sup> Photography, then, is a way to “express and articulate our own particularity and difference.”<sup>19</sup>

In examining the works of Japanese photographers, we must analyze not only *what* was represented but *how* it was represented in order to understand how the images articulated new

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<sup>15</sup> Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence*, first edition (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), 13.

<sup>16</sup> Kathryn Woodward, “Concepts of Identity and Difference,” in *Identity and Difference*, ed. Kathryn Woodward (London: Sage Publications, 1997), 14.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 15-33.

<sup>18</sup> Stuart Hall, “The Spectacle of the ‘Other,’” in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed. Stuart Hall (London: Sage Publications, 1997), 235.

<sup>19</sup> Derrick Price, “Surveyors and Surveyed: Photography Out and About,” in *Photography: A Critical Introduction*, ed. Liz Wells, second edition (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 108.

notions of Japanese-ness.<sup>20</sup> This brings us to the question of “reading” photographs. Scholars of visual culture emphasize the need to read the photograph as a text in order to grasp its meaning. This meaning is constructed, according to Graham Clarke, through “a ‘photographic discourse’: a language of codes which involves its own grammar and syntax.”<sup>21</sup> The active reading of the photographic discourse necessitates analyzing “denotative” and “connotative” meaning. Denotation is what we “see” in the photograph: a person, an object, a landscape, a facial expression. Connotation is the meaning expressed by these literal details through the photographer’s manipulation of composition and form: elements such as focus, light, line, angle, background/middle ground/foreground, perspective, tonal contrast, and so on. These elements are the grammar and syntax of photography, “which are themselves the reflection of a wider, underlying process of signification.”<sup>22</sup>

To understand the wider process of signification—in other words, to infer meaning from the photographic discourse—the historian must situate the image within the broader socio-cultural-historical context that it references and relates.<sup>23</sup> The images examined for this dissertation did not appear in isolation; they were published alongside others in photobooks, magazines, weekly news pictorials, and daily newspapers. Historian Elspeth Brown argues that we “anchor” a photograph’s meaning by considering this wider context in which the photograph

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<sup>20</sup> Mike Crang, “Picturing Practices: Research through the Tourist Gaze,” *Progress in Human Geography* 21, 3 (1997): 360.

<sup>21</sup> Graham Clarke, *The Photograph* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 27.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

appeared.<sup>24</sup> Here, we are concerned not merely with individual images, but how such images work together to create meaning within a broader visual framework—that is, “intertextuality.”

As Gillian Rose puts it, intertextual analysis explores “the way that meanings of any one discursive image or text depend not only on that one image or text, but also on the meanings carried by other images and texts.”<sup>25</sup> In applying intertextuality to photo magazines, we will examine the denotative and connotative meanings of individual photographs, but more than this we will be attentive as well to captions, the placement of images on the page, the relationship of individual images to surrounding images and text (i.e., juxtaposition), the sequencing of images in magazines, and discussion of the images in articles and essays. Such a holistic approach to photographic analysis reveals how photographs worked together to construct “views of the social world” in a given time and place.<sup>26</sup>

By way of example, let us conduct a brief intertextual analysis of the May 1950 issue of *Asahi Kamera*. Like most photo magazines published at the time, the issue contains a diverse array of subjects and photographic styles. The readers see portraits of male literary figures and *yōga* (Western painting) artists as well as women wearing trendy Western-style fashions; urban cityscapes that portray the bustling Ginza district and landscapes of isolated villages in the rural north; Japanese actresses performing in a French opera and male Kabuki actors on stage; the ornate architecture of Shinto shrines, cherry blossoms in full bloom, and the moon rising over autumn foliage; and a special feature on the photographic works of American Imogen

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<sup>24</sup> Elspeth H. Brown. Appendix A: “Reading the Visual Record,” in *Looking for America*, ed. Ardis Cameron (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 368.

<sup>25</sup> Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials* (London: Sage Publications, 2001), 136.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

Cunningham (1883-1976), as well as photographs from the European Theater of World War Two provided by the U.S. Army Signal Corps.

What meaning can we derive from these seemingly disparate images? Let us analyze a few photos in detail and consider their intertextual relationship to one another, beginning with an image from Kageyama Matsuhiro's photo story on "capturing the expression of the street" (*gaitō no hyōjō o tsukamu*) (fig. 1.5). In the photo, Kageyama has zoomed in on a group of women and two men on the sidewalk. The close-up perspective and tight cropping conveys the energetic vibe of an urban street teeming with pedestrians, and also allows the viewer to notice details within the image. The women wear stylish Western fashions: button-up blouses, headscarves cinched over permed hair, warm winter coats, gloves, and dark lipstick. Two men stand on either side of the frame, separated by a woman in the middle. On the right is a Japanese man caught in an unguarded moment with a vacant expression on his face. On the left is a GI in military uniform smoking a cigarette. Because he walks slightly behind the others, the tall form of the GI towers over the group, reaching to the top of the frame.

The editors placed a caption immediately above the GI in which the photographer proclaims that "it is only women of the postwar clique (*sengo-ha*) who can walk down the street with swagger" and that he "can't stand the sight of weak [Japanese] men with no money." Reading the caption and the image together, it is clear that Kageyama is addressing a pressing social issue: masculine insecurity vis-à-vis the occupying American "Other." He has achieved this in two different ways: First, the photo itself connotes a hierarchical relationship between the two men—and by extension, the U.S. and Japan—due to the higher position of the GI within the frame. Second, the photo and caption together impel the reader to draw a contrast between the

impoverished appearance of Japanese men and the stylish affluence of women clothed in fashions ostensibly introduced by the American Occupiers.



Figure 1.5. Kageyama Mitsuhiro. From “Kamera no sekisho: Gaitō no hyōjō o tsukamu.” *Asahi Kamera*, May 1950.

Now let us consider this image in relation to others in the issue. Towards the beginning of the issue, the editors followed a photo story on Ginza, a Tokyo neighborhood that had long been a symbol of urban cosmopolitanism in Japan, with a feature on Dwight D. Eisenhower’s book *The Crusade in Europe* (1948). The photos in the latter show scenes of war in Europe that emphasize the raw power of the American military; but the series on Ginza conveys America’s authority in a more nuanced way. Here, the editors juxtaposed two photos of Ginza. The image on the left takes up nearly the entire page. The photographer took it from a high vantage point, providing an expansive view of the bustling commercial district. Cars and trolleys move down a broad avenue lined with multi-story buildings that fill nearly a third of the frame. The photo on



the right, on the other hand, takes up slightly less than half the page. Here, the photographer has provided a street-level view of foreigners waiting at a bus stop outside the Tokyo Post Exchange (PX). Only two Japanese women are in the frame; the rest are American women in high heels and calf-length skirts and men in military uniforms. Behind them, the window displays of the PX have been shuttered, connoting the barrier erected between the material goods contained within the store and the Japanese who were excluded from entering the premises.

The juxtaposition of these two images of Ginza locates American authority in Japan by displaying the Occupier's physical presence in the heart of Tokyo. During the Occupation, SCAP requisitioned the upscale Wakō department store and turned it into the Tokyo PX, which quickly became an iconic symbol of American material affluence. The aura of American authority is further reinforced when considering these two photos together with the spread on *The Crusade in Europe* and Kageyama's image of the tall GI. The captions attached to the photos of Ginza further complicate the projection of American authority by posing an implicit challenge to the hegemony of American material culture. "No matter how much [Ginza] follows foreign influences," reads the text, "it is still Oriental and it is still Japan."<sup>27</sup> This tacit rebuff is reflected in the size of the two juxtaposed images. The cityscape view of Ginza, which provides no evidence of the Occupier's presence, takes up the entire left page, drawing the eye away from the smaller image of Allied personnel on the right.

We can see in these examples how editors added meaning to photographs through juxtaposition, the sizing of photographs, and captions. Editors also added meaning by sequencing

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<sup>27</sup> Other important elements in this issue are worth mentioning. A photograph of a man working at a stone quarry and one in a factory point to Japan's industrial recovery, and simultaneously ascribe to men the role of worker. Women, it should be noted, are depicted throughout the issue in the kitchen or with children—in other words, in domestic roles of housewife and mother. One of the few exceptions to this is a photograph of a woman seated among a group of male intellectuals, including Japan Socialist Party member Katayama Tetsu (1887-1978). However, the caption only reveals her identity as the wife of famed artist Kaburagi Kiyokata (1878-1972), not even providing her given name.

photographs. The issue of *Asahi Kamera* that we have been examining opens with a color photograph by Ōtake Shōji of Japanese actresses in lavish costumes. The caption informs us that they are performing in *Carmen*, a French opera first performed in Paris in 1875. The placement of the photo at the very front of the magazine—and the fact that it is the only color photo in the issue—strongly suggests the importance of cultural cosmopolitanism to the reconstruction of Japanese cultural identity. Then, when we look at the rest of the issue, we see more examples that connote cosmopolitanism: a special feature on the works of Imogen Cunningham, an American photographer known for her strong modernist aesthetic, and photographs of Queen Elizabeth II with Prince Charles.

The editors have sequenced these photos with images that invoke icons symbolic of traditional Japan: cherry blossoms in full bloom at the Dōkan-bori Moat outside the Imperial Palace, two men eating *bentō* (boxed) lunches underneath cherry trees, the ornate Yōmeimon Gate at the Tōshō-gū shrine in Nikko, and a full moon rising in a clear sky on an autumn night. The sequencing of these iconic symbols with photographs of the French opera, Queen Elizabeth, and Cunningham's work suggests that "traditional" Japan and cultural cosmopolitanism were equally important to the re-imaging of Japanese cultural identity following war, defeat, occupation.<sup>28</sup>

The intertextual analysis above, although brief, demonstrates the methodology that this dissertation employs to interpret images published in postwar photography magazines and other visual media from the Occupation era. The issue of *Asahi Kamera* that we have just examined is typical of the source materials at the core of this dissertation. We will be examining primarily photography magazines published between 1945 and 1955, among them *Kamera* (*Camera*),

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<sup>28</sup> Jennifer Robertson, "It Takes a Village: Internationalization and Nostalgia in Postwar Japan," in *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*, ed. Stephen Vlastos (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 128.

*Asahi Kamera* (Asahi Camera), *Foto Āto* (Photo Art), *ARS Shashin Nenkan* (ARS Camera Annual), *Kōga Gekkan* (Japan Photography), *Amachua Shashin Sōsho* (Amateur Photography Series), and *Shashin Techō* (Photography Notebook). In addition to these, we will be consulting illustrated news pictorials, photobooks, newspapers, essays, and oral histories. Because the dissertation also analyzes photographs taken by Allied military and civilian service members, as well as American photojournalists, it utilizes photobooks and online digital repositories of American photographs, in addition to American news media, such as *Life* and the *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, and military orientation films produced for Occupation personnel.

Photographs are central to the story of how Japanese re-imaged cultural identity during the Occupation—not simply as expressive illustrations, but as objects of historical meaning. As the first systematic study of early postwar photography magazines in the English language, this dissertation adds to a growing body of research on Japanese culture and identity in the Occupation period by investigating how individuals, in this case photographers, experienced cultural change and used image-making as a means to negotiate identity in a time of extreme societal upheaval. As such, this dissertation lies at the intersection of studies on the Occupation, Japanese photography, and Japanese cultural history.

### Literature Review

Historian Mark Metzler divides the historiography of the Allied Occupation into three generations. The first generation comprised former SCAP officials, who crafted a narrative of success regarding the initial Occupation policies of demilitarization and democratization. Two typical examples of this are: *Japan's Political Revolution under MacArthur: A Participant's Account* (1979) by Justin Williams, the chief of the Government Section's Legislative Division, who attributed the success of Japan's democratization to General Douglas MacArthur's

leadership; and *The Allied Occupation of Japan 1945-1952 and Japanese Religion* (1972) by William P. Woodward, an officer in the Religious Division of the CI&E, who offers a detailed account of SCAP's efforts to establish religious freedom in Japan.

The second generation of scholarship re-evaluated the seeming success of Occupation policies. Heavily influenced by America's role in the Vietnam War, these scholars questioned the validity of SCAP-imposed democratic reforms and situated the Occupation period along a longer continuum of American imperialism.<sup>29</sup> Key texts from this generation of scholarship include Joe Moore's *Japanese Workers and the Struggle for Power, 1945-1947* (1983), Michael Schaller's *The American Occupation in Japan: The Origins of the Cold War in Asia* (1987), John Dower's *Empire and Aftermath: Yoshida Shigeru and the Japanese Experience, 1878-1954* (1988), and Howard Schonberger's *Aftermath of War: Americans and the Remaking of Japan, 1945-1952* (1989). Applying a more critical assessment than the previous generation of scholarship, Dower, Schaller, and others draw attention to the anti-communist "reverse course," asserting that the shift to more conservative policies was a betrayal of the democratic policies implemented in the first years of the Occupation.<sup>30</sup>

The first two generations of scholarship on the Allied Occupation concentrated on political, diplomatic, and economic history, giving scant attention to the dynamics of Japanese society under foreign military control. However, the cultural turn in the humanities and social sciences from the 1980s fostered a third generation of scholarship that addressed the effects of the Occupation on Japanese society and culture. John Dower's *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* set the stage for this next generation. In his award-winning book, Dower

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<sup>29</sup> Mark Metzler, "The Occupation," in *A Companion to Japanese History*, ed. William Tsutsui (Blackwell Companions to World History. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2007), 266.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. As Metzler notes, the older generation of scholarship criticized the new, more critical history, claiming that it was "revisionist."

argues that Japan readily embraced defeat because the Japanese were, quite simply, exhausted after nearly a decade of total war. He identifies numerous “cultures of defeat” that arose from the deep-seated exhaustion that Japanese felt: intellectuals who embraced Marxism, artists and writers who descended into hedonism, and women who became sex workers. Dower further asserts that Japanese people thought and behaved differently in the new postwar world as a result of their liberation from Japan’s wartime past—but also due to the influences of an “American-style consumer culture” that spread throughout Japanese society.<sup>31</sup> As the Japanese “embraced defeat,” Dower asserts, they were conscious of the need to reinvent their lives along with their nation.

*Embracing Defeat* laid the groundwork for subsequent studies on the Occupation that have investigated the social and cultural interactions between Occupier and Occupied as well as the postwar (re)construction of Japanese identity. Literary scholars Michael Molasky and Sharalyn Orbaugh have examined how Japanese authors used literature to negotiate the humiliating experience of defeat and occupation, and the postwar identity crisis that ensued. Noting a distinction between male and female authors, Molasky asserts that the former used metaphors of rape to ensure that Japanese men were included among the victims of the foreign Occupation.<sup>32</sup> Orbaugh, on the other hand, argues that the Occupation acted as a mirror to Japanese authors who defined Japanese identity vis-à-vis the foreign “Other.”<sup>33</sup> Similarly, cultural sociologist Yoshimi Shunya makes the case that postwar Japanese national identity was formed in direct relation to and interaction with the constant, domineering presence of American

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<sup>31</sup> John Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*, first edition (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1999), 138.

<sup>32</sup> Michael Molasky, *The American Occupation of Japan and Okinawa: Literature and Memory* (London New York: Routledge. 2003).

<sup>33</sup> Orbaugh, *Japanese Fiction of the Allied Occupation*.

forces.<sup>34</sup> This dissertation builds on the work of these authors and others by examining how Japanese photographers represented the Occupation in their images, and what their depictions of the occupying American “Other” reveal about the process of (re)constructing Japanese cultural identity under a foreign military occupation.

One key lens of scholarly inquiry has been trained on relations between Occupier and Occupied—focusing specifically on gender roles and sexuality.<sup>35</sup> Mire Koikari looks at the experience of working- and middle- class women, concluding that many Japanese and American women “developed close working relationships and sometimes strong personal bonds” in ways that could reinforce and challenge Occupation authority.<sup>36</sup> A larger body of scholarship has focused on fraternization: Sarah Kovner demonstrates that sex workers who catered to Allied personnel played a key role in Japan’s postwar economic recovery;<sup>37</sup> Sakamoto Rumi considers representations of *pan pan* sex workers in post-Occupation literature, revealing that they might have been “victims” of the Occupation, but that they also exhibited material ambition and opportunism;<sup>38</sup> and Tanaka Masakazu questions how *pan pan* operated within the power

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<sup>34</sup> Yoshimi Shunya, “What Does ‘America’ Mean in Postwar Japan?,” *Nanzan Review of American Studies* 30 (2008).

<sup>35</sup> See also Lisa Yoneyama, “Liberation under Siege: U.S. Military Occupation and Japanese Women’s Enfranchisement,” *American Quarterly* 57 (2005), Jan Bardsley, *Women and Democracy in Cold War Japan* (London: Bloomsbury Academic Publishing, 2014), and Mark McLelland, *Love, Sex, and Democracy in Japan during the American Occupation* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012).

<sup>36</sup> Mire Koikari, *Pedagogy of Democracy: Feminism and the Cold War in the U.S. Occupation of Japan* (Temple University Press, 2009), 79.

<sup>37</sup> Kovner, *Occupying Power*.

<sup>38</sup> Sakamoto Rumi, “Pan-pan Girls: Humiliating Liberation in Postwar Japanese Literature,” *Portal: Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies* 7, no. 2 (2010), <https://doi.org/10.5130/portal.v7i2.1515>.

relations between Japan and the U.S., arguing that they were an “intermediary” between the American military and Japanese citizens.<sup>39</sup>

Several studies have examined the indirect encounters between Occupier and Occupied by examining SCAP’s attempts to exert American cultural hegemony through media such as film and literature. Ochi Hiromi investigates the American periodicals and translated literature that SCAP made available to young women, arguing that these works facilitated the promotion of American democracy and the American way of life. Ji Hee Jung, however, complicates the notion that they adopted American democratic lifestyles “wholly and with little resistance,” showing instead that Japanese expressed “ambivalence and dilemma” when encountering images of the American domestic ideal.<sup>40</sup> Kitamura Hiroshi and Tsuchiya Yuka, for their part, have examined SCAP’s effort to influence Japanese public opinion through film. Kitamura argues that the Occupation created racial hierarchies in Japan by employing Hollywood film that celebrated whiteness and white accomplishments, while downplaying or erasing the presence of non-white actors.<sup>41</sup> In her study of educational and documentary films, on the other hand, Tsuchiya argues that the films were “part of the American postwar project to export the ‘consensus culture’ overseas.”<sup>42</sup> However, Tsuchiya asserts as well that the films did not impose American cultural domination on Japan; instead, the audiences retained agency to interpret the films “for their own political interests,” viewing them as motivating “tools for material prosperity.”<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Tanaka Masakazu, “The Sexual Contact Zone in Occupied Japan: Discourses on Japanese Prostitutes or Panpan for U.S. Military Servicemen,” *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific* 31 (2012), <http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue31/tanaka.htm#n18>.

<sup>40</sup> Ji Hee Jung, “Seductive Alienation,” 501.

<sup>41</sup> Kitamura Hiroshi, “America’s Racial Limits.”

<sup>42</sup> Tsuchiya Yuka, “Imagined America in Occupied Japan,” 194.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

This dissertation will add to scholarship on social and cultural interactions between Japanese and Americans during the Occupation by showing that photography sparked lively encounters between Japanese and American photographers. This includes direct encounters that occurred as foreign correspondents traveled to and lived in Japan, as well as indirect encounters within the pages of photography magazines that introduced American (and European) photographers to Japanese readers. These encounters were not the result of the U.S. exerting “cultural hegemony” over Japan’s photographic world. Rather, photography magazines facilitated cross-cultural exchange by featuring the work of Americans and Europeans that drew the interest of Japanese photographers. These encounters had a lasting impact on photographic trends in Japan; in particular, Japanese photographers looked with interest to American photojournalism and European human-interest photography, which they then employed to offer a redefinition of Japanese-ness by recording people in moments of daily life.

While most of the aforementioned histories of the Occupation made use of photographs as a means of illustration, rarely did they examine the photographs in and of themselves. In fact, very few scholars at all have studied the Occupation *through* photography. The history of Japanese photography itself is a small but growing body of work. Anne Tucker’s edited volume *The History of Japanese Photography* provides a broad overview of Japanese art and documentary photography from the mid-nineteenth century to the twenty-first century;<sup>44</sup> and art historian Karen Fraser, in her sweeping study of the history of Japanese photography from the nineteenth century to the present, links shifts in photographic trends to Japan’s dynamic social history. Fraser argues that for the Japanese, the camera served as a significant tool in “documenting key cultural and political events of the past century and a half” and in exploring “social responses to cultural change.” Yet despite this claim, Fraser largely overlooks the

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<sup>44</sup> Anne Tucker, et al., *The History of Japanese Photography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).



Occupation period—arguably one of the most transformative periods in Japan’s modern history.<sup>45</sup>

Where scholarship on the postwar period is concerned, Marc Feustel and others offer an introduction to its major photographers and photographic trends in *Japan: A Self-Portrait*.<sup>46</sup> More pointedly, in his study of the works of Hamaya Hiroshi and Tōmatsu Shōmei, art historian Jonathan Reynolds foregrounds photography’s role in visualizing a new postwar national identity. In examining the quest of these two postwar photographers to document an authentic and traditional Japan in Niigata and Okinawa, respectively,<sup>47</sup> he shows how they re-imaged Japanese tradition by ignoring all evidence of Americanization. Like Fraser’s work, however, Reynolds’ study gives scant attention to the Occupation years, emphasizing instead the prewar and post-Occupation period.

Three scholars who have directly engaged the Occupation era are Iizawa Kōtarō, Julia Adeney Thomas, and Robin Gerster. In his essay on photography in the immediate postwar period, Iizawa argues that the realism movement led by Domon Ken and other photojournalists was a rejection of prewar art photography. Ironically, however, his analysis barely touches on the beginning of the Occupation era, ignoring completely the years from 1945 to 1950.<sup>48</sup> Thomas, for her part, does focus on the Occupation era, situating her work within the context of politics and modes of memory. She argues that photography was a political practice for photographers such as Domon Ken, who attempted to create reality by establishing political, social, and

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<sup>45</sup> Karen M. Fraser, *Photography and Japan*, first edition (London: Reaktion Books, 2011).

<sup>46</sup> Takeuchi Keiichi, Hiraki Osam, and Alain Sayag, *Japan: A Self Portrait*, ed. Marc Feustel (Paris: Flammarion, 2004).

<sup>47</sup> Jonathan Reynolds, *Allegories of Time and Space: Japanese Identity in Photography and Architecture* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2015).

<sup>48</sup> Iizawa Kōtarō, “The Evolution of Postwar Photography,” in *The History of Japanese Photography*, ed. Anne Tucker, Iizawa Kōtarō, and Kinoshita Naoyuki, (New Haven: Museum of Fine Arts Houston, 2003).

aesthetic norms within the realism movement.<sup>49</sup> Gerster, finally, looks to official Australian photography of the Occupation as his subject.<sup>50</sup> Like Shibusawa Naoko—who has argued that the American media cast Japan as female and child-like to support America’s position as a hegemon and to give Japan room to “grow up” into a democracy<sup>51</sup>—Gerster asserts that the Australian Occupiers captured Japan through a neo-colonial and Orientalist lens that constructed a “feminized” image of Japan. The image of a “feminized” Japan clearly emerged from the photos of the American Occupiers as well. However, as we shall discuss in Chapter VI, an examination of photographs taken by GIs reveals a much more complex, multifaceted perspective.

This project makes an original contribution to the scholarship on postwar Japanese photography as well as studies on Japanese culture and identity by demonstrating that photography played a key role in the re-imaging of Japanese cultural identity. I argue that the camera, in this sense, was a tool of culture. During the war, the military government had restricted free photographic expression. For this reason, photographers likened the end of the war to a “spring of freedom” (*jiyū no haru*) after the “long nightmare” (*nagaiai no akumu*) of the previous decade.<sup>52</sup> No longer subject to wartime constraints, amateurs returned to photography as an outlet of artistic expression.

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<sup>49</sup> Julia Adeney Thomas, “Power Made Visible: Photography and Postwar Japan’s Elusive Reality,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 67 (2008): 365–394.

<sup>50</sup> Robin Gerster, “Capturing Japan: Australian Photography of the Postwar Military Occupation,” *History of Photography* 39, no. 3 (2015): 279–299, and Melissa Miles and Robin Gerster, “Japan for the Taking: Images of the Occupation,” *Pacific Exposures Photography and the Australia-Japan Relationship* (Acton, ACT: Australian National University Press, 2018).

<sup>51</sup> Shibusawa Naoko, *America’s Geisha Ally: Reimagining the Japanese Enemy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

<sup>52</sup> “Arusu shuppan tayori,” *Kamera*, February 1946.

As well, many people picked up cameras for the first time, drawn to photography, according to photographer Kuwabara Kunio, as a form of cultural education (*bunka kyōiku*).<sup>53</sup> Creating a photograph did not simply entail pointing a camera at a subject and releasing the shutter. The photographic process involved wrapping undeveloped film around metal spools and developing negatives in large metal canisters, selecting negatives for printing, and then loading negatives into enlargers to transfer the image from negative to paper. The process of creating a photo continued in the darkroom, where photographers moved developing prints from trays filled with developer solution, to stop baths (to halt the development), and then to fixer chemicals (to ensure the paper wouldn't discolor over time), and finally hung finished prints to dry. From selecting a subject and releasing the shutter to developing negatives, and on to developing prints in the darkroom, photography was a creative process from start to finish.

Photographers also employed the camera as a tool of culture to re-image Japanese cultural identity. Writing in the 1948 *ARS Shashin Nenkan* introduced at the outset of this chapter, photographer Nagahama Keizō asserted that photos published in the annual and other photography magazines would contribute to the construction of a “new cultural nation” (*shin bunka kokka*) by projecting a “bright cultural Japan” (*akarui bunka nihon*).<sup>54</sup> A diverse portrait of Japan emerged out of their images. Photographers invoked symbols of tradition (e.g., rural villages, cherry blossoms, Buddhist monks) as well as icons of modernity (e.g., trendy fashions, movie theaters, urban neighborhoods). They photographed men and women at work, at home, and enjoying moments of leisure, and they snapped children at play. Moreover, their photos reflected both regional and national identities. Photographers documented the ethos of social and

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<sup>53</sup> “Hansei to zenshin,” *Kamera*. Quoted in Torihara Manabu, *Nihon shashin shi: Bakumatsu ishin kara kōdo seichō-ki made* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2013), 98.

<sup>54</sup> Nagahama Keizō, “Sengo no amachua shashinkai tenbo,” *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, 1948, 77-80.

economic recovery that the leadership of the Occupation cultivated, and they also captured the pathos of the early postwar years in scenes of poverty and material deprivation. Their images projected hopes for Japan's future and captured elements of Japan's wartime past that lingered into the postwar present. Finally, their photos illuminated changing social values and gender roles, foreign cultural influences, and life under the Occupation.

This dissertation builds as well on the research of Mire Koikari, Yoshimi Shunya, and others who have examined the “complex operations of power” of the Allied Occupation by investigating the photographs of Allied personnel and American photojournalists who documented what they saw and experienced in Japan.<sup>55</sup> Photo historians have long connected photography to systems of power like those exercised in military occupations because the photographer (i.e., the Occupier) gains control over the photographed subject (i.e., the Occupied) through the gaze.<sup>56</sup> Susan Sontag describes wielding a camera as a predacious act because “to photograph people is to violate them, by seeing them as they never see themselves, by having knowledge of them they can never have; it turns people into objects that can be symbolically possessed.”<sup>57</sup> John Urry likewise argues that the act of photographing is a means to “appropriate the object being photographed.” Describing the relationship between the photographer and the photographed subject as a “power/knowledge relationship,” Urry states that “photography tames

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<sup>55</sup> Koikari, *Pedagogy of Democracy*, 316.

<sup>56</sup> John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 7. Tagg locates the power of photography within regimes of looking relations by comparing the practice of photography to Foucault's idea of the panopticon. In his assessment, the state and other ruling institutions employ photography to assert social control by using it as a means of surveillance and as a tool of “disciplinary power.” See Tagg, *The Disciplinary Frame* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), xxvii. For an introduction to the relationship between photography and power, see Derrick Price, “Surveyors and Surveyed: Photography out and about,” *Photography: A Critical Introduction*, ed. Liz Wells, second Edition (London: Routledge, 1998), 65-116.

<sup>57</sup> Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Picador USA: Farrar, ZStraus and Giroux, 2001), 14.

the object of the gaze, the most striking examples being of exotic cultures.”<sup>58</sup> In this way, photography solidifies the relations of power between those who photograph and those who are objects of the camera’s gaze.<sup>59</sup>

A key element to the argument that photography functions as a tool of power is that only those in power possess cameras, thus monopolizing the ability to control how something or someone is represented. And yet, due to the global spread of photographic technology, the “Other” can also wield the camera to represent themselves and those in power.<sup>60</sup> In the case of the Occupation, the Allies did not have exclusive purview over photographic production; Japanese photographers could carry cameras freely as well. As Japanese and Americans encountered one another through the medium of photography, several socio-political factors informed the photographs that they took of each other: their transition from enemies to allies; Japan’s initial position as a defeated and Occupied nation; SCAP-imposed censorship and self-censorship that suppressed any negative or critical portrayals of the Occupation in the media; America’s emerging identity as a global superpower; and America’s continued military presence in Japan after the latter regained sovereignty in 1952.

### Dissertation Overview

This dissertation first examines the amateur and professional photographers who produced images of Japanese culture and society during the Occupation of Japan. Focused on published photos that circulated in photography magazines, it examines the constraints on photographic production imposed by the Occupation and the influences of Euro-American

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<sup>58</sup> John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London: Sage Publishing, 1990), 139.

<sup>59</sup> Tagg, *The Burden of Representation*, 12.

<sup>60</sup> Crang, “Picturing Practices,” 369.

photographers on photographic trends in Japan. It then turns to a close reading of the photographs themselves, looking in turn at photographs that Japanese photographers took of their own society and the Occupation, and then at photographs that the Occupiers took of themselves and Japan.

Chapter II, ““Sunday Photographers’: Amateurs, Magazines, and the Camera as a Tool of Culture,” introduces the amateurs and professionals who practiced photography in the early postwar era. It examines the reasons for photography’s widespread popularity among amateurs, outlines the prohibitions that SCAP placed on photography through censorship, and demonstrates the importance of photography magazines to the revival of Japanese photography in the postwar years. During the war, the military government constrained amateur photographers by suppressing free artistic expression and, in the case of professionals, going so far as to compel them to contribute to the production of propaganda. Photographers celebrated an end to state-imposed restrictions when the war ended; however, they were soon met with new restrictions, in the form of rigorous censorship under the Occupation—and especially censorship of portrayals of the Occupation that might mar its public image.

While SCAP-imposed censorship suppressed the publication of images that threatened to mar the Occupation’s authority, however, this did not hinder popular enthusiasm for photography or the publication of photography magazines. Magazines were fundamental to the revival of postwar photography because they provided a platform for photographers to exhibit their work and served as a technical manual for amateurs. Amateur photographers, for their part, were drawn to photography as an outlet for creative expression. Popular enthusiasm for photography flourished as a result, so much so that commentators began to question just what “amateur” photography meant in the postwar period. However, professionals and critics consistently

overlooked the work of women photographers. Accordingly, the work of male photographers dominated the pages of photography magazines.

Chapter III, “Nude Bodies, Photojournalism, and Documenting Daily Life: Cross-Cultural Encounters and Exchange in Photography Magazines,” investigates cross-cultural encounters between Euro-American and Japanese photographers, asking how these encounters influenced Japanese photographic trends. Here, I argue that photography magazines functioned as a contact zone by providing an opportunity for exchange between Western and Japanese photographers. These photographic contact zones facilitated encounter through multiple platforms: interviews and roundtable discussions of photographic trends; articles on and photo series by Western photographers; and images by both Western and Japanese photographers depicting Western material culture and landscapes. Such encounters directly influenced photographic trends in Japan, including the development of nude photography, photojournalism, and human-interest photography (i.e., photographing people in moments of daily life).

Chapter IV, “Japan’s Self-Image: Documenting Japanese Society,” examines the photographs that Japanese photographers took of Japanese people in moments of daily life. It reveals, first, that photographers considered their work essential to broader discussions of Japanese culture and identity. In essays and contest announcements, photographers called on their peers to represent Japan as a “new cultural nation” (*shin bunka kokka*). Magazines facilitated photographers’ ambition to re-image Japanese culture by providing space for images from photographers across Japan, and this in turn led to a multifaceted representation of Japanese culture and identity.

Photographers expressed this multifaceted image of Japan in several ways. They invoked icons of traditional Japan such as sumo wrestlers and *matsuri* celebrations. They celebrated

urban cosmopolitanism, but also complicated images of a new and “modern Japan” by photographing urban poverty and by recording traces of “old Japan” in metropolitan centers. Photographers depicted women in a number of roles: mothers and housewives, working women, modern women, and women clothed in American-style fashions that symbolized moments of encounter with the Occupation. On the other hand, photographs of Japanese men highlighted a dual male identity constructed vis-à-vis the occupying American presence. Images of disabled or elderly Japanese men printed next to images of American GIs or other symbols of the Occupation belied masculine insecurities. At the same time, images of brawny Japanese athletes who competed—and (sometimes) won—against the U.S. on a world stage represented a renewed masculine self-confidence and connoted an implicit challenge to America authority.

It is important to emphasize, of course, that these images were deliberately constructed. Accordingly, this chapter demonstrates that photographers manipulated the appearance of their subjects by carefully considering the formal elements of composition, taking multiple images to ensure the best shot of their subjects, and attempting to elicit specific emotional responses from viewers. This chapter also reveals that photographers marked “Otherness” in their photographs of white-robed repatriated soldiers, war and biracial orphans, and other subjects symbolic of war, defeat, and Occupation to illustrate what Japanese culture was *not*.

Chapter V, “The Gaze of the Occupied: Japanese Photographers Look at the Occupation,” aims to understand how the Japanese negotiated cultural identity by producing and consuming photographs that depicted the occupying American “Other.” It demonstrates that multiple “Americas” emerged from their images. Photographers cast America as a “liberating” presence from Japan’s wartime government by sequencing photos that recorded Japanese exercising free speech with images of American GIs walking down Japanese streets. America



also appeared as an “authoritative” presence in images of GIs and military parades. And photographs portrayed America’s “seducing” presence in seemingly affluent material cultures that contrasted with Japan’s *kyodatsu* condition.

As the Occupation came to a close, photographers began to portray America’s “problematic” presence in Japan. In September 1951, Japan and the U.S. signed a Security Treaty in conjunction with the San Francisco Peace Treaty that returned sovereignty to Japan. Under the Security Treaty, the U.S. committed to provide Japan with military protection, which it did in exchange for the continued occupation of Okinawa and the maintenance of hundreds of American military bases across the rest of Japan. No longer under the explicit authority of the Occupation, but still host to the American military, photographers and photographic media began to depict social problems connected to America’s continued military presence in Japan. By recording subjects such as crime, fraternization, and biracial orphans, photographers emphasized America’s “problematic” presence in what some scholars have labeled the “post-Occupation Occupation.”<sup>61</sup>

Chapter VI, “The Occupier’s Gaze: American Photographers Capture Japan,” analyzes the Occupiers’ impressions and views of Japan through the images of three photographers: Joe O’Donnell, John Bennett, and Horace Bristol. A U.S. Marine tasked with documenting Japan’s bombed cities with his official camera, O’Donnell carried a second camera for his personal use. With it, he documented the human cost of devastation—a cost that was conspicuously absent in official U.S. images. In so doing, O’Donnell shifted focus from the destructive potential of the U.S. military to the struggles of Japanese citizens as they began to rebuild their lives among the

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<sup>61</sup> This is a phrase used by Filmmaker Linda Hoaglund to describe the continued presence of American military personnel following a return to Japanese sovereignty in 1952. See Hoaglund, “Protest Art in 1950s Japan: The Forgotten Reportage Painters,” MIT Visualizing Cultures, accessed October 10, 2020. [https://visualizingcultures.mit.edu/protest\\_art\\_50s\\_japan/anp1\\_essay01.html](https://visualizingcultures.mit.edu/protest_art_50s_japan/anp1_essay01.html).

ruins. Bennett, meanwhile, focused his camera on evidence of economic recovery by photographing rebuilt commercial centers and multi-story buildings in downtown Tokyo. He also documented evidence of democratization in scenes of Japanese fathers taking a more active role in family life. In both instances, Bennett linked the changes that he witnessed directly to the “extraordinary success” of SCAP’s policies. Bristol, for his part, documented elements of traditional Japanese culture in his photobook *Tokyo on a Five Day Pass* (1951), but he interspersed such images with photos of Allied military personnel. By photographing Japan as distinctly subservient, feminine, and traditional, and by interweaving images of male Allied service members throughout his book, Bristol highlighted the hegemonic position of the U.S. in its postwar relationship with Japan.

Finally, Chapter VII, “The Occupier’s Self-Image: Portraying the U.S. as an International Leader in a Cold War World,” investigates the Occupation’s self-image documented in photographs published in news media such as *The Pacific Stars and Stripes* and *Life*. My analysis of these sources highlights several key themes: the U.S. as a victorious military power, as a progressive reformer and beacon of democratic principles, and as a benevolent protector of Japan. Such themes were informed, in part, by America’s new postwar national identity as a global superpower, especially in the emerging Cold War socio-political environment. To represent this new identity, the media printed photos of GIs in uniform and military tanks rolling through Japanese cities, as well as reports on female service members that projected notions of gender equality, reports on the efforts to democratize Japan, and articles on cross-cultural encounters between the Occupiers and the Occupied that positioned the U.S. as an international leader by emphasizing friendship and international goodwill.

In the turbulence of the first postwar decade, Japanese and American photographers were extraordinarily active and astute in documenting and interpreting the complex engagement of Japan with America. Photographers imprinted their impressions of this unique experience on film, portraying the ravages of defeat, the allure of American material culture, and the efforts to rebuild in a new postwar era. Japanese photographers were adept at visualizing the dramatic changes their nation was undergoing, and they have left us a discerning record of the cultural identity crisis that Japan experienced. American photographers, for their part, documented the devastated conditions of Japan at the end of the war, as well as the Occupation's role in facilitating Japan's rapid recovery. By taking a close look at the photographs taken by the Occupied Japanese and the Occupying Americans alike, we gain valuable insight into how these strange bedfellows perceived, experienced, and documented each other at the moment of this epochal historical encounter.

## CHAPTER II

### “SUNDAY PHOTOGRAPHERS”: AMATEURS, MAGAZINES, AND PHOTOGRAPHY AS A TOOL OF CULTURE

In 1954 *Kōga Gekkan* (*The Photographic Monthly*) printed a directory of photographers in their January and February issues (fig. 2.1). The listing included a dentist from Tokyo, a high school teacher from Osaka, and an electrician from Nishinomiya City. There was also a *ryokan* (inn) manager from Fukuoka and a café employee from Okayama, as well as a magazine editor, a college student, and a newspaper staff photographer. The hometowns of these photographers were nearly as varied as their occupations. They hailed from the port city of Kobe, from mountainous Matsumoto, from Moji near the Seto Inland Sea, and from the capital city of Tokyo. Their skill sets varied as well: among them, there were amateurs, semi-professionals, and full-time professionals. In short, the photographers in the directory differed in occupation, residence, educational background, age, and technical expertise. However, they were united by one thing: their passion for photography.



Figure 2.1. *Kōga Gekkan*, January 1954.

This chapter contextualizes the early postwar world of photography in Japan as it developed after the Asia-Pacific War and under foreign military occupation. Paying particular attention to the demographic of amateur photographers, who were perceived as playing a fundamental role in developing postwar photographic trends and techniques, I ask the following questions: Who was taking photographs at this time? What were their primary motivations for engaging in the act of photo-taking? How did photographs circulate among photo enthusiasts? And what impact did the Allied Occupation have on the production and circulation of photographs?

At the end of the war, amateur and professional alike welcomed liberation from wartime restrictions on photography. Despite the devastation that had ravaged Japan's social, political, and economic landscape, photographers were quick to pick up their cameras once again—and many Japanese acquired cameras and began taking pictures for the first time. Photographer Nagahama Keizō wrote in 1948 that everything had changed dramatically in Japan following its defeat, with one exception: the world of photography. But why was photography exempt from change, Nagahama asked? He reasoned that it had to have been natural for the Japanese to seek comfort in their cameras as they first processed the “forced oppression” of their lives under a military government and then their struggles through the *kyodatsu* conditions that permeated life following Japan's surrender. It was surely the experience of war and defeat, Nagahama concluded, that fueled the “photography fever” spreading across the nation.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Nagahama Keizō, “Sengo no amachua shashinkai tenbo” *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, 77. According to Susan Sontag, photography can be a “defense against anxiety” as well as “a tool of power.” The act of photo-taking and the physical possession of photographs, Sontag argues, “give people an imaginary possession of a past that is unreal” and “also help people to take possession of a space in which they are insecure. This was undoubtedly true for Nagahama Keizō, who believed that amateurs and professionals picked up their cameras as a defense mechanism of sorts against wartime traumas and the dismal social and economic conditions that besieged early postwar life. Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, 8-9.

As in the prewar period, amateurs in the early postwar years were drawn to photography because it offered an outlet for artistic expression. In interviews and roundtable discussions, amateurs lamented that painting and other artistic activities often demanded a level of training that was outside their grasp. But because cameras required little technical expertise to operate, they could engage in a creative cultural activity with ease. Engaging in photography as a creative activity, in turn, provided a cultural education (*bunka kyōiku*) for its practitioners. As Kobayashi Ikuo asserted, photography would improve the popular culture of the Japanese people (*nihonjin no taishū-teki bunka*).<sup>2</sup>

As popular enthusiasm for photography flourished, professionals and photo critics spoke of an amateur “boom” that had induced significant changes in Japanese photography. But the growing number of amateur photographers, in addition to their increasingly refined technical expertise vis-à-vis professionals, threw into question just what “amateur” photography meant. Commentators offered several definitions of “amateurism” in roundtable discussions and essays printed in photo magazines. They attempted to redefine the “amateur” in terms of remuneration for photographic work; engagement with photo-taking as a leisure activity; and subject matter that differed from the common motifs captured by professionals. Commentators found themselves challenged to concur on a defining set of criteria, but they agreed on one crucial thing: that amateurs were unrestricted by the work-related obligations that constrained professional photographers. Since their livelihoods were not involved, amateurs were free to photograph according to their interests.

Amateur and professional photographers relied on popular magazines to display their work to a nationwide cohort of photo enthusiasts. The monthly issues were particularly important to amateurs, who broadened their technical knowledge by studying the work of professionals,

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<sup>2</sup> Kobayashi Ikuo, “Shashin no taishū-sei,” *Kamera*, May 1948.

reading instructional articles, and learning from the critiques of *getsurei* (monthly contests) submissions. For these reasons, photography magazines were crucial in boosting the postwar revival of photography. However, photo magazines were subject to Occupation-imposed censorship. Thus, even as photographers celebrated freedom from wartime restrictions, the immediate postwar period also brought with it new constraints under the foreign military occupation.

In discussing photography's booming popularity in the early postwar years, it is important to note at the outset that photo-taking was an activity dominated by men.<sup>3</sup> So, please allow me a brief digression to introduce the gendered nature of photography. In her study of prewar amateur photography, historian Kerry Ross illustrates that photographers, as well as the photographic industry, differentiated between male and female photo enthusiasts. Camera companies marketed their products differently according to the gender of the target audience. Where women were concerned, companies treated the camera as a trendy accessory that evoked a modern cosmopolitan aesthetic. In contrast, cameras were marketed to men as a serious tool of the arts that fulfilled an ideal of middle-class masculinity. Further, photographers and critics alike refused to take women photographers seriously, as illustrated by the fact that women were usually assigned the pejorative title of "hobbyist" photographer or described as nothing more than mothers who took photographs and kept family albums. The classification of men as "amateurs," on the other hand, suggested an avocation pursued with more serious interest and more refined technical skill.

As in the prewar period, Japan's postwar photo world continued to overlook the work of women photographers. If a woman was pictured holding a camera, it was usually in an

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<sup>3</sup> Kerry Ross, *Photography for Everyone: The Cultural Lives of Cameras and Consumers in Early Twentieth-Century Japan* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2015).

advertisement that used seductive images of women to sell products. Indeed, of the 288 individuals listed in *Kōga Gekkan*'s directory of photographers, only one was a woman: Sasamoto Tsuneko (b. 1914). Having begun her career as an illustrator for the *Mainichi Shimbun* (*Mainichi Newspaper*), Sasamoto later became Japan's first female photojournalist when she joined the newspaper's photography department in 1940. When *Kōga Gekkan* printed its directory nearly fifteen years later, Sasamoto remained one of the only professional women photographers in the nation. To be sure, women were beginning to join the ranks of amateur photographers, as evidenced by roundtables with all-female panels or letters submitted to magazines by women. But it was the work of male photographers that continued to dominate the pages of popular photography magazines well into the postwar era.

While women photographers were rare, women as photographed subjects were not. Photographs of women saturated magazines—often as objects of the male gaze: in nude photos, in highly stylized portraits, or in jarring abstract compositions that depicted the female body in titillating ways (fig. 2.2). In short, photography was a gendered practice in which women, overwhelmingly, were the photographed subject and men the photographers.



Figure 2.2. Nakayama Iwata. “Demonish Feast” (Demon no saiten). *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, 1949.



As photographers picked up their cameras at the end of the war and in the “joyful, bright era” of photography, to borrow Nagahama’s phrase, they returned to the trends and styles that had been popular before the war. While many professionals turned their attention once again to documentary styles, amateurs—drawn to photography as a creative cultural activity—revived artistic genres that the military government had suppressed.

### Photography before 1945: From Pictorialism to Modernism

In Japan’s first postwar decade, photography exhibited several continuities with trends and developments in the first half of the twentieth century. First, many professional photographers whose careers began in the prewar period—Natori Yōnosuke (1910-1962), Kimura Ihei (1901-1974), and Domon Ken (1909-1990), to name only the most famous—remained active in the initial postwar years, many of them enthusiastically instructing a new cohort of amateurs and professionals. Second, the early twentieth century witnessed the genesis of amateur photography, whose practitioners were primarily members of the middle class seeking a means of artistic expression during the cultural and economic prosperity of the Taishō Period (1912-1926).<sup>4</sup> And third, three key prewar styles laid the foundation for the development of photographic expression in the postwar years: pictorialism, which flourished from the early 1900s to the 1920s; modernism, prevalent from 1924 to 1945; and photojournalism, the defining style of the war era from 1937 to 1945.<sup>5</sup>

Pictorialism was a style that flourished within the art photography movement in the early twentieth century. Practitioners of pictorialism rejected the mechanical qualities of the camera and its ability to record the subject objectively. Instead, they experimented with creative printing techniques to achieve a final product more akin to a painting or a woodblock print than a

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<sup>4</sup> Fraser, *Photography and Japan*, 16.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

photograph, including intentionally shooting out of focus, scratching prints to mimic the texture of canvas, and printing photographs in sepia or deep blue tones. Although developments in Western art photography heavily influenced Japanese photographers, photo critic Kaneko Ryūichi has demonstrated several important distinctions between Western and Japanese pictorialist trends. The former employed symbolism drawn from history and myth and encompassed a variety of subject matter, ranging from portraits to landscapes to still-life motifs. Japanese photographers, in contrast, called on an indigenous aesthetic tradition that accented the beauty of the nation. Consequently, landscapes were their preferred subject.<sup>6</sup>

Pictorialism and other styles within the art photography movement remained dominant in Japan until the 1920s, when an epochal event exerted a far-reaching effect on photographic trends. When the Great Kantō Earthquake shook Tokyo and surrounding areas on September 1, 1923—striking at noon when most households would have been heating fires to cook the mid-day meal—the tremors overturned braziers, sparking fires that quickly grew into raging infernos. Once the flames died down, an estimated 75,000 to 200,000 people were dead,<sup>7</sup> 44 percent of metropolitan Tokyo lay in ruins, and the nearby port city of Yokohama was severely damaged.<sup>8</sup> The earthquake was a definitive moment in Japan’s modern history, but it was not the earthquake itself that inspired new photographic trends. Rather, Tokyo’s transformation in the wake of the disaster provided the impetus for change. As the capital and surrounding areas set out on a path

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<sup>6</sup> Kaneko Ryūichi, “The Origins and Development of Japanese Art Photography,” in *The History of Japanese Photography*, 103.

<sup>7</sup> Elise K. Tipton, *Modern Japan: A Social and Political History* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 141. Estimates for the total number of casualties vary. As Mark Seldon notes, an estimated 1.5 million people lived in the areas targeted for bombing, meaning the death toll could be much higher. Mark Seldon, “A Forgotten Holocaust: US Bombing Strategy, the Destruction of Japanese Cities & the American Way of War from World War II to Iraq,” *Japan Focus* (2007).

<sup>8</sup> Gennifer Weisenfeld, *Imaging Disaster: Tokyo and the Visual Culture of Japan’s Great Earthquake of 1923* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 3. As Weisenfeld relates, damages were estimated at over 5.5 billion yen, nearly one-third of Japan’s gross national product in 1930.

of reconstruction, photographers experimented with new ways of representing rapid urbanization, industrial growth, and the accompanying social dislocation that these developments produced.<sup>9</sup>

As they became increasingly conscious of the social importance of photography in the mid- to late 1920s, photographers endeavored to engage art and society with their cameras.<sup>10</sup> This shift in focus led to a range of new styles grouped under the umbrella of modernism. Proponents of the modernist aesthetic scorned pictorialism, idolizing instead photographers such as Hungarian Laszlo Moholy-Nagy (1895-1946), who advocated for the consciousness of the “camera eye.” In other words, photographers began to celebrate the mechanical qualities of the camera that produced an objective recording of society.<sup>11</sup>

Photography magazines provided a lively environment for photographers to discuss the new modernist trends and to circulate their experimental work. *Asahi Kamera*, established in 1926, regularly derided pictorialism, writing in favor of techniques that engaged the mechanical qualities of the camera.<sup>12</sup> In 1932, the magazine *Kōga (Photography)* printed an influential essay by Ina Nobuo (1898-1978) that eschewed pictorialism and embraced modernism. Titled “Return to Photography” (Shashi ni kaere), the essay called on photographers to abandon pictorialism and embrace the camera's mechanical qualities instead. Ina defined the photographer's role as a documentarian devoted to capturing social reality with the camera in what he termed “Real Photos.” Such photos, the critic continued, should incorporate three elements: documentation of the era, expression of the subject's beauty, and skillful use of the “sculptural properties of light

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<sup>9</sup> Takeba Joe, “The Age of Modernism: From Visualization to Socialization” in *The History of Japanese Photography*, 144. and Ross, *Photography for Everyone*, 3.

<sup>10</sup> Takeba, “The Age of Modernism,” 145.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

and shadow.”<sup>13</sup> For Ina, it was imperative to balance straightforward documentation with attention to form, composition, and other aesthetic qualities.

Although at its core a movement calling for photographers to represent reality with their cameras, the age of modernism was in actuality a period of “oscillation between objective depiction and subjective representation.”<sup>14</sup> The two most prominent modernist styles in Japan were New Photography (*shinkō shashin*) and surrealism. Rooted in the German New Objectivity (*Neue Sachlichkeit*) and Bauhaus movements, New Photography was attentive to the industrialized mechanical world and symbols of technology. Art theorist Itagaki Takao (1894-1966), who published essays promoting New Objectivity and other German visual aesthetic trends, first encountered them on a research trip to Germany in 1924. Upon returning to Japan, Itagaki circulated these ideas in essays and books such as *The Interrelation Between Machine and Art* (*Kikai to geijutsu to no kōryū*, 1929), thus giving rise to a “mechanical aesthetics” based on the camera’s utility as a tool of documentation.<sup>15</sup>

Horino Masao (1907-2000) soon joined Itagaki in advocating the New Photography style. Fascinated by mechanical and steel structures, Horino photographed luxury liners, steel bridges and towers, and industrial sites. In 1932, he published the photobook *Camera: Eye x Steel: Composition* (*Kamera. Me x tetsu. Kōsei*), an exploration of the “beauty of machinery” that is now widely regarded as the exemplar of early Japanese modernist photography. In his other works, Horino used montage and typography to document the dynamic and constantly changing face of Tokyo. In his 1931 photo essay “The Character of Greater Tokyo” (*Dai Tokyo*

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<sup>13</sup> Quoted in Takeba, “The Age of Modernism,” 146.

<sup>14</sup> Takeba, “The Age of Modernism,” 144.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

no seikaku),<sup>16</sup> Horino included photographs of railroads, ships, and telegraph lines together with the word “TEMPO” printed in a progressively larger font size across the pages to convey a sense of speed and motion—two key characteristics of modernity and the contemporary urban environment.

Surrealism was another popular genre of modernist photography. Rather than embrace the objectivist principles of New Photography, however, its proponents infused their photos with a lyricism reminiscent of earlier pictorialist trends.<sup>17</sup> Takeba Joe has identified two different strains of Japanese surrealism from the 1930s. One emerged in the Kansai region, where photographers favored semi-abstract or entirely abstract compositions. Although still concerned with reality, the “real” in these images became increasingly difficult to identify due to a melding of documentation with photographic art techniques,<sup>18</sup> such as photograms and intentional camera movement that resulted in blurred compositions.

In contrast to the Kansai surrealists, Tokyo-based surrealist photographers, paradoxically, took a more documentary approach to recording the subject.<sup>19</sup> The central figure in Tokyo’s surrealism movement was art critic Takiguchi Shūzō (1903-1979), who derided Kansai surrealism as too pictorial. Although he placed importance on the photographer's subjectivity, Takiguchi argued that the photographer’s subjective perspective should be subordinate to the objective nature of the camera.<sup>20</sup> In other words, he urged photographers to

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<sup>16</sup> Originally published in the October 1931 issue of *Chūō kōron* (*Central Review*).

<sup>17</sup> Takeba, “The Age of Modernism,” 149.

<sup>18</sup> John Dower, *Nihon Shashinka Kyōkai. A Century of Japanese Photography*, first edition (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 18.

<sup>19</sup> Takeba, “The Age of Modernism,” 150.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

express their subjective viewpoint, but only if they could do so without manipulating the scene in their effort to attain a more objective recording of the subject.

While professional photographers began to abandon pictorialism for social documentation, amateurs continued to pursue the aesthetics of art photography. The first amateur photographers hit the scene toward the end of the Meiji period (1868-1912), enticed into the world of photography by the development of roll film and portable cameras like the Vest Pocket Kodak—technologies that enabled people with little technical expertise to engage in hobby photography.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, the act of photo-taking remained largely inaccessible to non-professionals until the domestic production of affordable 35mm cameras and the widespread circulation of how-to manuals in the 1920s.<sup>22</sup> Once such products started to hit consumer markets, the camera quickly became part of the everyday lives of Japanese people.<sup>23</sup> The appeal of photography among amateurs, who at this time were primarily middle-class, white-collar workers from urban areas, was its accessibility as an artistic endeavor.

Engaging in photography as an artistic activity was especially important to Japan's expanding middle class, who believed that "educated members of society" needed at least a basic familiarity with the fine arts. As well, by engaging in such an artistic pursuit, amateurs believed that they could accrue cultural capital to bolster their social status.<sup>24</sup> Since pictorialism required

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<sup>21</sup> Photography remained largely an activity of the elite for much of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Kerry Ross has described one of Japan's first photography clubs, the Photographic Society of Japan (Nihon Shashin Kai), established in 1889 as a "social venue for elite male culture," as the club consisted of members of the hereditary peerage, as well as eminent politicians, educators, and businessmen. *Photography for Everyone*, 102.

<sup>22</sup> Fraser, *Photography and Japan*, 16.

<sup>23</sup> As both consumer product and means of documentation, the camera connected to "the practical understanding of modernity" during the emergence of mass consumerism in the 1920s and early 1930s. See Ross, *Photography for Everyone*, 2-8.

<sup>24</sup> Ross argues that photography provided amateurs a unique medium of "artistic self-expression" that and a "set of tools to represent the world as they saw fit." And as photography became more widely popular among an amateur audience, it provided more people with a "vocabulary of aesthetic value." See Ross, *Photography for Everyone*, 8.

hands-on manipulation in the darkroom, such as scratching printing paper to mimic a painterly canvas, it attracted the interest of individuals who valued craftsmanship “in the face of an increasingly mechanized middle-class lifestyle.”<sup>25</sup> Thus, while social changes related to urbanization and industrialization drove professionals to reject pictorialism for social documentation, it had the opposite effect on amateurs who remained wedded to more artistic forms of photographic production.

Among professionals, the development of prewar trends from art to social documentation culminated in the rise of photojournalism in the 1930s. Natori Yōnosuke developed his knowledge of photojournalism while working for the *Munich Illustrated Press* (*Münchner Illustrierte Presse*) and the *Berlin Illustrated News* (*Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*) in Germany.<sup>26</sup> In 1931, Ullstein Press contracted Natori to document the Kwantung Army’s invasion of Manchuria.<sup>27</sup> Two years later, when Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany, Ullstein terminated Natori’s employment because the company could no longer employ someone of “non-Aryan” descent.<sup>28</sup> From that point, Natori resettled in Japan and established the photography and graphic design workshop Nihon Kōbō (Japan Workshop) with photo critic Ina Nobuo, photographer Kimura Ihei, actor Okada Sōzō (stage name Yamanouchi Hikaru, 1903-1983), and designer Hara Hiromu (1903-1986). These and other artists and writers who would

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>26</sup> Natori moved to Berlin in 1928 with his mother to study German, enrolling in an arts and crafts school in Munich the following year to study design. See Andrea Germer, “Artists and Wartime Politics: Natori Yōnosuke—a Japanese Riefenstahl?” *Contemporary Japan* 24, no. 1 (2012): 25.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 27.

later join Nihon Kōbō were initially drawn to the group by their desire to learn about photojournalism and other trends that Natori had introduced to Japan from Germany.<sup>29</sup>

It did not take long for Japan's government to realize photojournalism's ability to incite popular support for colonial expansion and war. It began calling on professional photographers to serve the national interest through photojournalism under the slogan "*Hōdō hōkoku*" (Journalism Reporting).<sup>30</sup> The images that photographers produced, however, were heavily edited and thus far from the objective documentation characteristic of journalism. Most photographers were soon swept up in propaganda campaigns as tensions mounted in China following the Mukden Incident in 1931 and intensified further after the Marco Polo Bridge Incident in 1937. Some were directly responsible for initiating the production of wartime propaganda.<sup>31</sup> In 1938, Natori himself wrote a proposal advocating emulation of the Nazi system of propaganda, and he later led the propaganda efforts of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere after the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War.<sup>32</sup> So integral were photographers to the production of propaganda that Natori and those who worked with him were "actively reproducing and 'designing' the lies that the Japanese government and Imperial Army invented."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> For more see Germer, "Visual Propaganda in Wartime East Asia—The Case of Natori Yōnosuke, *Japan Focus: The Asia-Pacific Journal* 9, no. 20 (2011): <http://japanfocus.org/>.

<sup>30</sup> Torihara, *Nihon shashin shi*, 64.

<sup>31</sup> Andrea Germer, "Visual Propaganda in Wartime East Asia," 16.

<sup>32</sup> Germer, "Artists and Wartime Politics," 40.

<sup>33</sup> Germer, "Visual Propaganda in Wartime East Asia," 25.



Natori brought together photographers, journalists, and designers to work on propaganda publications such as *Nippon* and *Front*.<sup>34</sup> Funded by *zaibatsu* business concerns, including Mitsubishi, Sumitomo, and Mitsui, these magazines were primarily aimed at foreign audiences and printed in fifteen languages. The editors and photographers of *Front* relied on montages of Japanese tanks, planes, and other technology to garner support for the military, and the magazine also displayed photographs of ethnically diverse communities in areas under Japanese control to inspire a pro-empire message. In one example from the English edition of *Front*, a montage brings together individuals of different ethnicities across a two-page spread (fig. 2.3). The constructed image crowds a diverse assemblage of people into the frame: men and women, young and old, some wearing straw caps suggestive of farm labor, others adorned with student military-style hats. Clustered beneath two lines of bold, blood-red text proclaiming that Japan has “built a state of racial harmony, and established a land of security and happiness of the people” in its overseas empire, the faces clearly convey the message that people of different ethnic and social backgrounds have happily come together as a collective in Japan’s expanding imperial endeavor.

Some photographers, of course, expressed reluctance, if not outright resistance, to participating in such activities. Domon Ken had joined the photography team at *Nippon* in 1935, and in 1939 started working for the propaganda organization *Kokusai Bunka Shinkōka* (International Culture Promotion Association). Despite his work for the latter and for publications like *Nippon*, however, Domon criticized government propaganda in an essay

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<sup>34</sup> According to Germer, Natori possessed an expert knowledge on what images would appeal to a Western audience thanks to his time spent in Europe and the U.S., as well as his German wife Erna Mecklenburg (1901-1979). See Germer, “Artists and Wartime politics,” 40.

published in *Nihon Hyōron* (*Critique Japan*) in 1943.<sup>35</sup> His criticism was met with immediate reprisal. The International Culture Promotion Association fired Domon, and the government banned the issue of the magazine.<sup>36</sup> Domon was one of few photographers to denounce propaganda publicly. For the most part, professionals had two choices during the war: contribute to propaganda or quit their profession and face unemployment. Most chose to keep their jobs.



Figure 2.3. *Front*, 1943, nos. 5-6 (English edition).

While professionals contributed to propaganda campaigns, amateur photographers all but vanished in the name of national defense and counterintelligence.<sup>37</sup> The artistic styles still favored by amateurs, as well as a minority of professionals, faced hostility under a wartime system that placed strict ideological constraints on art and photography. Indeed, the term “avant-

<sup>35</sup> Torihara, *Nihon shashin shi*, 86.

<sup>36</sup> Edward Putzar, “The Reality of Domon Ken,” *Japan Quarterly* 41 (1994): 313.

<sup>37</sup> *Nihon shashinka kyōkai, Nihon gendai shashin-shi* (Tokyo: Heibon sha, 1977), 385.

garde” itself came under attack<sup>38</sup> because it was equated with other “dangerous ideologies” that advocated overthrowing the Japanese government.<sup>39</sup> Government crackdowns came down hard on amateurs, especially: the 7/7 Sumptuary Law prohibited the sale of cameras with a price tag of over 500 yen, and the government forbade civilians from taking pictures in urban locations. So restrictive were these measures that one article in a March 1946 issue of *Kamera* blamed them for the complete disappearance of candid photography during the war.<sup>40</sup> As the war progressed, amateurs were only allowed to use cameras at times when family members departed to the warfront. If an amateur went out in public with a camera on any other occasion, he risked being arrested as a spy.<sup>41</sup> Among the few non-professionals able to take photographs freely during the war were policemen such as Ishikawa Kōyō (1904-1989) who, as a member of the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department, produced some of the only extant photographs of the destructive firebombing raids that ravaged Tokyo in 1945.<sup>42</sup>

Throughout the war, as I have suggested, both amateurs and professionals lacked the freedom to pursue photography of their own accord. Japan’s defeat in the war, however, changed all that, as photographers once again took up styles suppressed by wartime restrictions. In photography magazines published in the first postwar years, amateurs’ and professionals’ images

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<sup>38</sup> As Takeba Joe explains, the phrase “avant-garde” specifically came under attack because the Japanese language uses the same term for vanguard, a term that was associated with Communism at the time. For this reason, groups and publications quit using the term. For example, The Avant-Garde Photography association was renamed the Experimental Photo Group. See Takeba, “The Age of Modernism,” 153.

<sup>39</sup> Torihara, *Nihon shashin shi*, 64.

<sup>40</sup> Morooka Kōji, “Kyandeddofoto ni tsuite,” *Kamera* March 1946, 18-20.

<sup>41</sup> Kuwabara Kunio, “Hansei to zenshin,” *Kamera* January, 1946. Reprinted in *Senryōki zasshi shiryō taikē III: Taishū bunka hen* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2009), 112.

<sup>42</sup> U.S. bombing raids killed 85,793 people and left over one million homeless. The United States Strategic Bombing Survey. “Effects of Incendiary Bomb Attacks on Japan—A Report on Eight Cities.” Physical Damage Division (April 1947), 67. The raids also destroyed roughly 51 percent of the physical landscape. See Peter C. Chen, “Bombing of Tokyo and Other Cities: 19 Feb 1945-10 Aug 1945,” World War II Database, accessed May 9, 2014, [http://ww2db.com/battle\\_spec.php?battle\\_id=217](http://ww2db.com/battle_spec.php?battle_id=217).

show continuity with prewar photographic trends. Amateurs, for their part, turned once again to art photography styles. Their idealized portraits of *bijin* (beautiful women), children at play, idyllic landscapes, and still life motifs filled the pages of photography magazines in the initial years after the war. Meanwhile, professionals, who had experienced first-hand the government's control over media, returned to the straightforward, objective style characteristic of New Photography and photojournalism. Yet, photographic freedom was anything but absolute in immediate postwar Japan. Under the Allied Occupation, the Japanese media faced new constraints in the form of SCAP-imposed censorship that restricted the types of documentary images that could be published—and, in particular, virtually any image that depicted the Occupation forces in an unfavorable light.

#### New Censorship Controls under the Occupation

As the Japanese people clamored for printed books and news of foreign cultures denied them during the war<sup>43</sup>—and as the print media was freed from wartime censorship controls and forced mergers—journals that had been suspended or forcibly merged reappeared in rapid succession, alongside a plethora of new titles. Most photo magazines unequivocally criticized the war restrictions and vowed to protect freedom of expression in the new postwar era.<sup>44</sup> At first, SCAP appeared to support these aims. By abolishing twelve different laws instituted by the wartime Japanese government to regulate journalism—among them the Newspaper Law, the National Mobilization Law, and the Military Protection Law<sup>45</sup>—SCAP signaled its support for

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<sup>43</sup> Jay Rubin, “From Wholesomeness to Decadence: The Censorship of Literature under the Allied Occupation,” *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 11, no. 1 (1985): 75-76.

<sup>44</sup> Torihara, *Nihon shashin shi*, 97.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

democratization. Paradoxically, however, it soon imposed new restrictions on the media that amounted, in essence, to a new form of censorship.

Planning for postwar censorship in Japan started in the summer of 1943. As the Allied Combined Chiefs of Staff met to approve a censorship plan for Europe and North Africa, the War Department and Navy Department initiated plans for censorship in the Asia-Pacific region.<sup>46</sup> In May 1944, Douglas MacArthur, then commander-in-chief of the Southwest Pacific Area, received a directive from the War Department declaring that “censorship in occupied areas was the responsibility of the Supreme Military Commander.” It further outlined a basic organization for censorship controls not only of the press, but also of mail, telegrams, telephone, cinema, and photographs.<sup>47</sup>

The implementation of censorship controls began soon after Japan’s surrender. In a provisional civil liberties directive issued on September 10, 1945, General MacArthur demanded “responsible reporting of the news.”<sup>48</sup> Not even two weeks later, on September 21, SCAP issued a ten-clause press code in response to Japanese criticism of the use of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The press code required that the “news must adhere strictly to the truth” and banned the publication of any information that might affect public tranquility, as well as information on Allied troop movements in East Asia.<sup>49</sup> SCAP abolished wartime limitations on the press, free speech, and assembly on September 27, 1945; but at the same time it issued a

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<sup>46</sup> Monica Braw, *The Atomic Bomb Suppressed: American Censorship in Occupied Japan* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1991), 21.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>48</sup> Mikiso Hane, *Eastern Phoenix: Japan Since 1945* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), 23.

<sup>49</sup> Nishi Toshio, *Unconditional Democracy: Education and Politics in Occupied Japan, 1945-1952* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, 1982), 88.

series of orders that curtailed the flow of information.<sup>50</sup> The final plan outlining the basis for censorship in Japan, the Revised AFPAC Basic Plan for Civil Censorship, was approved on September 30, 1945.

Censorship fell under the jurisdiction of the Civil Intelligence Section (CIS), one of the General Staff sections of GHQ. This unit, in turn, was divided into different departments, including the Civil Censorship Detachment (CCD), which was itself further divided into bureaus that were responsible for various aspects of censorship: the Press, Pictorial and Broadcast Division (PPB), the Special Activities Division, the Postal Division, the Telecommunications Division, and the Information Records Division. Charged with overseeing the mass media, the PPB began working on September 2, albeit at reduced capacity due to limited staff.<sup>51</sup> Censorship was carried out in two phases. In the first phase, “pre-censorship” required the review of material before publication. As violations decreased, SCAP steadily lessened the amount of material that required pre-censorship, ending pre-censorship entirely by July 1948. From that point until October 1949, materials were subject only to post-publication reviews (i.e., “post-censorship”).

Foreign media outlets reporting from Japan were not exempt from SCAP censorship, which monitored books, magazines, and movies imported into Japan. At the beginning of the Occupation, many foreign journalists were barred from venturing beyond the Tokyo-Yokohama metropolitan area, and thus remained near GHQ in Tokyo’s downtown Marunouchi district. Several newspaper outlets quickly found themselves on General MacArthur’s blacklist, including the *New York Herald*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and the *Chicago Sun*. Journalists who made

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<sup>50</sup> William J. Coughlin, SCAPIN-66. Quoted in Jay Rubin, “From Wholesomeness to Decadence,” 75.

<sup>51</sup> Braw, *The Atomic Bomb Suppressed*, 33-35.

unfavorable or blatantly critical remarks about the Occupation faced harassment and were even threatened with the revocation of their press credentials.<sup>52</sup>

For the Japanese press, CCD officers scheduled regular meetings “to teach the Japanese what kind of press the Occupation authorities expected.”<sup>53</sup> They made it clear that SCAP did not merely aim to censor what it deemed taboo material, but also to influence what was produced and published. Toward this end, it established the Civil Information and Education Section (CI&E) as a mouthpiece of American propaganda.<sup>54</sup> Directing a range of institutions (the Japanese press, schools, libraries, and churches)—and employing a range of media (film, radio, print publications)—the CI&E aimed to “remake Japanese thinking” and “impress war guilt on the nation.”<sup>55</sup>

Under the dual aims of excising and influencing material, SCAP gradually extended censorship from the press to other media. It notified the film industry in January 1946 to submit films for censorship screening, and required everyone who owned films to submit reports providing the details of their respective collections. In early 1946, in one 30-day period, 1,268 magazines, 1,169 books, and 4,985 newspapers were submitted for censorship.<sup>56</sup> By mid-1947, on a monthly basis, the PPB scanned 16 news agencies, 69 newspapers, 3,243 magazines, 1,838 books, 8,600 radio programs, 673 films, 514 phonograph records, and 2,900 drama plays.<sup>57</sup> Not even *kamishibai*, a type of storytelling involving illustrated paper panels displayed on street

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<sup>52</sup> Takemae, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, 388.

<sup>53</sup> Braw, *The Atomic Bomb Suppressed*, 40.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>55</sup> Merle Fassinod, *Military Government and the Occupation of Japan*, p. 294. Quoted in Braw, *The Atomic Bomb Suppressed*, 44.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>57</sup> Takemae, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, 387.

carts, escaped censorship. Between late 1945 and early 1947, the PPB monitored 8,821 shows in one district of Tokyo alone.<sup>58</sup>

Because few Occupation officials were proficient in the Japanese language, the CCD relied on Nisei (second-generation Japanese Americans) who worked for the Occupation, in addition to Japanese and Korean nationals. Of 8,734 persons employed by the CCD, 8,084 were listed as foreign.<sup>59</sup> The non-American censors were required to attend special six-hour courses to learn the basics of American-style press censorship, which included lectures on “The Press in the United States,” “Mechanics of Press Censorship,” “News Slanting,” and “Divide and Conquer.”<sup>60</sup> The censors were given two missions upon completion of their schooling: to ensure public tranquility so that Japan could rise as a new nation and to obtain information that would guarantee Japan’s compliance with the terms of surrender.<sup>61</sup> The key censorship guideline that SCAP employed—namely, “information that disturbs public tranquility”—was left intentionally vague. In the words of the Office of the Chief of Counter-Intelligence, this would “enable suppression of any publication or radio station violating censorship.”<sup>62</sup> In other words, it would guarantee censors the widest degree of latitude in making their excisions.

As the above suggests, SCAP censorship was notorious for its ambiguity. Censorship guidelines were outlined in different materials: manuals that served as handbooks for practical work, subject matter files that compiled items of interest to different departments, and “key

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Braw, *The Atomic Bomb Suppressed*, 59.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>61</sup> *Manual of PPB: Censorship in Japan*, September 30, 1945, CCD, Army Forces in the Pacific, box 8569, SCAP. Quoted in Braw, *The Atomic Bomb Suppressed*, 62.

<sup>62</sup> Office of the Chief of Counter-Intelligence, September 3, 1945, box 8520, SCAP. Quoted in Braw, *The Atomic Bomb Suppressed*, 62.



logs”—records that contained instructions on how to treat specific information.<sup>63</sup> The logs were constantly amended and periodically recalled and reissued. On January 2, 1948, the latter happened when an order for new key logs demanded that all previous versions be “collected and burned.”<sup>64</sup> Additionally, despite the guidance offered by the key logs, subject matter files, and manuals, there were no definitive rules for what should and should not be censored. Instead, the CCD left it up to the censors to exercise their own judgment.<sup>65</sup>

SCAP did not give the Japanese media access to the key logs or other instructions that guided the work of CCD censors, adding another layer of ambiguity to Occupation censorship.<sup>66</sup> According to historian Takemae Eiji, the key logs and other guidance were a “closely guarded military secret . . . and prohibited categories were not shown to Japanese editors, radio announcers or other media people...”<sup>67</sup> The absence of such information forced Japanese media to guess at censorship guidelines and directives, which were purposely couched in ambiguous language.

Occupation censorship targeted a broad range of topics. Officials were particularly sensitive to material that might disturb public tranquility or undermine SCAP authority, including references to the Pacific War, criticism of SCAP policies, or hints at ultranationalist or militarist ideology.<sup>68</sup> Starting from 1946, authorities prohibited Japanese photographers from photographing outside designated locations due to security concerns related to the Tokyo War

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>65</sup> Instructions from CCD to Press and Radio Censors, September 10, 1945, *CCD Censorship History*, box 16, SCAP. Quoted in Braw, *The Atomic Bomb Suppressed*, 74.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>67</sup> Takemae Eiji, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, 388.

<sup>68</sup> For a more comprehensive list, see Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 411.

Crimes Trials. Censors also targeted images of the devastated condition of postwar Japanese society: prostitutes, food shortages and rampant starvation, and even the urban landscapes ravaged by U.S. incendiary bombs. In addition, censors remained alert for anything that threatened to damage the Occupation's public image. In one instance, a censor removed a dog from a photograph of U.S. forces parading down a street because it "detracted from the dignity of the troops," thus demonstrating the ruthless intensity with which censors carried out their task.<sup>69</sup> Because Japan was subject to strict censorship, many photographers hid their film negatives. So circumspect was one publishing company, in fact, that it forgot about its hidden cache of photographs of bombed cities, only unearthing the images in 2011.<sup>70</sup>

At times, SCAP censorship's "opaque quality" forced the Japanese to resort to self-censorship.<sup>71</sup> Cinema scholar Hirano Kyoko has studied self-censorship in the film industry specifically. In late 1945, she notes, the CI&E demanded that *Eiga Kōsha* (Film Corporation) create a list from the 455 feature films produced after 1931 that should be banned based on militarist sentiment. David Conde, a staff member of the Psychological Warfare Branch (PWB) of the Office of War Information (OWI), equated the finalized list to self-censorship, surmising that some film titles were likely included solely "out of fear of provoking the GHQ."<sup>72</sup> As literary scholar Sharalyn Orbaugh has argued, the very presence of the Occupation spurred the media to carry out self-censorship. SCAP relied on existing sources of Japanese surveillance, alongside its own institutions, to establish visibility throughout Japanese society. The fear of

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 419.

<sup>70</sup> Torihara, *Nihon shashin shi*, 99-100.

<sup>71</sup> Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 410.

<sup>72</sup> Quoted in Hirano, "The Banning of Japanese Period Films by the American Occupation," 195. SCAP went from prefecture to prefecture to collect banned films. Officials sent four prints and a negative of each film to GHQ. CCD received one negative and two prints for analysis. The rest were burned in the spring of 1946.

coming under the gaze of Occupation censors proved immensely effective in stifling the free flow of information in the Japanese media.<sup>73</sup>

Many media outlets and film companies censored their own material for fear of the financial repercussions of violating censorship edicts. Here, too, consequences were vague and inconsistent. Photographer Matsushige Yoshito (1913-2005) was called into GHQ for questioning shortly after an article containing his photographs of atomic bomb damage in Hiroshima appeared in a local newspaper in August 1946. Matsushige, fearing the worst, was surprised to come away from the encounter with only a warning to submit his photos for review prior to publication in the future.<sup>74</sup> Others who violated censorship rules were not so fortunate. The editor of *Nikkan Supōtsu* (*Daily Sports*) came under fire for supposedly damaging SCAP's dignity with a story titled "Mr. Thompson to Introduce American Nude Show to Big Theater." SCAP levied a 75,000 yen fine on the newspaper, suspended it for six months, and sentenced the editor to one year at hard labor. The second two penalties were eventually dropped, but the newspaper still had to pay the steep fine.<sup>75</sup> At a time when financial hardship had caused many businesses to close their doors, the threat of fines for violating censorship edicts proved to be a powerful incentive to avoid the attention of SCAP censors.

SCAP officials began revising censorship practices in 1947, finally approving an end to pre-censorship controls on July 15, 1948. From this point until the end of 1949, the PPB relied on post-censorship, whereby materials were only subjected to review after publication. One motivation for the shift from pre- to post-censorship was the sheer volume of material flooding

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<sup>73</sup> Orbaugh, *Japanese Fiction of the Allied Occupation*, 94.

<sup>74</sup> Matsushige Yoshito, "Five Photographs of August 6," in *Japan at War: An Oral History*, ed. Haruko Taya Cook and Theodore F. Cook (New York: The New Press, 1993), 391–395.

<sup>75</sup> Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 434.

censorship offices. As well, a shift to post-censorship put the onus on the Japanese press to follow censorship codes. This, it was hoped, would result in more “responsible” reporting.<sup>76</sup> After one year of employing post-censorship practices, SCAP decided to end censorship entirely on October 31, 1949. Yet Japanese media were never truly free from the watchful eye of their Occupiers until the Occupation ended in 1952.<sup>77</sup>

Scholars have long debated the effectiveness of Occupation censorship. Some claim that it was lenient, rarely enforced, and did little to stifle information.<sup>78</sup> Others, such as literary critic Etō Jun, have argued that the censors had a negative and permanent impact on Japanese media.<sup>79</sup> Jay Rubin, on the other hand, argues that assessing the effect of censorship is made challenging, if not impossible, by the dearth of documents demonstrating its effects. He argues that the “psychological pressure” exerted by the ruling regime, as well as the practice of self-censorship, have deprived modern scholars of the evidence to analyze censorship policy.<sup>80</sup> Rubin further notes that, in the case of Japan, Occupation censorship was not applied in equal measure to all

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<sup>76</sup> Braw, *The Atomic Bomb Suppressed*, 76.

<sup>77</sup> In her study of Japanese period film during the Occupation, Hirano Kyoto notes that while censorship officially ended in 1949, the CI&E still required clearance for completed films until the end of the Occupation. Further, in 1949 censorship responsibilities passed over to Eirin (Eiga Rinri Kitei Kanri Iinkai [Committee on Film Ethics Regulation Control]), a committee established that same year with the help of Americans to operate autonomously from SCAP censorship. Eirin continued many of the restrictions placed by the CCD, including banning feudalism, militarism, and nationalism from film. See Hirano, “The Banning of Japanese Period Films by the American Occupation.”

<sup>78</sup> See, for example, Thomas, “Power Made Visible,” and Donald Richie in “The Occupied Arts” in *The Confusion Era: Art and Culture of Japan during the Allied Occupation, 1945-1952*. ed. Mark Howard Sandler (Washington, D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution in Association with the University of Washington Press, Seattle and London), 1997.

<sup>79</sup> Orbaugh, *Japanese Fiction of the Allied Occupation*, 90. As Jay Rubin notes, Etō argued that Occupation-imposed censorship had a lasting impact on Japanese culture and that it recast the Japanese psyche “in an American mold.” See Rubin, “From Wholesomeness to Decadence,” 71.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

media—that the only certainty inherent in SCAP censorship was its inconsistency and unpredictability.<sup>81</sup>

Because neither magazine editors nor photographers discussed censorship, it is difficult to evaluate its effects on photography publications. However, a good place to begin is with the Prange Collection, an archive of print media containing materials examined by Occupation censors.<sup>82</sup> Several of the magazines examined for this dissertation were accessed via the Prange Collection, including *Kamera*, *Amachua Shashin Sōsho*, *Shashin Techō*, and *Foto Āto*. One notable aspect of the Prange Collection is that it archived the censorship documents that examiners completed as they screened magazines under pre-publication regulations. Each document affixed to the monthly issues includes general magazine information (title, editor, circulation numbers, frequency of publication), as well as the editorial policy (listed on the documents in categories of right, center, left, conservative, liberal, radical). In addition, censors noted whether the issues included foreign material; provided a list of serial installments in each issue; and documented the total number of articles examined, approved, suppressed, deleted, or disapproved. Censors translated the table of contents into English, and any possible violations were also translated and marked for further review.

Those issues published during the CCD’s “post-censorship” phase obviously lack the censorship documents. Instead, the cover of each issue simply bears a stamp of either “Processed without Examination” or “Spot Checked.” Of the titles surveyed for this study, only two issues of photography magazines were flagged for possible violations: the August and September 1947 issues of *Kamera*. Both were cleared without any alteration of the original contents. Aside from

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>82</sup> The collection holds over 13,800 magazine titles, 18,000 newspaper titles, and 71,000 books and pamphlets, in addition to news agency photos, maps, posters, and other items.

these two examples, the remaining issues surveyed for this study went to press with no registered violations.

The lack of registered censorship violations might suggest that censors refrained from excising photographic material with any degree of severity. But it is also clear that magazine editors relied on self-censorship to avoid catching the attention of censors in the first place. The issues published between 1945 and 1952 are notable for the dearth of images that depict Allied personnel in Japan, indicating that the magazines gave censors little cause to excise material. It was only after the Occupation ended that magazines began to publish the images that photographers had taken of Occupation personnel, as well as photos of the Americans who continued to be stationed in Japan.

A photo of an MP by Nagano Shigeichi (1925-2019) provides one iconic example of a photo taken during the Occupation but not published until much later. Nagano snapped the MP directing traffic in front of Ginza's Mitsukoshi Department Store. The uniformed man stands on a box in the middle of an intersection with hands raised, looking away from the camera. Just behind him, on the right, a Japanese policeman dressed in white carries out the same task. The burned and scarred façade of the department store that fills the background reveals the destructive effects of American incendiary bombs. Nagano took this photograph in 1946, but it was not published until years later. Similarly, Okamura Taiko's photographs of Americans in Yokohama did not appear in photography magazines until after the Occupation had ended (discussed in Chapter V). Without such images, magazines effectively molded an image of Japanese society devoid of the reality that, in many ways, defined their existence.

An essay printed in *Kamera* in April 1946 suggests that editors were acutely aware of censors combing through their monthly issues. Titled "Photography in Japan," the essay was

penned in English with no Japanese translation at a time when only a minority of Japanese people could speak or read English, indicating that it was likely intended for English-speaking Allied personnel. The essay makes clear that magazine editors crafted subliminal messages to Occupation censors by renouncing wartime leaders and Japan's "feudal" past, on the one hand, and anticipating a "reborn" Japan under a new democratic system, on the other.

Throughout the essay, the author carefully highlights the war's damaging effects on Japan's photographic industry, specifically, and Japanese society more broadly. He laments that wartime propaganda hindered advancements in photographic technology, and insists that ardent wartime patriots misled Japan's photographic world, ignoring the "interest and welfare" of Japanese photography as they "madly rushed into the 'Fascism Express.'" Japan could not return to these old ways, the author went on: The nation, and Japan's photo world, must progress. In a statement that resonated with SCAP's demilitarization and democratization agenda, the author insisted that Japanese photography could progress only by becoming a "pioneer" of a "movement for the construction of a new Japanese culture based on democracy." Photography, the author declared, would play a central role in Japan's democratization. By disparaging the failed wartime totalitarian state and repeatedly invoking the term "democracy," the author let the censors know that *Kamera* was completely aligned with Occupation policies.

Ultimately, this essay boldly situates photography—and by extension *Kamera* magazine itself—at the center of Japan's postwar socio-political landscape. The author concludes with an affirmation of the magazine's ability to spread democracy through Japan: "With this experience [of developing amateur photography] and our importance in the photo world we hope to do our utmost for the development of a democratic culture in reborn Japan." By connecting photography to the establishment of a democratic Japanese society, the author assures the Occupation that

*Kamera* and photography are not only enthusiastic vehicles of American democratic ideals, but also important cultural institutions that must remain free from restriction.<sup>83</sup>

Print culture flourished in immediate postwar Japan despite the Occupation's manipulation of the media through censorship. During the war, many photography magazines had been forcibly merged with other titles at the behest of the Japan Publishers' Cultural Association.<sup>84</sup> *Kamera*, *Kamera Kurabu* (*Camera Club*), and *Shashin Salon* (*Photographic Salon*), for example, were merged into the publication *Shashin Bunka* (*Photographic Culture*).<sup>85</sup> No sooner were the stringent wartime restrictions that had been placed on print media rescinded in late 1945 than the publishing industry experienced a resurgence. Old magazines reemerged in the postwar era, and new titles came onto the scene, marking a revival of professional photography and a boom of amateur photography.

#### The Postwar Revival of Photography Magazines

*Kamera* was the first photo magazine to begin publishing in the postwar period, releasing its first issue in early 1946. It was followed by *Kōga Gekkan* (1947), *Shashin Techō* (1949), *Amachua Shashin Sōcho* (1949), and *Asahi Kamera* (1949), just to name a few titles. Between 1946 and 1949, the number of issues of photography journals in circulation ranged

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<sup>83</sup> Emily Cole, *Towards a New Way of Seeing: Finding Reality in Postwar Japanese Photography, 1945-1970* (Thesis MA—University of Oregon, 2015), 46-47.

<sup>84</sup> The Japan Publishers' Cultural Association was established in 1940 by the military government in its attempt to exert greater control over the flow of information as Japan became mired in war with China and faced imminent war with the U.S. Newspapers were affected as well. To more easily carry out censorship, an order was sent out to merge all newspapers in 1942. The final goal was to decrease the number to one newspaper per prefecture. See Thomas R. Havens, *Valley of Darkness: The Japanese People and World War Two* (New York: Norton, 1978), 64. For more on the censorship of magazines and newspapers during the war, see Gregory J. Kasza, *The State and the Mass Media in Japan, 1918-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). Also in 1940, the Information and Propaganda Bureau took over the handling of all news, advertising, and public events. The following year, the government abolished freedom of the press with the National Mobilization Law (*Kokka Sōdōin Hō*). Throughout the war, propaganda and censorship worked together to keep a tight rein on media and constantly present the public with false information.

<sup>85</sup> "Chronology," in *The History of Japanese Photography*, 322.



from 2,500 to around 35,000 per month.<sup>86</sup> A roundtable on amateur photography in the July 1954 issue of *Kamera* estimated the total magazine circulation to be about 500,000 read by upwards of three million amateurs across Japan.<sup>87</sup>

Photography magazines generally followed the same organizational format: each issue included a “frontispiece” (*kuchie*—the first half of the issue that was dedicated solely to photographs, usually printed on higher quality paper than photos and articles in the second half), a monthly amateur contest (*getsurei*), roundtable discussions, instructional articles, and overviews of the latest camera equipment. As an example, here’s a guided tour of the June 1950 issue of *Asahi Kamera*. When the issue was released, realism was just emerging as a popular photographic trend in Japan. At the top of the cover, the journal’s name, *Asahi Kamera*, appears in bold *katakana* font, the white characters set against a red background. At the bottom, *Asahi Camera* appears again, this time in English. The cover photo is a portrait of a quintessentially modern woman: her permed hair falls just to chin-level, and she wears a chic suit jacket with shoulder pads and a wide, rounded collar. The woman leans back on her right elbow, and her left hand is wrapped around a small dog with white, shaggy fur. Upon opening the issue to the table of contents, the reader finds an inset in the bottom right corner identifying the woman, photographed by Matsushima Susumu (1913-2009), as the film star Shibata Sanae.

The next series of pages comprise the “frontispiece,” the opening section of the magazine usually reserved for the work of professional photographers. Perusing these pages, the reader first sees a color photograph of a still life motif by Itō Yoshihiro followed by a collection of photos that feature a range of seemingly random subjects: a policeman on duty; artist Yokoyama Taikan (1868-1958) posing in front of a scenic ocean backdrop; a landscape taken in

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<sup>86</sup> Thomas, “Power Made Visible,” 367.

<sup>87</sup> Roundtable discussion, “Amachua shashin to wa nanika,” *Kamera*, July 1954, 117-123.

Kamakura; a woman in a long trench coat and fashionable hat posing in front of a car that speeds by in the background; and the brightly lit buildings of Tokyo at night. After studying these examples of still life, portrait, candid snapshot, and cityscape photography, the reader continues to flip through photos of daily life, portraits of women in kimono, and a composition featuring literary critic Kobayashi Hideo and painter Aoyama Jirō sitting in a tastefully appointed, Japanese-style room.

Despite the varied subject matter of this issue's *kuchie*, scenes of daily life comprised the majority of the images, revealing that realism and the human-interest photographic styles were quickly becoming dominant trends. Additional photos in the frontispiece likewise show scenes of daily life in Japan and abroad: a photo series on Tokyo's Ginza district, a collection of documentary images by Jerry Cook (1921-2005), amateur snapshots of Emperor Hirohito on a tour of Japan, scenes from Ueno Zoo on a beautiful spring day, and rush hour congestion clogging the streets and subways of London.

Continuing to thumb through the magazine, the reader next encounters a series of essays and instructional articles. The first essay, penned by the Photo Department manager of Asashi Shimbun's Tokyo Headquarters, is on photojournalism and art photography. This is followed by an interview with Natori Yōnosuke and Ōtake Shōji; an informative article on roll film; and an essay introducing readers to American photojournalist Jerry Cook. Other articles in the issue include topics ranging from portraits to foreign cinema, from small-format cameras to updates on developments in foreign photo equipment, and critiques of the *getsurei* submissions. Amateur and professional photographs punctuate the articles: *getsurei* submissions, winning selections from a German photo contest, nature landscapes, and tips on photographing children. The issue ends with notes on camera club activities and a call for various contests: The Natural Features of

Hokkaido (*Hokkaidō fūbutsu shashin*), a commercial photo (*shōgyō shashin*) contest sponsored by Dentsu Inc. (an advertising and public relations company), and a color photo contest (*zen iro shashin konkūru*).

Asahi Shimbunsha founded *Asahi Kamera*, the magazine we have been examining, in 1926. It was introduced as an “educational photographic journal for the entire world of Japanese photography, unaffiliated with any particular tendency or party.” The wartime government suspended the magazine in 1942, but it was re-launched in 1949 under the editorship of Tsumura Hideo.<sup>88</sup> Other influential magazines from this period include *Kamera*, which was launched under editor Takakuwa Katsuo in 1921 to promote amateur “hobby photography;” *Foto Āto*, which was established in 1949 under founding editor Nagai Kaichi as a successor to *Shashin Satsuei Sōsho* (*Taking Photographs*); and *Kōga Gekkan*, a magazine for amateurs first published in 1947 under editor Kitano Kunio.<sup>89</sup> Although these and other magazines became ardent supporters of realism in the 1950s as the trend swept through Japan’s photo world, they continued to feature art photography and other styles as well. After all, as *Asahi Kamera*’s founding statement declared, the priority was to foster amateur development irrespective of style.

Photography magazines were fundamental to the rebuilding of Japan’s postwar photo world primarily because they served as sources of photographic knowledge. Additionally, in the early postwar era when severe shortages of supplies made public exhibitions difficult, magazines were the principal means of circulating photographs. For this reason, Ivan Vartanian calls them the “beast of print media.”<sup>90</sup> For professionals, *rensai* (photo series) published in the frontispieces

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<sup>88</sup> “Major Photography Magazines,” in *The History of Japanese Photography*, 380.

<sup>89</sup> For more on magazines, see “Major Photography Magazines,” in *The History of Japanese Photography* and Shirayama Mari, *Shashin zasshi no kiseki* (Tokyo: JCII Library, 2001).

<sup>90</sup> Ivan Vartanian, “The Japanese Photobook: Toward an Immediate Media,” in *Japanese Photobooks of the 1960s and 70s*, ed. Lesley A. Martin and Kyōko Wada, first edition (New York: Aperture, 2009), 14.

were a significant source of revenue and prestige.<sup>91</sup> For amateurs, magazines were often the only way to display their photos to the public.

As crucial as magazines were to professional photographers, they proved even more so to amateurs. In one essay, Tanaka Masao claimed that the renewed activity of photography journals in the postwar era was key to the revival of amateur photography itself, since amateurs relied upon the monthly journals for instruction, recognition of their photographic work, and as a means of interacting with professionals.<sup>92</sup> Magazines regularly showcased their amateur readers' photographs in *getsurei*. In selecting the winning submissions, judges attempted to feature a wide range of photographic styles and subject matter, from landscape to still life, and from portraits to candid snapshots. In 1955, *Kamera* began organizing its *getsurei* around central themes, such as “dusk” (September), “landscape” (October), or “faces” (November).

Indeed, these monthly *getsurei* contests were one of the most popular features of the magazines. According to one estimate, the more popular *getsurei* received upwards of 5,000 submissions per month from amateurs in the early postwar years,<sup>93</sup> and a survey conducted by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Photography noted that the boom in amateur photography had led to a sharp increase in the number of photographs submitted to such contests. A survey of one contest sponsored by Fuji Film found that the number of submissions (a total of 94,153) in 1954 was a 180 percent increase from the prior year.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Frequently, these photo series were often later published as monographs. Vartanian, 14. Kimura Ihei's photographs from his trip to Europe, for instance, were serialized first in *Asahi Camera* in 1954 and 55 and later in book form as *Kimura Ihei gaiyū shashinshū: Dai ikkai* (1955) and *Kimura Ihei gaiyū shashinshū: Dai nikai: Yōroppa no inshō* (1956).

<sup>92</sup> Ina Nobuo, “1949 Toshi Nihon shashin-kai no dōkō,” *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, 1950, 1-4.

<sup>93</sup> Nihon Shashin Kyōkai, *Nihon gendai shashin-shi*, 403

<sup>94</sup> Watanaabe Tsutomu, “1954 nendo Nihon shashin-kai hakusho,” *Kamera*, December 1954, 123-124.

The popularity of *getsurei* among amateurs led to a proliferation of similar contests. Universities, film and camera companies, travel bureaus, and newspapers sponsored camera contests, and magazines published the winning submissions. In contrast to the generalized *getsurei*, these other contests called for more defined themes, among them national parks, aerial photography, sightseeing in resort towns, and even commercial photography. From the early 1950s, photography magazines highlighted such contests in nearly every issue, indicating that they were just as popular as the monthly *getsurei*.

Many amateurs relied on the *getsurei* and other contests for instruction. Noted photographer Watanabe Tsutomu (1908-1978) described *getsurei* as “a window to connect [amateurs] to the photography world” and a “dojo” (hall of learning) in which amateurs could “acquire experience in their own competence, and receive direction and criticism from third-party members.”<sup>95</sup> Instead of joining a local camera club, Kansai-based amateur Inagawa Hideo used the *getsurei* to study and connect with other photographers. He regularly sent around ten photographs each month to magazine contests and won the *Asahi Kamera* prize after photographing for only three years.<sup>96</sup> *Getsurei* were especially important for photographers in rural, isolated areas. Amateur Kugami Yoshizō explained that because he had few friends in the countryside who knew photography, and because there were no clubs in his area, he relied on the comments of *getsurei* judges for instruction. For Kugami, the monthly contests were his “place of study.”<sup>97</sup> Because professional photographers critiqued the winning submissions, amateurs like Kugami relied heavily on the *getsurei* to develop their photographic knowledge.

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<sup>95</sup> Watanabe Tsutomu, “*Foto Ato* getsurei sakka Shōwa 25 26 27-nendo kagayaku jōi-sha shōkai,” *Foto Ato*, May 1953, 131-133.

<sup>96</sup> Roundtable discussion, “Kansai amachua taiken o kataru,” *Asahi Kamera*, November 1954, 114-121.

<sup>97</sup> Kugami Yoshizō, “Shashin no hiroba: Ōfuku shokan chihō amachua no nayami,” *Kamera*, December 1954, 144-145.

Beyond providing critique and instruction, contests were important to amateurs for several other reasons. Kawase Kunio proclaimed that winning contests was the greatest joy, and many amateurs gained considerable recognition and notoriety from their winning submissions.<sup>98</sup> For a few amateurs, winning brought more than pride, actually serving as a means to transition fully from amateur to professional status. This was the case with Kuwabara Kineo (1913-2007), Tōmatsu Shōmei (1930-2012), Okumura Taiko (1914-1995), and several other well-known photographers whose work we will discuss in Chapter V. For still others, winning *getsurei* was a source of regular income.<sup>99</sup> Midorikawa Yōichi, a dentist by trade, noted in an interview that many people took up photography solely for economic reasons, hoping to win cash prizes from contests. Midorikawa's interviewer agreed that amateurs had begun submitting to contests with the sole aim of earning money and that this was hardly surprising given that cash prizes for winning submissions across all magazines in 1953 totaled one to two million yen.<sup>100</sup>

The monthly contests we have been discussing also became a major driving force in setting trends in Japanese photography, especially realism and photojournalism—mainly because professional photographers judged the submissions and offered their critiques. In a break from the prewar tradition of designating magazine employees to judge contests, *Kamera*, followed soon after by other photo journals, began to enlist professional photographers for the role instead. Domon Ken, who became a judge for *Kamera's getsurei* in 1949, was one of the most influential of these professional judges. In an essay explaining his acceptance of the position, Domon wrote that he wanted to pass along his beliefs, experiences, and enthusiasm to photographers through

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<sup>98</sup> Kawase Kunio, "Zenjitsu shū-soku kamera kurabu zenjitsu Shinagawa shibu yori," *Kamera*, August 1955, 184-185.

<sup>99</sup> Roundtable discussion, "Amachua sakka no mondai," *Foto Āto*, May 1953, 119-125.

<sup>100</sup> 6,126,407 to 12,252,815 yen in 2020.

his critiques of winning submissions.<sup>101</sup> Ina Nobuo credited several amateurs' rise to prominence, including Kanai Seiichi, Mejima Keiichi, and Kinejima Takaji, specifically to Domon's instruction in *Kamera's getsurei*.<sup>102</sup>

The *getsurei* contests provided a space where professionals and amateurs could come together within the pages of magazines and, at times, in real life. Some magazines sponsored photo meetups or overnight trips for the top winners of *getsurei*. *Asahi Kamera* did so on several occasions, in one instance hosting a figure shooting party for amateurs led by Kimura Ihei that was the subject of a report in the January 1951 issue. The July 1955 issue of the same magazine reported on a class held by Watanabe Yoshio (1907-2000), which instructed amateurs on taking candid shots inside the Mitsukoshi Department Store in Nihonbashi, Tokyo. Such events offered amateurs the opportunity to learn firsthand from professional photographers and have their photographs featured in the magazine's coverage of the meetings.

While *getsurei* undoubtedly exerted significant influence over amateur photography, some identified their prominence as *problematical* to the development of photographic trends. One photographer bemoaned that amateurs knew they had to submit a specific style of photograph or a particular motif to win contests and have their work featured in frontispieces.<sup>103</sup> Kimura expressed a similar view of the pitfalls of such contests, noting that the photos of some amateurs lacked emotional depth because, he suggested, their primary purpose was to please the judges.<sup>104</sup> Other professionals took a negative view of *getsurei* because of the tendency among some amateurs to simply copy other work. Okatami Sōichi claimed in one roundtable, for

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<sup>101</sup> Domon Ken, "Shinsa ni atatte," *Kamera*, October 1949, n.p.

<sup>102</sup> Ina Nobuo, "1950-Nen Nihon no shashin geijutsu no dōkō," *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, 1951, 7.

<sup>103</sup> Roundtable discussion, "Amachua shashin wa shinposhita ka," *Asahi Kamera*, December 1951, 76-81.

<sup>104</sup> Roundtable discussion, "Amachua sakka no mondai," *Foto Āto*, May 1953, 119-125.

example, that many amateurs who won *getsurei* did so only by mimicking the work of professional photographers.<sup>105</sup> In another roundtable, the discussants likewise criticized the tendency of amateurs to copy others' work to win. Itō Norimi complained that if an amateur won with a photograph of an animal one month, then in subsequent months, all submissions would be pictures of animals.<sup>106</sup> Katō Yasuo expressed his agreement with Itō, arguing that the act of imitating the work of others solely to win had engendered a loss of individuality in the images submitted by amateur photographers.

The dangers of copying certain styles or motifs extended beyond *getsurei*. In a roundtable with college students, one student from Meiji University asserted that the biggest problem in his club was the bad habit of junior members to mimic the work of more senior members or professionals.<sup>107</sup> Ina and Kanamaru, who hosted the roundtable, agreed that mimicking the work of others was a problematic issue. If student photographers did not record subjects based on their individual way of seeing, the two professionals explained, they could not produce photographs that conveyed a profound understanding of the photographed subject.<sup>108</sup> Indeed, the inability to create works informed by one's individual perspective and that lacked a deep, meaningful significance was the greatest complaint leveled at amateurs who were content to copy the works of professionals.

The occasional critique of amateurs' lack of creativity aside, many commentators believed that photography allowed amateurs to develop their cultural education. As previously mentioned, the value that Japanese photographers placed on photo-taking as a means of creative

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<sup>105</sup> Roundtable discussion, "Amachua shashin to wa nanika," *Kamera*, July 1954, 117-123.

<sup>106</sup> Roundtable discussion, "Henshū-sha wa kataru," *Foto Aito*, September 1953, 107-112.

<sup>107</sup> Roundtable discussion, "Gakusei shashin wa ikani arubeki ka," *Asahi Kamera*, August 1954, 122-128.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*



expression had its roots in the 1920s and 30s. At that time, culture had become a marker of social development in popular consciousness, as evinced by the creation of the Asahi Cultural Awards (*Asahi Bunka Shō*) in 1930 and the state-funded “culture awards” (*bunka kunshō*) in 1937.<sup>109</sup> Similarly, in the postwar period, as Kuwabara and others argued, photography would significantly contribute to its practitioners’ “cultural education” (*bunka kyōiku*) because it offered an easy means of creative expression.<sup>110</sup>

### A New Age of Amateur Photography

The roundtable discussions and interviews with amateur photographers that magazines printed in the early postwar highlight the value that the Japanese continued to place on photography as a creative cultural pursuit. Murasaki Keijurō, a 39-year-old company employee from Hokkaido, abandoned an attempt to learn Western-style painting and picked up photography instead, believing that he could take pictures even without formal training or technical expertise.<sup>111</sup> Fujita Eizō, a youth from Hokkaido who enjoyed photographing the ocean and horses, also found the motivation to try his hand at photography after realizing that he lacked the requisite skill to excel in painting.<sup>112</sup>

In one essay, Ina Nobuo explained that amateurs switched from painting to photography because learning to paint with skill took considerable training and time. But thanks to

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<sup>109</sup> The association of culture with social development and elite social groups quickly led to the creation of the Cultural Residence (*bunka jutaku*), which, according to Morris-Suzuki, symbolized the identification of culture with the “new consumption patterns of the expanding middle class.” The Cultural Residence—the “most tangible symbol of the popular equation of culture with the novel and the foreign”—comprised a suburban family home built of non-Japanese materials such as stucco or wood shingles, and decorated with wallpaper, carpet or linoleum floors, Western-style furniture, musical instruments such as a piano, and illuminated with electrical lighting. See Tessa Morris-Suzuki, “The Invention and Reinvention of ‘Japanese Culture,’” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 54, no. 3 (1995): 763.

<sup>110</sup> Kuwabara, “Hansei to zenshin,” *Kamera*. Quoted in Torihara, *Nihon shashin shi*, 98.

<sup>111</sup> Roundtable discussion, “Hokkaidō amachua hōfu wo kataru,” *Asahi Kamera*, November 1952, 92-97.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

developments in camera technology, anyone could pick up a small-format camera and take a picture. And whereas a painting required long hours to complete, photographers could snap photographs at any time, in any place: around the home, on the way to work, or on special photo outings with fellow photo club members. Because a camera could be carried easily at all times, Ina concluded, photographers had more opportunity than painters to be blessed with the enjoyment of creation.<sup>113</sup>

As popular interest in photography spread, companies established cultural organizations (*bunka dantai*) like camera clubs for their employees. The proliferation of such clubs is indicative, on the one hand, of the belief that photography could increase the cultural education of its practitioners, and, on the other, that photo-taking was an activity accessible to people of all skill levels. Amateur photographer Osatani Gen'yōshi, who worked for a mining company in Fukuoka, was an active member of his company's photo club. According to Osatani, many of the club's members, especially miners, had left middle school to enter the workforce and thus lacked cultural refinement. But thanks to the company's camera club, those who lacked formal education could overcome their cultural deficiency by learning how to take photographs.<sup>114</sup>

In photo magazines, many commentators considered workplace camera clubs (*kaisha jigyōjō no shokuba tan'i no shashin dantai*) of fundamental importance to amateurs' photographic education and cultural engagement. Writing on the state of amateur photography in 1951, Tamura Sakae asserted that workplace clubs occupied an important position in every company's welfare and cultural development department (*kōsei bumon* and *bunka kyōiku no bumon*), and were thus one way in which companies provided for their employees' cultural education. Tamura acknowledged that workplace groups might not be well known outside the

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<sup>113</sup> Ina Nobuo, "Nichiyōbi no shashin-ka no tanoshimi," *Kamera*, March 1952, 65.

<sup>114</sup> Roundtable discussion, "Kansai amachua hōfu wo kataru," *Asahi Kamera*, October 1952, 100-106.

individual company and therefore could not match the fame of prominent amateur clubs, such as the Naniwa Shashin Kurabu (Naniwa Photography Club) in Osaka.<sup>115</sup> Nevertheless, for Tamura, the very existence of workplace clubs was proof that photography was valuable for Japanese citizens as a form of cultural expression.<sup>116</sup>

Because company clubs rented out equipment and provided facilities necessary to develop and print photographs, they enabled a broader segment of society to engage in photography, and especially poorer, working-class people. In the essay mentioned above by Kuwabara, the photographer opined that photography's usefulness as "cultural education" would generate mass interest in photography. Osatani, the Fukuoka amateur mentioned above, credited workplace photo clubs with opening photography up to lower socio-economic groups in particular.<sup>117</sup> One Nippon Yusen Kabushiki Gaisha (NYK, Japan Mail Shipping Line) employee wrote a detailed overview of his workplace club as a reference for others who might want to start or improve upon their own clubs.<sup>118</sup> As the NYK employee explained, clubs at his company fell under two broad categories: cultural groups (*bunka bu*) or exercise groups (*undō bu*). The photo club was established as one of twelve under the cultural group category. At the time of his writing, the club membership included 100 members out of 500 employees working at the company's offices in Tokyo and Yokohama.

According to the NYK employee, his company club and others like it helped make photography accessible to those who lacked the financial means to purchase their own camera equipment. Members could rent cameras, accessories, and other photo equipment, and enjoy the

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<sup>115</sup> Established in 1904 by Kuwata Shozaburo and Ishii Kichinosuke, and supported by the Kuwata Shokai photographic supply store in Osaka.

<sup>116</sup> Tamura Sakae, "1951 nen no amachua shashin-kai o kaiko suru," *Foto Āto*, December 1951, 48-51.

<sup>117</sup> Roundtable discussion, "Kansai amachua hōfu wo kataru," *Asahi Kamera*, October 1952, 100-106.

<sup>118</sup> Photography culture club member, "Aru amachua shashin kurabu no un'ei," *Kamera*, June 1954, 178-179.

use of the club's darkroom. The NYK club even provided projection equipment so that amateurs could share their photographs with a wider audience through slideshows. Other workplace photo clubs found different ways of alleviating the financial demands of photography. One amateur company club, comprised of forty-five members, utilized membership dues to purchase and circulate magazine titles for its members and provided free use of cameras for those who could not afford one.<sup>119</sup>

In addition to company photo clubs that introduced photography to an ever-expanding group of amateurs, the mass production of cameras likewise contributed to the growing number of amateur photographers by making it possible for many more Japanese to afford them. Even though civilians were prohibited from photographing freely during the war—and though retail camera markets were shut down—the production of cameras and light-sensitive materials continued for military use throughout the war. The arrival of the Occupation forces only spurred camera production, as GIs clamored for cameras to document their experiences in Japan. In 1948, 82 camera factories employed 4,812 workers. By the late 1950s, the industry had grown to 606 facilities with 32,545 employees.<sup>120</sup> Domestic camera production surpassed prewar levels by the end of the Occupation in 1952, with nearly 400,000 cameras produced annually.<sup>121</sup> As more amateurs turned to the camera as a creative pursuit, the popularity of photography exploded. By 1950, commentators were speaking of the “amateur boom” that had taken over Japan.

The boom in amateur photography engendered debates about what exactly an “amateur” was and what separated him from professional, or even semi-professional, status. Several changes in the amateur demographic and their photos spurred attempts to redefine the very term

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<sup>119</sup> “Kurabu tsūshin,” *Kamera*, December 1955, 168.

<sup>120</sup> Ross, *Photography for Everyone*, 170.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 169. By 1957, Japan was producing more than 470 times the number of cameras than in 1946.

“amateur” photography. Chief among the changes were: the shift from art photography to social documentation; an increased technical skill that at times rivaled professional work; and the “popularization” (*taishū ka*) or “massification” of photography. Commentators debated these characteristics and were challenged to agree on which constituted the defining features of amateur photography.

From the early 1950s, one of the main changes commentators acknowledged in amateur photography was a shift from artistic trends to social documentation. Ina Nobuo identified snapshot photography as a significant postwar trend in the December 1951 issue of *Asahi Kamera*,<sup>122</sup> and by 1953, photographers and critics noted that amateurs no longer took pictures that mimicked paintings or employed lyrical sentiment, as had been commonplace before the war and in the immediate postwar years. Instead, in the words of one photographer, amateurs had begun to gaze directly at reality and pursue the “unique expression of photography” (*shashin dokuji no hyōgen*).<sup>123</sup> In other words, amateurs, like professional photographers of the prewar period, had begun to rely upon the mechanical qualities of the camera to document their surroundings.<sup>124</sup>

Commentators frequently discussed amateur interest in social documentation. In a December 1953 issue of *Kamera*, Tanaka Masao divided the world of amateur photography into two realms: art and realism.<sup>125</sup> Observing that art photography had decayed over the years while realism had increased in popularity, Tanaka ascribed this to a growing awareness of the modern

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<sup>122</sup> Roundtable discussion, “Amachua shashin wa shinposhita ka,” *Asahi Kamera*, December 1951, 76-81.

<sup>123</sup> “Amachua no shinpo ni tsuite,” *Foto Āto*, February 1953, 72. It should be noted that he distinguishes this from Domon’s definition of “realism,” claiming that amateurs were simply “people who ride the route of contemporary photography.”

<sup>124</sup> Whether or not the photograph was indeed objective is not the topic of inquiry here. The point is that amateurs attempted to document society with their cameras.

<sup>125</sup> Tanaka Masao, “Ichi kyū go san toshi Nihon shashin-kai hakusho,” *Kamera*, December 1953, 76-79.

significance of photography (*shashin no gendai-teki ishiki*)—that is, the ability of photographs to represent Japanese society. Participants in one roundtable discussion, printed in the September 1953 issue of *Foto Āto*, observed a similar trend.<sup>126</sup> Katō Yasuo noted that before the war, amateurs only photographed still life, portraiture, landscapes, or other motifs within the realm of art photography. Only after the war, he observed, did amateurs begin to take up social documentation. Osuta Sōji, another participant in the 1953 roundtable, added that amateurs had started to capture scenes that were unpleasant and difficult to look at, such as poverty and homelessness. They were emboldened to do so, he believed, by the experience of living through a long war. Progressing beyond hobby photography, these amateurs had cultivated a serious mindset about how photography should be woven into the very fabric of Japanese lives. People could only find meaning in photography, Osuta argued, by using their cameras to document the everyday life of Japanese society.<sup>127</sup> Katō agreed, linking the societal and cultural importance of photography to the act of social documentation. These and other photographers rooted the significance of photography in the camera’s ability to document people in moments of everyday life.

Many amateurs, it seems, hoped to sharpen their photographic consciousness by training their lenses on Japanese society. Chiba Teisuke, an amateur who first picked up a camera in 1935, participated in a roundtable discussion with other amateurs that was published in the June 1951 issue of *Asahi Kamera*. When the conversation turned to their preferred photographic styles and motifs, Chiba explained that because art photography could not satisfy his desires, he had begun to photograph “real humanistic things” (*riaru na hyūmanisuchikku na mono*) instead. Photographers, in his eyes, had a duty to photograph and produce a truthful recording of the

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<sup>126</sup> Roundtable discussion, “Henshū-sha wa kataru,” *Foto Āto*, September 1953, 107-112.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid. Osuta credited the war for this change.

subject. Because he believed that the camera's ability to record the subject accurately differentiated photography from the fine arts, Chiba argued that the unique characteristics of photography were lost if the subject was imbued with the photographer's subjective perspective.<sup>128</sup>

Many amateurs in the early 1950s shared Chiba's sentiments. One stated in an interview for *Foto Ato* that he did not care for staged portrait photography. What drew his interest instead, he declared, was candid photographs of people—and this had led him to try snapshot photography.<sup>129</sup> Inoue Shō, a Kansai-based amateur inspired by documentary photographer Margaret Bourke-White (1904-1971), revealed in a roundtable discussion that he was somewhat opposed to artistic salon photos despite a childhood interest in haiku and a past attachment to lyrical photography. While Inoue did not entirely reject motifs associated with art photography, he believed salon photography, especially landscapes, should continue to be practiced only when they captured “societal things” and thus established a close relationship to daily life.<sup>130</sup> Like many photographers at the time, Inoue believed that photography's importance lay in its ability to produce a visual record of society.

Of course, not all amateurs were interested in documenting daily life. The postwar shift to snapshot and human-interest photography aside, an amateur's place of residence, and even his occupation, exerted significant influence over his photographic interests. Aoyama Jinzaburō, a 43-year-old amateur who enjoyed photographing mountains, worked for the railroad. Because his job allowed him to travel across Japan, Aoyama focused his energies on tourism

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<sup>128</sup> Roundtable discussion, “Amachua kien o ageru,” *Asahi Kamera*, June 1951, 76-79.

<sup>129</sup> “Amachua shashin hito ni kiku gaitōrokuon-ban,” *Foto Ato*, June 1951, 34-35.

<sup>130</sup> Roundtable discussion, “Kansai amachua hōfu wo kataru,” *Asahi Kamera*, October 1952, 100-106.

photography, primarily landscapes and wildlife.<sup>131</sup> He submitted his images to several competitions, including the National Railway Employee National Contest (Kokutetsu shokuin no zenkoku konkūru). Nakamata Masayoshi, who began working in the tourism industry after returning from fighting in the Pacific War, likewise submitted his photographs to different competitions, including *Kamera's getsurei* and the All Japan Tourism Photo Contest (Zen'nihon kankō shashin konkūru).<sup>132</sup> Amateur enthusiast Matsunaga Yoshinori started photographing at age nineteen. Inspired by the natural beauty of his native Hokkaido, Matsunaga favored landscape photography and had a particular interest in cows. But even such specific photographic preferences as his were subject to shifting trends: in one roundtable, he expressed a desire to abandon landscape and start capturing humans with a snapshot aesthetic.<sup>133</sup>

A second significant change in postwar amateur photography was a marked improvement in amateurs' technical abilities. Some commentators even suggested that amateurs had begun to surpass professionals on a technical level.<sup>134</sup> As critic Ina Nobuo and photographer Tanaka Masao discussed in a 1952 roundtable on Japanese photo exhibits, the intense interest in social documentation was a primary reason for this. The introduction to the roundtable identified 1952 as the year of highest amateur activity and development in the postwar period. As the moderator put it, this amounted to a "photo renaissance incited by amateurs" (*amachua ni yoru shashin no runessansu*) in which the quality of amateur photography had surpassed the technical expertise of professionals. In explaining the reason for their improvement, Tanaka theorized that amateurs had begun to look at how professionals documented society and realized that they

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<sup>131</sup> "Amachua kien o ageru," *Asahi Kamera*, June 1951, 76-79.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Roundtable discussion, "Hokkaidō amachua hōfuwokataru," *Asahi Kamera*, November 1952, 92-97.

<sup>134</sup> Roundtable discussion, "Amachua shashin wa shinposhita ka," *Asahi Kamera*, December 1951, 76-81.



needed to develop a deeper consciousness of the mission of their work. Recognizing that social documentation demanded a greater degree of intentionality than other photographic genres, amateur photographers had begun to approach their subjects with a renewed sense of purpose. In doing so, Tanaka reasoned, amateurs could create photographs of quality and technique that rivaled, or even surpassed, the work of professionals.<sup>135</sup>

Commentators identified a third change when comparing postwar amateur photography to the prewar era: photography's "popularization" (*taishū ka*) across a broader socio-economic spectrum. As one commentator stated, the economic class that wielded cameras (*kamera o motsu kaikyū*) had changed drastically due to the war.<sup>136</sup> Even though amateur photography had become something of a middle-class hobby before the war, practitioners still needed the necessary income and leisure time to engage in it as a serious pastime.<sup>137</sup> Prewar amateurs were described as "gentlemen" (*dan'nashū*, i.e., upper-middle-class), but in the postwar era photography had become an activity that anyone could enjoy, no matter their income or social status. As the professional photographer Watanabe Tsutomu put it, photography in the postwar years had finally become something for the masses.<sup>138</sup>

The popularization of photography among a mass audience, the increased technical skill of amateurs, and the increased seriousness with which amateurs pursued their craft threw into question the basic definition of amateur photography. Attempts at defining amateur photography surfaced in almost every photography magazine in the early postwar era. In some cases, critics simultaneously marveled at the work of amateurs and lamented the fact that their work was equal

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<sup>135</sup> Roundtable discussion, "1952 Toshi Nihon shashin-kai tenbō," *Kamera*, December 1952, 83-90.

<sup>136</sup> "Apuregēru kameraman no jittai," *Kamera*, April 1950, 84-85.

<sup>137</sup> Ross, *Photography for Everyone*, 8.

<sup>138</sup> Watanabe Tsutomu, "Sakunen no amachua kara medatsu shinjin no katsuyaku," *Foto Āto*, March, 1953, 120-122.

to, and at times better than, that of established professionals.<sup>139</sup> If it was now impossible to distinguish between the photographs of amateurs and professionals based on technical skill alone, how should amateurs be defined? In the discussions that played out across photography magazines, commentators debated three distinct criteria as a basis for a new definition of amateur photography. They asked: First, should amateurs be defined as those individuals who recorded domestic scenes for personal family albums? Second, should amateurs be distinguished from professionals on the basis of monetary profit? And third, was there a fundamental difference in the mentality of an amateur photographer that distinguished him from a professional?

One early postwar definition of amateurs held that they were simply people who had obtained a camera for the first time and started taking pictures of the family.<sup>140</sup> This definition fit the description of railroad worker Aoyama Jinzaburō, for example, who initially became interested in photography because he wanted to take family photos after the birth of his daughter.<sup>141</sup> The plethora of articles on photographing children across all magazine titles suggests that family photography was a pastime enjoyed by many amateurs. Nevertheless, not everyone agreed that amateurism was synonymous with family photography. Some commentators pointed to the penchant for family photography to buttonhole amateurs as less serious, less skilled hobbyists. In 1949, *Asahi Kamera* published a translated essay by Briton Paul Chilly in which he argued that family photography was nothing more than crude snapshots taken by hobbyists who had no interest in improving their technique. True amateurs were not

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<sup>139</sup> The “1952 Toshi Nihon shashin-kai tenbō,” roundtable in the 1953 *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, for example, discusses how amateurs have mastered techniques displayed by such prominent figures as Domon Ken and Kimura Ihei.

<sup>140</sup> Yoshii Jogetsu, “Amachuaizumu no hihyō,” *Kamera*, September 1948, 40-42.

<sup>141</sup> “Amachua kien o ageru,” *Asahi Kamera*, June 1951, 76-79.

those who took out a camera once or twice a year to photograph their families, wrote Chilly, but rather those who, like professionals, recognized the importance of diligently developing the compositional quality of their craft.<sup>142</sup>

Magazine publishers, for their part, suggested that family photography was a woman's pursuit—contrasting this to the work of more serious *male* amateurs. A two-page spread that appeared in *Kamera* in January 1951 illustrates this bias. Titled “Mother's Photography Journal” (Mama no satsuei nikki), the text of the photo spread stated that mothers who wanted to take photos of their beloved children could do so and have the results critiqued by their “cameraman” husbands. The editors further asserted that mothers—not fathers—should be the ones to take photos of children because they were the children's daily companions. As if to underscore that this was a fun-loving activity, and not for the serious amateur, the spread ended with the suggestion that mothers did not need to use high-end cameras—that a standard box camera was sufficient.<sup>143</sup> Just as in the prewar era, postwar photographers failed to take women who wanted to wield cameras seriously.

Other attempts to define amateur photography rested on the issue of whether or not a photographer received compensation for their images. On the one hand, some rejected the idea that remuneration divided the professional from the amateur. Suzuki Hachirō (1900-1985) was one of many who regarded this as a facile distinction, noting that amateurs frequently collected compensation for their work.<sup>144</sup> After all, he pointed out, *getsurei* and other contest winners often received monetary prizes. To complicate matters, some amateurs retained their non-professional status even after finding employment in the field of photography. Fukumoto Kazufumi, a

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<sup>142</sup> Paul Chilly, “Amachua shashin ni tsuite,” *Asahi Kamera*, November 1949, 78-79.

<sup>143</sup> Ootani Satoru, “Mama no satsuei nikki,” *Kamera*, January 1951, 97-99.

<sup>144</sup> Interview, “Amachua sakka no tachiba,” *Kamera*, December 1953, 69-74.

Kansai-based photographer in his mid-twenties who had recently transferred to the photography department of the *Kobe Shimbun* (*Kobe Newspaper*), refused to call himself a professional during an October 1952 roundtable printed in *Asahi Kamera*, choosing instead to identify as an amateur.

Some commentators claimed that those who depended on photography for their livelihood should be identified as professionals and that all other photographers should be labeled amateurs.<sup>145</sup> Here, the issue was not whether an amateur earned money from a photograph, but rather whether he could support himself and his family based on his photographic work alone. Midorikawa Yōichi, the aforementioned dentist, stressed the importance of maintaining a separate professional career so that photography could remain a recreational activity that did not upset the balance of family life. If an amateur were to neglect his career and devote himself solely to photography, insisted Midorikawa, he would fail in his duties as a husband and father.<sup>146</sup>

Those who attempted to define amateur and professional photography based on income argued that photography was a leisure activity for amateurs. Because they did not depend on photographic work for their livelihood, amateurs were free to hone their craft as an avocation. Discussed in this vein, amateurs were labeled “Sunday Photographers” (*nichiyō shashinka*).<sup>147</sup> This new moniker notwithstanding, commentators acknowledged that amateurs did not limit their leisurely pursuits to Sunday alone, but went out to take pictures whenever they had free time away from work.<sup>148</sup> As many amateurs demonstrated, their photography was not tied strictly

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<sup>145</sup> Ina Nobuo, “1952 Toshi Nihon shashin-kai tenbō,” *ARS Shashin Nenkan* (1953), 142-144.

<sup>146</sup> “Amachua sakka no tachiba,” *Kamera*, December 1953.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>148</sup> Ina Nobuo, “Nichiyōbi no shashin-ka no tanoshimi,” *Kamera*, March 1952, 65.

to moments of leisure. Hamamoto Nagao, a 24-year-old greengrocer employee, could only take photographs while walking through the city on his way to work because he otherwise had no free time to dedicate to photography.<sup>149</sup>

In the end, reaching a consensus on what defined amateur photography proved nearly impossible. At times, commentators questioned whether it was even necessary to outline a concrete definition of amateur photography. For example, in one discussion, Kimura Ihei and Watanabe Tsutomu at first threw their support behind the claim that the word “amateur” denoted those who took family photos. Then, in the same conversation, they stated that anyone who made a photograph was a photographer. By the end of the discussion, Kimura and Watanabe concluded that it was not necessary to distinguish between professional and amateur status.<sup>150</sup>

The above disagreements aside, most commentators concurred in acknowledging one central feature unique to the amateur photographer: his mentality. Work orders constrained professionals, but an amateur could choose his subject matter freely. According to Tanaka Masao, professional photographers needed to take work orders to maintain their family’s economic stability. This created tension between the “occupational consciousness” and the “artistic consciousness.”<sup>151</sup> In contrast, because amateurs did not depend upon photography as a source of income, they were free from the constraints of work orders and thus freer to pursue their “artistic consciousness.” In the words of Midorikawa, the dentist mentioned above, the pure spirit of an amateur rested in the feeling that he was beholden to no one and took photographs for himself alone.

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<sup>149</sup> Roundtable discussion, “Kansai amachua hōfu wo kataru,” *Asahi Kamera*, October 1952, 100-106.

<sup>150</sup> Roundtable discussion, “Amachua sakka no mondai,” *Foto Āto*, May 1953, 119-125.

<sup>151</sup> Ina Nobuo, “1952 Toshi Nihon no shashin geijutsu no dōkō,” *ARS Shashin Nenkan* (1952), 107.

While commentators of all sorts grappled with the definition of amateurism, no one challenged the importance of amateurs to the postwar development of Japanese photographic trends and styles. In an article published in *Kōga Gekkan*, the author asked what had contributed most to improvements in Japan's photography culture. The answer, he proclaimed without doubt, was amateur photographers.<sup>152</sup> In the first postwar edition of *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, judge Fujikawa Toshiyuki asserted that the amateur photos published that year, collectively, defined the future of Japanese photography.<sup>153</sup>

Critics continued to discuss the importance of amateur photography throughout the first postwar decade. In a 1953 white paper on the state of photography, Tanaka Masao commented on the difficulty of distinguishing between candid, documentary-style photographs and art photography. As Tanaka saw it, the problem in the past was that photographers recorded social phenomena in a manneristic style characteristic of art photography. This tendency, which had persisted for decades, was resolved only in the early 1950s thanks to the boom of amateur photography. As more and more amateurs grew interested in social documentation, reasoned Tanaka, fewer and fewer had pursued art photography—thus leading to a rapid rise in realism.<sup>154</sup>

Professional photographer Kanamaru Shigene (1900-1977) also connected amateur photography with the shift to social documentation. In a roundtable with Watanabe Yoshio and five amateurs, Kanamaru declared that amateur photography, more than anything, had brought about a revolution in Japan's photo world. The importance of amateurs, in his view, lay in their realistic way of seeing things (*sokubutsuteki to iu ka, riaruni mono o miru to iu mikata*).

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<sup>152</sup> Editorial, "Nihon no hokori," *Kōga Gekkan*, February 1947, 7.

<sup>153</sup> Roundtable discussion, "Arusu shashin nenkan ōbo sakuhin ni miru: Sengo no amachua shashin-kai," *Kamera*, January 1948, 29-33.

<sup>154</sup> Tanaka Masao, "Ichi kyū go san nen Nihon shashin-kai hakusho," *Kamera*, December 1953, 77.

Amateurs operated in this fashion, Kanamaru continued, because of their distinctive mindset. Building on this argument, Watanabe stated that what was most apparent in *getsurei* contests was the freedom of the amateurs to pursue their interests. Both photographers viewed amateur status as a freewheeling alternative to professional photography, where the craft was driven by work orders. Indeed, Kanamaru went on to claim that the professionals who made good photographs did so because they had the mentality of an amateur.<sup>155</sup>

Even as photography rose in popularity as a leisure activity, it remained dominated by male photographers. On the rare occasion that female photographers were featured in magazines, the word “woman” was always used as a modifier before “photographer.” Men were simply called *shashinka* (photographer) or *kameraman* (cameraman), but women were *onna no shashinka*, (women photographers) *joryū kameraman* (female cameraman), or *kamera ūman* (camerawoman).<sup>156</sup> Women who wielded cameras—whether as amateurs or professionals—faced vastly different expectations than their male peers. Indeed, it was a common belief among male photographers that the world was seen differently through women’s eyes. When Hayashi Kenichi hired Sasamoto Tsuneko as a photojournalist for the *Mainichi Shimbun*, making her the first female to hold such a position, he did so not based on her technical expertise, but because he and others believed that there were photographs that only a woman could take.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Roundtable discussion, “Amachua no gimon o hodoku,” *Asahi Kamera*, May 1955, 117.

<sup>156</sup> As Kelly Midori McCormick argues, designating the gender of the photographer effectively stripped women from equal recognition. See “Tokiwa Toyoko, the Nude Shooting Session, and the Gendered Optics of Japanese Postwar Photography,” *Japan Forum* 0, no. 0 (2021): 5.

<sup>157</sup> Sasamoto, *Raika de shotto*, 13.

A roundtable printed in *Foto Āto* in 1952 illustrates the different expectations for women photographers.<sup>158</sup> Conducted by a male moderator, the discussion hosted female students from the Tokyo College of Photography (now the Tokyo Polytechnic University). The issue of gender framed the entire discussion. Early in the conversation, the moderator exclaimed how admirable it was that women now had more freedom to pursue their interests due to postwar reforms. But when asking about their future aspirations, the moderator suggested that the women were probably thinking about marriage. In doing so, the moderator implied that marriage would surely impact whether the women could pursue photography in the future since married women were expected to become housewives.

For Nakanue Kikuko, who was raised in a family that owned a photo studio, there was no question that she would inherit the family business and continue to work even after marriage. But for the other women in the group, the prospect of marriage threatened to constrain their future careers as photographers. One discussant expressed the hope to become an advertising photographer—that is, if she married an understanding man who would allow her to maintain a job outside her housewifely duties. Iwakami Emiko asserted that she would not quit her photography job even if she married. Such expressions of determination on the part of women photographers, however muted in some cases, were clearly indicative of the changing status of women in the postwar era, even if such changes were slow to infiltrate Japan's photography culture.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Roundtable discussion, "Shashin wo aisuru Tokyo shashin daigaku no joshi gakusei ha kataru," *Foto Āto*, January 1952, 64-68.

<sup>159</sup> During the Occupation, feminists advocated for political rights and equality between men and women. Women gained the right to vote in 1946, and that same year 39 women were elected to the Diet. Other changes dictated women to have legal equality in marriage, education, the workplace, and within the family. See Elise K. Tipton, *Modern Japan*, 162-163.



In the same roundtable, gender remained a central concern when the discussion shifted to the women's preferred subject matter and photographic styles. In other roundtables and interviews with male photographers, their identity as men was never made the subject of discussion. In this roundtable, however, the young women's photographic sensibilities (*seishin*) were framed by their gender. Inaba Masae admired the work of Margaret Bourke-White, but stated that documentary photography was challenging for a woman to pursue in Japan because it required going to locations that were dangerous for a woman to visit alone, such as Shinjuku at night. Akahori wanted to pursue news photography in her future career, but only the type that "a woman should do" (although she did not elaborate on what she meant by this). Kumakai wanted to photograph Kabuki actors, further revealing that her mother thought it would be interesting for a woman to photograph male subjects—implying, as was typical at the time, that women saw things differently than men. Kumakai's statement perpetuated a longstanding stereotype regarding women photographers first established when Sasamoto Tsuneko joined the photo department at *Mainichi Shimbun*—hired, specifically, because of the belief that women possessed a different photographic perspective than men. The belief that women and men had different "camera eyes" reinforced the gendered nature of photography.

In her study of American woman photographers, Judith Fryer Davidov states that women could not be considered photographers because "in the tradition of the genre they – their bodies – *are* the subject."<sup>160</sup> The same was true for Japanese photography in the early postwar years. The gendered nature of photography is evident in reports on sponsored photography sessions for amateurs that depicted men as the photographers and women as the photographed

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<sup>160</sup> Judith F. Davidov, *Women's Camera Work: Self/Body/Other in American Visual Culture* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1998), 11. Quoted in McCormick, "Tokiwa Toyoko," 14.

subject. Although the events did not bar women from participating as photographers, few did.<sup>161</sup> Usually, the only women in attendance were the models being photographed.

In photography magazines, nearly every report on the shooting sessions includes photographs showing large groups of men photographing female models. *Asahi Kamera* covered one such event in the August 1953 issue. Professional photographers Kimura Ihei, Watanabe Tsutomu, Kanamaru Shigene, Nishiyama Sei, and Uozumi Rei instructed over 400 amateur participants, joined by four female models. Ōtsuka Gen's photographs of the outing show groups of men crowding around the female models, who pose in front of their cameras. Photographs that depicted gatherings of men photographing women were not uncommon in magazines, nor were they unique to *Asahi Kamera*. In a report on an amateur photo outing in 1951, *Kōga Gekkan* included a picture of male photographers crowded around a female model (fig. 2.4). Amateur photographers captured similar scenes and submitted them to the monthly *getsurei*. In the December 1954 issue of *Kamera*, the winning submission was an image of a large group of men photographing a nude woman on a beach (fig. 2.5). In the same issue, *Kamera* printed a two-page spread titled "Words from the Prizewinners" (Nyūshō sha no kotoba). All twelve of the featured photographers were men.

As the above examples demonstrate, photography in early postwar Japan was an activity almost exclusive to men and often, paradoxically, focused on women as subjects. Women inhabited the pages of magazines as objects of the male gaze in stylized portraits of *bijin* (beautiful women) and fashion models; in artistic compositions of nude models; and in snapshots of daily life, such as partially nude pearl divers, women in rural village communities, housewives and mothers, strippers and cabaret performers, and prostitutes. Multiple male gazes converged on these women: the gaze of the male photographer, the male professional and amateur

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<sup>161</sup> McCormick, "Tokiwa Toyoko," 2.

photographers who read the magazines, the male magazine editors and publishers, and the male subjects within photographs.



Figure 2.4. *Kōga Gekkan*, May 1951.



Figure 2.5. *Kamera*, December 1954.

One particularly telling image shows a store window display in the Ginza district of Tokyo. Funayama Katsu took the photograph from behind the flesh-and-blood models sitting in the window, using a wide-angle lens. Lounging in fashionable bathing suits in beach chairs, the

women look out from the window to a gathering crowd on the other side of the glass. Taking the photograph from this angle allowed Funayama to capture the facial expressions of the crowd, mainly composed of men, as they gazed at the women on display. Another photograph from the same series captured a group of men watching a bathing suit fashion show held on a department store roof. The photographer took the photo from behind a row of men looking down on the stage below, thus transforming the viewer into a spectator seated in the stands. In both of these images, the women are the objects of multiple male gazes: the men within the photograph, the photographer, the viewer of the photograph, and the magazine editors.

At times the male gaze linked multiple images printed on the pages of a magazine. In the 1949 *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, a farmer, peering out from a weather-beaten face dotted with stubble, looks directly across the page at the exposed flesh of a young woman pearl diver emerging from the ocean. Her head is lopped off at the top of the frame, effectively denying her subjectivity and turning her into an object for the viewer's gaze. The photographer focused on the flesh of her body dappled by bright sunlight and splashed with droplets of water from the sea. The image itself conveys a sexual tension that is further reinforced by the farmer on the opposite page who, through the placement of the images, seems to stare openly at her breasts.

Such strategic placement of images was not uncommon in magazines. In another instance, a *108oga* (Western-style) artist stands in his studio amid finished paintings and sculpted busts, painting a portrait of a nude model.<sup>162</sup> But rather than look at the nude woman in his studio, who stands in the foreground with her backside turned towards the viewer, the artist looks out of the frame to the image of a topless young woman on the opposing page. Due to the placement of the two images, the artist's line of sight aims directly at the breasts of a nude woman on the opposite page.

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<sup>162</sup> Nakamura Tatsuyuki, "Studio" (Ga shitsu), *ARS Shashin Nenkan* (1949).

Of course, photographing nude and other female models were not amateurs' only interest in the postwar period. As Japan recovered from devastation, photographic competitions began to urge amateurs to submit images that evoked their hopes for a new Japan. *Asahi Kamera* ran the results of one such contest in their July 1951 issue. The winning pictures came from four amateurs. Matsuki Masuda submitted an image of a teacher at lunchtime ladling soup to boys and girls sitting at desks laden with loaves of bread. Okumura Taiko's image "Dreams of the Homeless" (Apato kenzo, literally "Apartment Construction")<sup>163</sup> captured agricultural fields arrayed around two big new apartment complexes astride smaller houses. The next photograph, by Tamura Yōzō, features a scientist working with a gigantic microscope; and the final image is a construction scene, submitted by Ikeda Mitsugu, showing the steel beams of a new structure against an urban backdrop of tall buildings and smoke-belching industrial chimneys. When viewed together, these four images—of children with full bellies, new housing, technological advances, and a recovering cityscape—evoke hope. They present postwar Japan as a place of recovery, reconstruction, and progress. As amateurs took up the mantle to document Japanese society in the early 1950s, these were the kinds of images that filled photography magazines.

#### From Art Photography to Photographing People in Daily Life

In the prewar era, professional photographers had begun to experiment with the documentary potential of the camera, while amateur photography continued to engage artistic modes of production that had been popular since the early twentieth century. Then the war intervened, drastically altering the ability of both groups to engage in free photographic expression. Attempts by the military government to control the flow of information, in addition to chronic material shortages that steadily worsened as Japan became mired in war, effectively

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<sup>163</sup> This translation is provided by the magazine. A more literal translation is "Apartment Construction."

forced professionals into producing propaganda while squelching amateur photography altogether.

At the end of the war, photographers welcomed their liberation from wartime restrictions on photography. Ironically, however, their liberation was stifled by new constraints imposed by the Occupation authorities. But even censorship could not stifle the burgeoning interest of the Japanese in photography. Like amateurs in the prewar period, postwar amateurs were drawn to the practice of photo-taking because it was a creative artistic pursuit that demanded little in the way of technical know-how. They at first revived art photography styles that had been popular before the war. But as the Occupation progressed, photographers, professional and amateur alike, became preoccupied with depictions of daily life.

The interest in social documentation stemmed in part from memory of the military government's control over media and propaganda production. In brief, photographers wanted to aim their cameras at reality and capture that reality on film. Amateurs also took inspiration to photograph scenes of daily life from the many foreign photojournalists and documentarians who were featured frequently in Japanese magazines, including Henri Cartier-Bresson, Eugene Smith, and Werner Bischof.

Indeed, magazine editors filled the pages of their monthly issues with the photographic works of Western photographers. *Asahi Kamera*, for example, began nearly every issue with a special feature on masterpiece works from well-known American and European photographers. As well, magazines provided articles on trends and styles from abroad and updates on the latest developments in camera equipment. The many photographs, articles, interviews, and roundtable discussions provided ample opportunity for cross-cultural encounter and exchange. As we shall see next, these encounters profoundly impacted the direction of photographic styles in postwar

Japan, including the popularity of nude photography, developments in photojournalism based on American trends, and an intense interest in photographing people in moments of daily life.

### CHAPTER III

#### NUDE BODIES, PHOTOJOURNALISM, AND DOCUMENTING DAILY LIFE: CROSS-CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS AND EXCHANGE IN PHOTOGRAPHY MAGAZINES

In the summer of 1955, the National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo showcased the photographs of several French and Japanese photographers in the exhibit “Contemporary Photography: Japan and France” (*Kyō no shashin: Nihon to Furansu*).<sup>1</sup> The works of Eugène Atget (1857-1927), Robert Doisneau (1912-1994), Henri Cartier-Bresson (1908-2004), among others, were hung alongside those of Kimura Ihei, Ishimoto Yasuhiro (1921-2012), and Miki Jun (1919-1992). In the introductory essay to the exhibit catalog, noted photo critic Ina Nobuo reflected on the deep and lasting relationship between photographers from Japan and France. The recent war had cut off all photographic exchange between the two nations, Ina explained, but Japan’s keen interest in French photography had led to the speedy resumption of photographic relations in the decade following the war.<sup>2</sup> Photography magazines were fundamental to the reestablishment of this cross-cultural exchange, as coverage of Western photographers became an integral part of nearly every photo magazine published in the immediate postwar period.

From an early date, Japanese photographers expressed their admiration for the work of European and American photographers. Given the presence of Allied Occupation forces, it is not surprising that many of these photographers were Occupation personnel. Yet photographic contact was not limited to American members of the Occupation alone. In May 1946, *Kamera*

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<sup>1</sup> This translation appears on the cover of the exhibit catalog. A more literal translation might be “Photography Today: Japan and France.”

<sup>2</sup> In the essay, Ina also referenced a similar exhibit held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1953: “Contemporary Photo Exhibition: Japan and the United States” (*Gendai shashin-ten: Nihon to Amerika*).



printed an interview with German-born American photographer Alfred Eisenstaedt (1898-1995),<sup>3</sup> and in August ran a two-page spread on Latvian-born American Philippe Halsman (1906-1979). When asked by *Kamera* in 1949 to identify the “best ten” photographers in the world, Domon Ken named Hungarian Martin Munkácsi (1896-1963), Briton Herbert List (1903-1975), and French-Hungarian Brassai (born Gyula Halász, 1899-1984), among others.

This chapter examines the inclusion of Western (defined here as primarily Western European and American) photography in Japanese photography magazines published from 1946 to 1955, asking two key questions. First, how did these magazines facilitate encounters with Western photographers? And second, how did these encounters affect photographic trends in Japan? Most scholarship on the history of early postwar Japanese photography has focused on photojournalist Domon Ken and the development of his realism movement from 1950 (explained in further detail below), which aimed to capture the “objective truth” of the subject.<sup>4</sup> Scholars rightly trace the postwar turn to realism to the problematic legacy of wartime propaganda and the disastrous conditions that Japan faced in the wake of war and defeat. But there is also the question of photographic realism, *as a style*, and this is where the connection to Western influence comes in. Specifically, the impact of American photojournalism and European human-interest photography has remained largely unexplored. If Domon Ken laid the foundation for developments in postwar Japanese photography that centered on documenting reality, Western

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<sup>3</sup> Eisenstaedt’s visit to Japan made a strong impression on Kimura in particular. Seeing his work, Kimura rethought his job as a news photographer who photographed current events. See *Kimura Ihei: Kessaku senn—essei boku to leika* (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbun Publications, Inc., 2003), 74.

<sup>4</sup> For example, see Frank Feltens, “‘Realist’ Betweenness and Collective Victims: Domon Ken’s Hiroshima,” *Stanford Journal of East Asian Affairs* 11, no. 1 (2001): 64-75.; Iizawa Kōtarō, “The Evolution of Postwar Photography,” in *The History of Japanese Photography*; Thomas, “Power Made Visible”; and Fraser, *Photography and Japan*.

photographers played a pivotal role as well by popularizing human-interest photography and introducing new photojournalistic trends.<sup>5</sup>

This chapter frames a discussion of the interaction between Japanese and Western photographers with Mary Louise Pratt's concept of "contact zones." First introducing the idea in a 1991 keynote address to the Modern Language Association,<sup>6</sup> Pratt described them as "the social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today."<sup>7</sup> Focused on the question of how to theorize the dynamics of 'contact' between two disparate cultures, Pratt presented such moments of encounter as an exercise in mutual relations and interactive communication—not as a one-sided dialogue controlled by a colonizer or other dominant group. As different cultures meet within these contact zones, suggested Pratt, the subordinated group undergoes a process of transculturation: they adopt and adapt, in a selective process, materials from the dominant culture. Pratt cautioned that this is not always a case of forced assimilation by the hegemonic culture; subordinated groups can exert agency to determine what gets incorporated into their own culture and how it is used.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> As a product of Western invention and importation into Japan, photography in the prewar period maintained close connections to the West. Many prewar issues of *Asahi Kamera*, for example, include photographs by Western photographers as well as essays penned in English. Additionally, photographers in the interwar period were heavily influenced by Western photojournalism, the avant-garde German New Objectivity, and surrealism. For more, see Torihara, *Nihon shashin shi*.

<sup>6</sup> Pratt further developed the concept of contact zones and how they worked in her research. See *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992).

<sup>7</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," *Profession* (1991), 34.

<sup>8</sup> Pratt locates the origins of the term "transculturation" with Cuban sociologist Fernando Ortiz, who in 1940 coined the term in an attempt to "replace concepts of acculturation and assimilation used to characterize culture under conquest." Quoted in "Arts of the Contact Zone," 36.

This chapter argues that photography magazines, as cultural contact zones, facilitated international exchange by bringing together Western and Japanese photographers within the spaces of magazines, thus exposing readers to Western photographers and photographic styles.<sup>9</sup> The regular coverage of Western photography inspired three key developments in Japanese photography: first, a rekindled interest in photojournalism; second, an enthusiasm for human-interest photography, a style concerned with photographing people in moments of daily life; and third, an acceptance of nude photography as a form of art.<sup>10</sup>

Fundamental to Pratt's definition of contact zones is the notion that encounters occur at a time of "highly asymmetrical relations of power." The Allied Occupation of Japan was just such a time. Mire Koikari has defined the Occupation as an instance of U.S. imperialism,<sup>11</sup> and John Dower has characterized it as a "neocolonial military dictatorship" in which SCAP not only symbolized the hierarchical position of the U.S. in Japan but also engaged in direct manipulation of Japan's society and culture.<sup>12</sup> Building on Dower's assertion, Kitamura Hiroshi has argued

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<sup>9</sup> This is not the first study to apply the idea of the "contact zone" to Japanese photography. Melissa Miles and Kate Warren have applied the concept to their study of early twentieth-century Japanese photographers in Broome, Australia. They argue that Japanese immigrants used photography as a means of transcending social lines to create their own place among the varied cultures and social classes of Broome, and that they expressed their "ambitions and achievements" by photographing the adoption and adaption of Anglo-Australian social and cultural systems. As an example of the latter, Japanese residents posed for photographs in white clothing—at the time a symbol of Australian colonial mastery—to signify their own economic ambition and success. In this way, photography acted as a *product* of cultural exchange by revealing how the Japanese adopted and adapted Western culture. Miles and Warren further argue that photography did not merely capture moments of cross-cultural encounter; it actively *facilitated* cultural exchange as well. To take one example, photographers took photos of Australia's Aboriginal population that they then made into postcards and circulated between Australia and Japan, thereby facilitating cross-cultural contact and the development of intercultural relations. See Melissa Miles and Kate Warren, "The Japanese Photographers of Broome: Photography and Cross-Cultural Encounter," *History of Photography* 41, no. 1 (2017): 3-24, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03087298.2017.1280903>.

<sup>10</sup> Even well-known photojournalists engaged in nude photography at the height of its popularity, publishing their images in the frontispieces of popular photography journals or in special one-time issues published by magazines. For example, *Foto Ato* published *Rafu (Nude Woman)* in 1951, and *Gendai sakka nūdo foto kessaku-sen (Selection of Nude Photographs by Contemporary Artists)* in 1952.

<sup>11</sup> Koikari, *Pedagogy of Democracy*, 17.

<sup>12</sup> Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 81, 203.

that the U.S. employed Hollywood to cement its hegemonic position over Japan by screening films that celebrated “white” achievement while disparaging “inferior” non-white minorities.<sup>13</sup>

In the case of photography, as we discussed in Chapter II, the unequal power relationship between the Occupation forces and Japan was manifested in SCAP censorship of Japanese photography magazines and self-censorship on the part of Japanese publishers. In this context of asymmetrical power relations, it was within the pages of photo magazines that photographers of differing nations came together: Occupation personnel, American photojournalists, European humanist and art photographers, and, of course, Japanese photographers. Photographs, articles, and interviews documenting these encounters suggest that the Japanese engaged with their Western peers on equal terms, communicating through the common language of photography. Thus, although censorship of photography magazines at times reinforced the underlying power relations of the Occupation, the magazines could at times also reveal “the instabilities and malleability of these relations”<sup>14</sup> by documenting cross-cultural encounter and exchange.

#### Photography Magazines and Cross-Cultural Encounters

The means by which magazines informed their readers about Western photography can be divided into five broad categories: 1) reports on technological developments; 2) articles on photographic trends, styles, and principles of composition; 3) interviews and roundtable discussions; 4) articles on or by Western photographers; and, of course, 5) photographs themselves. This last category can be further subdivided into two groups: the photographic work of Western photographers, and photos that Japanese photographers took of Western places, people, and objects. This section will examine each of these five categories in detail.

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<sup>13</sup> Kitamura, “America’s Racial Limits,” 139-162.

<sup>14</sup> Miles Warren, “The Japanese Photographers of Broome.”

Nearly every issue of every photography magazine published in Japan between 1946 and 1955 included reports on European and American camera technology. In its January 1949 issue, *Amachua Shashin Sōcho* published a two-page spread on one of the most coveted cameras among Japanese photographers: the Leica. Although the author hailed the Leica as a modern precision camera, he also cautioned that it was a camera more suited to knowledgeable professionals. Less adept amateurs, he warned, should test the camera before making a purchase, lest they leave the store without fully understanding how the camera worked.<sup>15</sup> *Kamera* featured several cameras in the December 1950 issue: the Kodak Duaflex; the latest Flexaret model, a twin reflex camera produced by the Czechoslovakian company Meopta; and a new Rolleiflex from American-occupied West Germany. *Asahi Kamera*, for its part, ran regular features on foreign camera equipment, featuring the Ansco Karomat (Agfa Karat 36) in the February 1951 issue and a new small-format Leidorf model in the November issue that same year.

Moreover, magazines introduced their readers to more than just camera bodies and lenses. In its December 1946 issue, *Kamera* reported on an assortment of photo technology from the U.S., including General Electric photo studio lightbulbs, the Kodak Universal M-Q Developer, and a drying box for recently developed images.<sup>16</sup> By 1950, *Kamera* had begun to print regular installments on American photographic technology in a series titled “American Photography News” (*Amerika shashin kai nyūsu*), eventually changing the title to “Foreign News” (*Kaigai nyūsu*) as it began to cover other countries as well. Other magazines included similar spotlights on foreign technology in their back-matter. Thus, even if an amateur or

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<sup>15</sup> Morooka Kōji, “Raika no maku,” *Amachua Shashin Sōsho*, January 1949, 28-31.

<sup>16</sup> Tamura Yokihiro, “Amerika shinseihin shōkai” *Kamera*, December 1946, 40-41.

professional lacked the financial means to purchase imported products, he could still keep abreast of the latest developments from abroad.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to reports on camera equipment, magazines provided readers with a host of articles on Western art composition and photographic styles. Over several magazine issues in 1952, *Kamera* ran a series on Western composition entitled “Discussion of Photographic Composition” (Shashin no kōzu no hanashi). The first installment in the series, subtitled “Density and Wisdom” (Mitsudo to kichi-sei), focused on the works of French post-impressionist painter Paul Cézanne (1839-1906). Hailing Cézanne as someone who considered composition the essence of good painting, author Yanagi Ryō trained his attention on Cézanne’s use of density, a painting technique achieved with bold brushstrokes or by adding layers of paint to create textual intensity or dynamism. After exploring Cézanne’s use of density, Yanagi demonstrated how readers could employ the compositional technique in their photographic work, emphasizing, in particular, the use of balance and contrast. Yanagi illustrated his point with a photograph of a nude female torso by Man Ray (1890-1976). In the photo, Man Ray used an

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<sup>17</sup> In the early 1950s, as Japanese camera production increased in quality and quantity, many magazine titles started publishing reports on domestic camera products alongside reports on American or other foreign camera equipment. In a January 1951 issue, *Kamera* informed readers of the latest foreign-produced photo equipment in their “Foreign News” series, including enlargers, a new Leica, and range finders. The next page presented the reader with a spread displaying an equally impressive list of developments in domestic products. In addition to range finders, enlargers, and flashbulbs, the spread promoted the Beautyflex, a twin reflex camera briefly manufactured by camera maker Taiyōdō. Starting in March 1952, *Asahi Kamera* even started including a serial titled “This Photo Made with Japanese Camera” (“Kokusan kamera no pēji”)\* that showcased work taken with the Pearl II, Semi Minolta, Olympus Flex, and other cameras made by Japanese manufacturers.

*Foto Āto* printed a feature spread on Japanese twin-reflex cameras in the January 1950 issue. Among the cameras featured were the Yallu Flex, a 35mm model produced in 1949 by the Yallu Optical Company (Yarū Kōgaku); the Ricoh Flex, a series of 6x6 twin-reflexes made by Ricoh (Riken Optical Industries) in the 1950s; and the Gem Flex, a subminiature twin-reflex\*\* manufactured by the Shōwa Optica Works (Shōwa Kōgaku Seiki), also in the 1950s. By the mid-1950s, as Japanese cameras began to garner global attention, articles on domestic products began to compete with a dedicated interest in foreign camera equipment.

\*As was often the case, *Asahi Kamera* provided an English translation of the Japanese title. A more literal translation might be “Pages for Domestic Cameras.” *Asahi Kamera* printed forty-two installments by the end of 1955.

\*\* Subminiature cameras used film smaller in size than 35 mm. The Gem Flex, one of many subminiatures on the market at the time, used 17.5mm film.

exaggerated contrast that threw the woman's breasts, rib cage, and biceps into sharp relief by deep shadows and a pitch-black background that surround her body. The effect transformed the woman's body into an abstract image, open to interpretation according to the viewer's imagination. In other installments in the "Discussion of Photographic Composition" series, Yanagi dissected the works of a wide range of artists, among them modern and surrealist painter Amedeo Modigliani (1884-1920), Raphael of the High Renaissance era (1483-1520), and landscape painter Meindert Hobbema (1683-1709). By the final installments, Yanagi had shifted his focus from painters to photographers, including Edward Weston and Werner Bischof.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to updates on the latest camera equipment and lessons on composition, readers gained a greater knowledge of Western visual culture through essays on the history of photography penned by critics and professionals. Ina Nobuo wrote a series of articles published in *Kamera* that chronicled the world history of photography. Even though the series title promised a history that was global in scope, Ina devoted his attention almost exclusively to developments in Europe and the U.S.<sup>19</sup> In other articles, commentators focused more narrowly on histories of particular publications, such as *Life* magazine,<sup>20</sup> or on prominent personages such as George Eastman.<sup>21</sup> These articles undoubtedly gave amateurs greater insight into principles of

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<sup>18</sup> Other magazine titles published articles on Western art and photographic composition. A two-part series printed in *Asahi Kamera* in April and May 1954, entitled "What is Composition" (*Kōzu to wa dō iu mono ka*) used examples exclusively from Western photographers. And an article printed in *Kōga Gekkan* in August 1952 discussed the composition of photographer Joseph Foldes: "Foreign Works Appreciation 8: Composition and Story" (*Gaikoku sakuhin kanshō VIII kōzu to hanashi: Josefu fōrudesu*), 199-201.

<sup>19</sup> Ina Nobuo, "Sekai shashin shi." Printed in installments in *Kamera* from July 1949 to June 1950, with the exception of the November 1949 issue.

<sup>20</sup> Watanabe Tsutomu, "Raifu imamukashi monogatari," *Kamera*, December 1948, 38-40.

<sup>21</sup> "Kamera no rekishi: Shashin kagaku to geijutsu no ikita meisho jōji īsutoman hakubutsukan," *Kamera*, January 1952, 34-36. Supplied by GHQ. *Asahi Kamera* printed two articles on George Eastman, in their July and August 1951 issues. Kamada Yasuji, "Kyō no shashin o kizuuta hito: Jōji īsutoman."

Western photographic composition as well as new trends in genres such as photojournalism and amateur snapshot photography.<sup>22</sup>

American photography magazines were another aspect of Western photography of interest to a Japanese audience. *Kamera* featured a handful of magazine titles in a two-page spread published in October 1949, among them *American Photography*, *U.S. Camera*, *Photography*, *The Camera*, and *American Photography*.<sup>23</sup> Some of these titles, alongside other famous general-interest magazines such as *Life* and *Look*, were available to the Japanese public at Civil Information and Education (CI&E) Libraries. The Occupation set up these cultural centers to provide American books and periodicals, many of which were translated into Japanese, to Japanese citizens.<sup>24</sup>

Interviews and round table discussions provided an opportunity for direct engagement between Japanese and Western photographers, and magazines frequently printed the transcript of these meetings for their readers. Some of the individuals interviewed were Occupation personnel, such as Lieutenant Jack Halter of the Signal Photos Department, whom Kumagai Tatsuo interviewed for *Kamera*'s February 1946 issue.<sup>25</sup> Kumagai expressed interest in the kind of photographic work Halter did for the military, comparing it to Japanese photojournalism. In

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<sup>22</sup> Japanese amateur photographers learned about their peers in the U.S. and Europe through articles on popular photography abroad. In the first postwar issue of *Asahi Kamera*, Ina wrote an essay in which he discussed the postwar photo craze in America that had accompanied the increase in inexpensive, high-quality cameras manufactured domestically in the U.S. In addition, the ranks of amateurs swelled because many people now had access to cameras via their work for the U.S. military, such as GIs who served in the Occupation. The net result, Ina concluded, was that photo enthusiasm in the U.S. had surpassed prewar levels. Ina Nobuo, "Kaigai Shashin-kai Tenbō," *Asahi Kamera*, October 1949, 48-50.

<sup>23</sup> Tamura Yukihiro, "Amerika shashin zasshi," *Kamera*, October 1949, 56-57.

<sup>24</sup> The CI&E Library was a pivotal component of SCAP's re-education programs. The libraries, opened as early as November 1945, were created with the specific intent to reorient "occupied peoples and institutions." By 1951, there were 23 centers scattered across Japan. See Ochi, "What Did She Read?," 359-363, and Henry James, Jr. "The Role of the Information Library in the United States International Information Program," *The Library Quarterly* 23, no. 2 (1953): 75-114.

<sup>25</sup> Kumagai Tatsuo, "Sig. Photo buin: Lt. Jakku Harutā" *Kamera*, February 1946, 28-31.



1947, *Shashin Tembō* (Photo Outlook) printed an interview with Helen Bruck, a photographer for *Pacific Stars and Stripes*.<sup>26</sup> The interviewer, Sasamoto Tsuneko, kept the conversation focused on women's status in the photographic industry. Sasamoto expressed particular interest in career opportunities for women photographers in the U.S., peppering Bruck with questions about what types of photography-related occupations American women pursued and whether they enjoyed the same opportunities as men in the profession.

Of course, members of the Signal Corps and other Allied personnel were not the only photographers to travel to Japan during the Occupation. Other photographers from abroad included correspondents from American media outlets such as *Life* magazine, who came to document the Occupation or sojourned in Japan on their way to document the Korean War, and individual photographers drawn to Japan out of interest in its culture and society. In a roundtable printed in the August 1952 issue of *Asahi Kamera*, Margaret Bourke-White (1904-1971) noted that she had traveled to Japan to photograph America's cultural influence on the island nation in the wake of the Occupation.<sup>27</sup> Helen Bruck also took note of American cultural influence. In her view, the most obvious cultural change could be seen in women's clothing. Before coming to Japan, Bruck had expected all Japanese women to be adorned with a traditional hairstyle and long-sleeved kimono. But to her surprise, many women in Tokyo wore Western clothing and had their hair styled in permanent waves. American cultural influence was a subject of particular interest among Western photographers, some of whom looked upon it with admiration and others with disdain. In one interview, Werner Bischof (1916-1954) admitted that while he held a

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<sup>26</sup> Sasamoto Tsuneko, "Amerika no joryū kameraman o kataru: Heren burukku jō no koto," *Shashin Tembō*, September 1949, n.p.

<sup>27</sup> The roundtable with Margaret Bourke-White started with a section on her impressions of Japan—a common feature with most interviews and roundtables. Compared to Europe, which seemed to be in a slump, Bourke-White described Japan as a country newly rising and filled with energetic people. "Bākuhowaito joshi ni mono o kiku," *Asahi Kamera*, August 1952, 89-93.

particular affinity for Kyoto, he harbored a mild distaste for Tokyo due to the corrupting presence of the Americans who had negatively impacted the city and its inhabitants.<sup>28</sup>

American cultural influences were a popular subject for Japanese photographers as well, exhibited most frequently in photographs of women. Miyake Kiyoshi's photograph "Modern Woman" (Kindai josei) offers one good example.<sup>29</sup> The portrait features a young woman in profile, clad in a headscarf and a chic blouse. She gazes to the left of the frame while clutching a set of fashion sketches to her breast, giving the impression that she is daydreaming about Western couture. Photographs similar to Miyake's appeared regularly in Japanese photography magazines. Women were pictured in calf-length dresses standing next to Coca-Cola signboards, posing demurely by Hollywood posters affixed to urban buildings, and modeling the latest fashions from abroad, including white, Western-style wedding dresses.

But new cultural influences did not flow into Japan solely from the United States. Magazines offered pictures that showed readers material culture and lifestyles from European countries as well. Akiyama Shōtarō (1920-2003), for example, submitted a four-part series to *Asahi Kamera* titled "People of the New Theater" (Shingeki no hitobito) that featured Japanese actors in productions of Western stage plays. In the third installment, cast members appeared in medieval European dress for Fredrich Schiller's *William Tell* production in Tokyo.<sup>30</sup> *Kamera* printed Hayata Yūji's photographs from a 1954 production of *Lilac Garden*, a ballet set to a composition by Ernest Chausson (1855-1899) that was originally based on a Russian novella. In the text that accompanied the images, Mishima Yukio exclaimed that Nobuo Iwamura, who was

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<sup>28</sup> "Vuerunābishoffu-shi o kakonde sukiyaki pāti," interviewed by Domon Ken and Kimura Ihei. *Kamera*, January 1952, 52-55.

<sup>29</sup> *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, 1948, 37.

<sup>30</sup> The series appeared from May to August, 1955.

selected for the lead role across from American prima ballerina Nora Kaye (1920-1987), filled the audience with anticipation for a bright future (although whether he meant for ballet specifically or society more generally was left up to the reader's interpretation).

As photographic contact zones, the images and articles that readers encountered in magazines provided insight into the diverse cultures and lifestyles of the Western world. Writing specifically on American photography, Watanabe Yoshiaki stated that the images featured in popular American photography magazines had the “smell of American culture;”<sup>31</sup> and the same could be said of photographs that featured other locations across the globe. A four-page spread in a 1950 issue of *Asahi Kamera*, for instance, informed readers about the public transit system in London.<sup>32</sup> The photographs showcased London's famous double-decker buses crammed with commuters, as well as the city's distinctive architecture. In one image, the domed top of St. Paul's Cathedral looms in the background, just visible through thick London fog, while the city's iconic double-decker buses snake around multi-story buildings of brick and stone that tower towards the top of the frame on the right side of the page. *Kōga Gekkan*, for its part, gave Japanese readers a taste of German clothing customs, running a two-page spread in September 1947 of European summer scenes that included women clothed in traditional dirndl dress. In other magazines, photographs featured Hollywood actresses, Parisian cafes, and imposing New York City skyscrapers.

Among Japanese photo magazines, *Asahi Kamera* led the way in featuring photographs by Western photographers, starting with their first postwar issue. In October 1949, the magazine printed portraits of Winston Churchill and Dwight D. Eisenhower taken from Yousef Karsh's (1908-2002) “Faces of Destiny” series. Then from January 1950 onward, the editors included in

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<sup>31</sup> Watanabe Yoshiaki, “Foto ātsu-shi ni miru Amerika sakka,” *Kamera*, August 1948, 27-29.

<sup>32</sup> Nakasato Tomijiro, “Rondon no rasshu awā,” *Asahi Kamera*, June 1950, 38-41.

each frontispiece a photo spread by a Western photographer for a series entitled “Selections from [photographer’s name]” (Kaigai Yūmei Shashin Sakka Shōkai).<sup>33</sup> The placement in the frontispiece, an area typically reserved for photos of the highest standard, highlights the significance of Western photography for a Japanese audience. In the second half of each issue, *Asahi Kamera* also printed an article by a Japanese photographer or critic on the same photographer featured in the “Selections” series, and usually followed this with a translated essay on the same featured photographer penned by a Western photographer. By the end of 1955, *Asahi Kamera* had printed 52 installments of the series, demonstrating that interest in Western photographers remained steady throughout the first postwar decade.

In the April 1950 issue, one of *Asahi Kamera*’s editors noted that the “Selections” series had been well received by readers, and reassured readers that the magazine would continue to “have the photographic world of Japan, which was stagnant during the war, absorb photographic trends from around the world.”<sup>34</sup> Initially, *Asahi Kamera* featured prominent American documentary photographers in the series, such as David Douglas Duncan (1916-2018) and Eliot Elisofon (1911-1973). By the end of 1951, pillars of the European photography scene began appearing as well, including Werner Bischof, Robert Doisneau, and Willy Ronis (1910-2009). Most, but not all, of the photographers who appeared in the frontispiece spreads were photojournalists or photographers with a dedicated interest in documenting the human condition.

Two characteristics of European and American photojournalists were lauded above all others in the “Selections” series. First, Western photographers were praised for their ability to press the shutter at the most opportune moment; second, they were lauded for their ability to

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<sup>33</sup> “Selections” is the English title provided by the magazine. A more direct translation of the Japanese title might be “An Introduction to Famous Foreign Photographers.”

<sup>34</sup> “Editor’s Section” (Henshū-shitsu), *Asahi Kamera*, April 1950.

capture the subject's humanity. Where timing was concerned, Japanese photographers studied with interest the work of French human-interest photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson. Dissecting Cartier-Bresson's approach to photography in one essay, Ina Nobuo wrote that he waited to release the shutter until the moment when the lighting, composition, and emotion all matched exactly (*pittari to ichi shita shunkan*).<sup>35</sup> So influential was Cartier-Bresson that the terms "moment" (*shunkan*) and "decisive moment" (*ketteiteki shunkan*) became buzzwords in the early 1950s, frequently invoked in photo magazines as photographers became increasingly interested in using their cameras to document society.

Regarding the capturing of the subject, Japanese photographers focused on the ability of European photographers to record intimate, candid moments in people's everyday lives. When Ina praised Robert Capa's (1913-1954) photo story on Pablo Picasso, he did so not because Capa represented Picasso the artist (*geijutsu-ka toshite no Pikaso*), but rather because he depicted Picasso the human (*ningen toshite no Pikaso*) in images of the famous painter playing with his son and wife at the beach.<sup>36</sup> When presenting Alfred Eisenstaedt's photo of Albert Einstein and Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer, Ina highlighted his skill in expressing the respect and friendship between the two men, who appear in the image engrossed in a sea of notes scattered on the table before them.<sup>37</sup> And when presenting the work of Leonard McCombe (b. 1923), whose celebrated career at *Life* magazine spanned nearly three decades, Ina alerted readers to his expertise in capturing the natural expression of people in unguarded moments.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Ina Nobuo, "Shashin geijutsu no daijisen o iku hitobito Anri Kaatie Buresson," *Asahi Kamera*, August 1951, 84.

<sup>36</sup> "Umibe no Pikaso," *Asahi Kamera*, August 1952, 7-13. Text by Ina Nobuo.

<sup>37</sup> "A. Aizensutatto shashin-shū 2," *Asahi Kamera*, January 1955, 15-21. Text by Ina Nobuo.

<sup>38</sup> "Reonādomakkōmu shashin-shū," *Asahi Kamera*, May 1954, 13-19.

The “Selections” series featured more than just photojournalists and human-interest photographers. Art and landscape photographers were featured as well, including landscape photographer Ansel Adams (1902-1984); Japanese-American Harry K. Shigeta (1887-1963), who experimented with artistic expression; and Stirling Henry Nahum (1906-1956), known simply as Baron, a portraitist who specialized in famous entertainers, authors, fashion designers, and foreign dignitaries.<sup>39</sup> The inclusion of these and other art photographers is a testament that, while photojournalism and documentary photography remained dominant trends, art photography continued to enjoy popularity among many photographers.

Indeed, even though the “Selections” series tended to feature photojournalists, *Asahi Kamera* and other magazines included a broad range of photographers and photographic genres, ranging from strict documentary reporting to portraiture and nude photography, and on to the experimental and avant-garde. In 1950, *Asahi Kamera* published photos from a Japan International Salon exhibition that showcased art photographers from Portugal, Czechoslovakia, Luxemburg, Spain, Hungary, Italy, and England.<sup>40</sup> The international salons were tremendously popular among Japanese and foreign photo enthusiasts. According to a report that ran in the March 1953 issue of *Asahi Kamera*, the 13th annual salon received 626 submissions from foreign photographers alone.<sup>41</sup> *Kamera* printed numerous photos from international salons as

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<sup>39</sup> The text that accompanied Baron’s feature spread in the February 1952 edition of *Asahi Kamera* stated that his photographs enjoyed widespread popularity because he maintained the grandeur of his subjects (in particular, the royal family of England) while artfully conveying the feeling that they were like everyone else (*minshu-teki na shitashimi*). “Baron shashin-shū,” *Asahi Kamera*, February 1952, 7-14.

<sup>40</sup> Kanemaru Shigene and Ina Nobuo, “Kokusai shashin saron nyūsen kessaku-shūi,” *Asahi Kamera*, December 1950, 51-64.

<sup>41</sup> Kanemaru Shigene and Ina Nobuo, “Kokusai shashin saron nyūsen kessaku-shū,” *Asahi Kamera*, March 1953, 33-40.

well,<sup>42</sup> including contemporary French art photography and modern art photography from Switzerland.

*Kōga Gekkan*, like other magazines, frequently published spreads on Western photographers. In the October 1947 issue, the magazine included a special on Alfred Stieglitz (1864-1946), who advocated photography as an art form.<sup>43</sup> The September 1951 issue opened with a feature on German portrait and theater photographer Liselotte Strelow (1908-1981),<sup>44</sup> and followed this with a spread on other European photographers.<sup>45</sup> Here, the works of Rudolf Doderhoff (1917-1992), Ingrid Autenrieth (b. 1926), and Ludwig Windstosser (1921-1983), among others, showcased pastoral landscapes, romantic portraiture, and urban photography captured with a distinctly modernist aesthetic. The third feature in the issue displayed the works of European art photographers. Titled “Works Taken with a Rolleiflex” (Rōrai sakuhin-shū), the images included fashion portraits of female models, nude photographs, and mountainous landscapes by Swiss and German photographers.

Notably, the interaction between Western and Japanese photographers was not limited to the pages of photography magazines alone. *Kōga Gekkan* printed Japanese-English dictionaries containing photographic terms in several of its issues. The dictionary published in April 1948 filled a staggering four pages, divided into six sections: the practice of photographing (e.g., landscape, depth of field); camera equipment (e.g., optical finder, cable release); optics and

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<sup>42</sup> Popular in the first half of the twentieth century, salon photography refers both to a style of photography that emphasizes a classical “fine art” composition, as well as to contests or exhibitions in which photographers submitted their work to be judged and displayed. The March 1950 issue of *Asahi Kamera* reported on the growing numbers of Japanese photographers who submitted their photos to international salons, as well as the recovery of Japan’s own International Photo Salon.

<sup>43</sup> “Afureddo Sutigurittsu: 1947-Nen natsu nyūyōku gendai bijutsukan kinen tenran-kai yori,” *Kōga Gekkan*, October 1947, 5-8.

<sup>44</sup> “Tokushū Ōshū sakka shijō ten shetorō joshi sakuhin-shū,” *Kōga Gekkan*, September 1951.

<sup>45</sup> “Oirōpa kamera kessaku-shū,” *Kōga Gekkan*, September 1951.

lenses (e.g., ultra-violet ray); processing (e.g., dark room; tank development); photosensitive materials (e.g., panchromatic film; bromide paper); and chemicals (e.g., potassium bromide, toner). Such dictionaries surely proved helpful to those who read American and other English-language publications, such as *Popular Photography* or *Life*, available at CI&E libraries.

Additionally, these dictionaries suggest that Japanese photographers might have expected personal encounters with camera-wielding, English-speaking Occupation personnel who were documenting their experiences in Japan. One short essay in the May 1946 issue of *Kamera* demonstrates that such encounters were not uncommon: the owner of a film developing studio discussed American GIs shopping in droves at his camera shop.<sup>46</sup> As well, American and European photographers who came to Japan developed lasting relationships with Japanese photographers (a subject explained in more detail below). For example, Miki Jun's employment for *Life* magazine demanded that he spend a considerable amount of time with Carl Mydans, David Douglas Duncan, and other photojournalists on assignment in Japan. By bringing these photographers together in real life, photography acted yet again as a point of contact in cross-cultural encounters between Japanese and Euro-American photographers.

In addition to features on foreign photographers, magazines published images by Japanese photographers of foreign places and things. The September 1951 issue of *Kōga Gekkan* mentioned above included in the frontispiece a special on Kitano Kunio's (1910-2000) trip to Europe, with pictures of the Cathedral of Cologne, an idyllic village in the Bavarian town of Garmisch-Partenkirchen, and a quaint, quiet street in Kalmbach, Germany.<sup>47</sup> At the end of the

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<sup>46</sup> "Tōkyō no zairyō-ya-san," *Kamera*, May 1946, 26-29.

<sup>47</sup> "Kitano Kunio toō sakuhin-shū," *Kōga Gekkan*, September 1951. Kitano himself had a deep interest in European and American photographic trends. Continuing the interest in European photography, the issue also included an article on a German photo factory, two articles on German photo equipment, as well as an essay on German amateur photography.



issue, a notice appeared calling readers' attention to a soon-to-be-published photobook of Kitano's pictures of Germany, hailing the book as a must-read (*hitsudoku no sho*) for professionals, amateurs, and camera makers alike. In 1950, *Asahi Kamera* printed several photographs by Natori Yōnosuke taken while on assignment in the U.S. for *Life* and *Fortune* magazines,<sup>48</sup> and in 1952 used a number of Ishibashi Kanichirō's shots of Parisian streets and high-class housing suburbs of Los Angeles for cover images.

In photo magazines, the focus on foreign photography was so great that the subject often took up nearly half of any given issue. The January 1953 issue of *Asahi Kamera* provides just one instance in which coverage of Western photographers or photographed subjects filled the majority of the issue. French ballet star Liana Daydé (b. 1932), photographed in color by Funayama Katsu, gazes seductively from the cover, the red of her lips and headscarf contrasting sharply with a dark green background. Then, on the first page of the issue, another color portrait appears: a Western model bathed in soft golden hues photographed by German-American fashion photographer Horst P. Horst (1906-1999). A seven-page feature on Brassai and his street photos of Paris comes next, as the thirty-first installment in the "Selections" series. This is followed by a portrait of a kimono-clad Japanese woman, but this image offers only a small break from the Western imagery that continues to dominate the issue. Turning the page, the reader next sees Mihori Ieyoshi's (1921-2006) collection of photos of Western ballet, and a few pages later finds first a section on the 1953 *U.S. Camera Annual* that fills a staggering fifteen pages. This is followed by an essay on nude photography by Lewis Tulchin. Additional photographs in the frontispiece by Western photographers include stills from the 1950 French film *Le Chateau de Verre* (*The Glass Castle*), and selections from Fritz Henle's (1909-1993) "City at Night." The issue also included photos by Japanese photographers of Western subjects,

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<sup>48</sup> "Natori yōnosuke taibei sakuhin-shū," *Asahi Kamera*, September 1950.

including a photo of Pennsylvania Station in Philadelphia by Kikuchi Kosuke and a portrait of film director Josef von Sternberg by Hamaya Hiroshi. The second half of the issue includes an interview with photojournalist Margaret Bourke-White and an essay on Brassai.

As the above issue of *Asahi Kamera* suggests, magazines functioned as photographic contact zones in multiple ways: through photographs, articles, interviews, and roundtable discussions. These encounters had a lasting impact on Japanese photographic trends. More specifically, they appear to have fueled new photographic interests in Japan, such as nude portraiture, photojournalism, and human-interest photography. While Japanese photographers had always expressed some degree of interest in and involvement with Western photographic trends, their fascination with styles popularized by Western photographers in the postwar period arguably owed to, and was guided by, the situation that prevailed in Japan at the time: namely, the overwhelming presence of Americans brought by the Occupation, the depredation of early postwar society, and the arrival of foreign photojournalists on their way through Japan to photograph the Korean War. The following sections will examine the styles that flourished in Japan under American and European influence.

### The Nude Woman: A New Genre of Art Photography

Three words characterize the state of Japanese society in the immediate postwar years: *yakeato* (burned ruins), *kyodatsu* (physical exhaustion and mental numbness), and *kasutori* (days in the dregs). By the end of the war, cities that had once been lively urban centers were charred and desolate landscapes, filled with the starving, orphaned, and homeless. Most of the destruction owed to the waves of incendiary bombing that the U.S. had unleashed in 1945, which created intense, all-consuming infernos, reduced Japanese cities to rubble, and took tens of thousands of lives. Those left in the ruins fought to scrounge even the most basic necessities of

life. Severe housing shortages forced people to live in train stations, buses, or shacks made of scavenged debris, and rampant starvation decreased the average height and weight of school children until 1948.<sup>49</sup> Children were perhaps the most vulnerable victims of war. In 1948, there were an estimated 120,000 homeless children, including 30,000 war orphans. To survive, they sold food and tobacco ration tickets, gathered cigarette butts, and worked as shoe shiners.<sup>50</sup> Photographer Hayashi Tadahiko described the speech of two young boys he encountered on the streets of Tokyo as identical to members of local yakuza gangs that controlled the black markets, indicative of their work as errand runners.<sup>51</sup>

The strain of putting body and soul into the long and drawn-out war, living in constant fear of bombing raids, and struggling with dismal living conditions had taken its toll on the Japanese physically and mentally.<sup>52</sup> Many responded to the desperation of living in a *kyodatsu* society by finding outlets of escape. *Kasutori* culture, in particular, captured the desire of many simply to withdraw mentally and emotionally from Japan's ravaged physical and social landscape. The term *kasutori* originally referred to a cheap alcoholic drink made from the dregs of sake, but soon evolved to encapsulate the nihilistic ethos of impermanence that, for many, hung over the postwar era. At the same time, to some, the term signaled a new feeling of liberation from the oppression of wartime Japan—a break from established values that celebrated

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<sup>49</sup> Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan*, 226.

<sup>50</sup> *Shūshoku nan to jūtaku nan*, in *Senryoshita no nihon*, vol. 9 of *Showa nihon shi* (Tokyo: Akatsuki Kyōiku Tosho, 1977), 101. According to one report, there were twenty orphanages in Tokyo in early 1946, and some children were housed in Buddhist temples. See “Public Welfare Weekly Report,” week ending in March 23, 1946. <http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/10288555>.

<sup>51</sup> Hayashi Tadahiko, *Kasutori jidai: renzu ga mita Shōwa nijū-nendai Tōkyō* (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbun sha, 1987), 52.

<sup>52</sup> Cole, *Towards a New Way of Seeing*, 1-2.

hedonism and, most especially, sexual indulgence.<sup>53</sup> *Kasutori* culture quickly gave rise to a flourishing print culture of pulp magazines (*kasutori zasshi*) printed on crude, low-quality paper.<sup>54</sup> For young aspiring writers, *kasutori* magazines were one of the few media by which they could make money.<sup>55</sup> The same was true for young photographers, most famously Hayashi Tadahiko, who made a living by submitting his work to pulp magazines after returning to Japan from Beijing in 1946.<sup>56</sup>

Since *kasutori* magazines specialized in “sex journalism” (*sei jōnarizumu*),<sup>57</sup> common symbols in both text and image ranged from kissing to strip shows,<sup>58</sup> and from masturbation to incest.<sup>59</sup> It was this kind of magazine that initially provided the space for the circulation of nude photography.<sup>60</sup> Nakamura Rikkō (1912-1995), a photographer known for his postwar photos of nude women, traced the origins of his career to the erotic prints (*shunga*) that he drew for *kasutori* magazines to earn enough money to buy food. His interest in nude photography grew out of these sketches, he recalled, and he soon convinced an acquaintance to model, posing *au naturel* in front of his camera.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 149.

<sup>54</sup> Torihara, *Nihon shashin shi*, 101.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Hayashi, *Kasutori Jidai*, 16.

<sup>57</sup> Mark McLelland, “Sex and Censorship During the Occupation of Japan,” *Japan Focus: The Asia-Pacific Journal* 10, no. 37 (2012), <https://apjff.org/2012/10/37/Mark-McLelland/3827/article.html>.

<sup>58</sup> For more on the history of *pan pan*, see Holly Sanders, “Streetwalking in Occupied Japan,” *Pacific Historical Review* 81, no. 3 (2012): 404-431; Tanaka, “The Sexual Contact Zone in Occupied Japan,” and Kovner, *Occupying Power*.

<sup>59</sup> Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 150-151.

<sup>60</sup> *Nihon shashinka kyōkai, Nihon gendai shashin-shi* (Tokyo: Heibon sha, 2000), 465.

<sup>61</sup> Katō Tetsurō, *Shōwa no shashin-ka* (Tokyo: Shōbunsha, 1990). 29. Another reason Nakamura began nude photography can perhaps be credited to something of a rebellious streak. According to Katō Tetsurō, Nakamura

To be sure, nude photography was not an entirely new phenomenon. Photographers had experimented with nude photography before the war as well, but then they had been compelled to practice in secret due to strict government constraints.<sup>62</sup> Nojima Kōji recalled in a 1951 roundtable that a lack of public approval had kept him from pursuing his interest in nude photography in the prewar years. Even just photographing breasts, he lamented, had been enough to warrant a visit from the police. But, “amidst the turmoil of postwar” Japan (*sengo no konran ni jōjite*),<sup>63</sup> as Nojima phrased it, the popularity of nude photography became widespread—in part at least because the genre presented such a stark challenge to prewar and wartime social conservatism.<sup>64</sup>

The type of nude photography published in *kasutori* magazines favored erotic imagery designed to titillate readers. One way to convey seductive appeal was to make the viewer a voyeur—as exemplified by a photograph of a partially nude woman printed in the September 5, 1946 issue of *Aka to Kuro* (*Red and Black*).<sup>65</sup> The photographer caught the woman as she was pulling a thin dress over her head, in the process exposing her bare buttocks to the viewer. Because the woman in the photo is facing away from the camera, and because her vision is obscured by the dress bunched up around her head as she strips it off, she is doubly blind to the

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struggled at school because he favored a realist painting style influenced by German photographic realism. But this went against styles in vogue at the time, such as Cézanne, Vincent van Gogh, and cubism.

<sup>62</sup> Nihon shashinka kyōkai, *Nihon gendai shashin-shi*, 392.

<sup>63</sup> Nojima Kōji, Inokuma Gen'ichirō, Satō Kei, Ina Nobuo, Kimura Ihei, “Nūdo shashin wo kataru,” *Asahi Kamera*, March 1951, 76-82. Other publications noted that nude photography only became popular in Japan after the war, such as a spread that featured the nude photographs of Heinz Park Hammer, a native of Berlin, entitled “One Hundred Beautiful Shadows” (*Hyaku mikage*) (*Kamera*, May 1950), and a roundtable on nude photography printed in a March, 1951 issue entitled “Discussing Nude Photography (*Nūdo shashin o kataru*).”

<sup>64</sup> Nihon Shashin Kyōkai, *Nihon gendai shashin-shi*, 465.

<sup>65</sup> Not to be confused with the Taisho-era anarchist magazine, the postwar *Aka to Kuro* was a detective novel magazine that began publication in 1946. It later changed its name to *Ningen Fukkō* (*Human Reconstruction*). See Saito Seiichi, “Kasutori zasshi,” in *Taishū bunka jiten*, ed. Ishikawa Hiroyoshi, et al. (Tokyo: Kōbundō Publishers, 1991), 142-143.

viewer gazing at her from behind, who silently violates a private moment of undress. It is this voyeuristic element, combined with the lack of attention to aesthetic compositional elements like line and shape, that lends the image a lascivious quality.

Respected photographers Sugiyama Kira (1910-1988), Matsugi Fujio (1903-1984), Fukuda Katsuji (1899-1991), and Nakamura Rikkō (1912-1995) wrested nude photography from its association with *kasutori* culture.<sup>66</sup> In place of artless, titillating pictures that played on the sexual fantasies of a predominantly male audience, Sugiyama, Matsugi, Fukuda, and Nakamura shifted the emphasis to the “sculptural beauty of a healthy woman’s body.”<sup>67</sup> Sugiyama, for his part, concentrated on capturing the movement of his subjects, thereby expressing a sense of life and vitality in the nude form.<sup>68</sup> Fukuda, who valued art photography and its ability to express the beauty of the subject, played with light and tonal contrasts to create a more aesthetic approach to his nude subjects.<sup>69</sup> His photobook *Five States of Nude Women (Rafu Gotai)* was published to critical acclaim in 1946, and was quickly followed by *Flowers and Nude Women (Hana to Rafu to)* the following year. In 1948, Sugiyama went on to publish a book of his own entitled *Photographing Nude Women (Rafu wo Utsusu)*. Even as nude photography began to gain widespread popularity, however, local authorities sometimes reprimanded photographers or magazine editors for the explicit images, as when *Foto Āto* was cited for obscenity in 1951.<sup>70</sup> It would seem that not everyone was ready to embrace nude photography as an expression of art.

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<sup>66</sup> Ina Nobuo, *Shashin Shōwa 50-nen-shi* (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbunsha, 1978), 145.

<sup>67</sup> Torihara, *Nihon shashin shi*, 103.

<sup>68</sup> Nihon Shashin Kyōkai, *Nihon gendai shashin-shi*, 392, 465.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 393.

<sup>70</sup> Torihara, *Nihon shashin shi*, 104.

Only in 1948, when magazines started to feature nude images by Western photographers, did nude photography really began to earn critical esteem.<sup>71</sup> In their January and February 1951 issues, *Asahi Kamera* printed a two-part series titled “Etude of Nude” (Harunoshirabe Furansu nūdo kessaku-shūin) that featured the work of Nora Dumas, Man Ray, I. Deutsch, and Rémy Duval. In his introductory statement to the series, Ina Nobuo wrote that the liberation of humanity from wartime restrictions had engendered a fervent interest in nude photographs in Japan. He proclaimed that the naked female body had become a major theme of art, alongside other subjects such as still-life motifs. What is more, he insisted, many different artistic genres—from romanticism and surrealism to the abstract and avant-garde, and even realism—could take advantage of the nude motif. In other words, anyone could enjoy taking nude photographs, no matter their stylistic preference. Because free expression of artistic creativity had been suppressed under a strict wartime regime, Ina concluded, the introduction of these Western works to a Japanese audience had even greater significance.<sup>72</sup>

Even though photographers took up the mantle of nude photography with enthusiasm, critics were nevertheless quick to point out the compositional failings of Japanese photographers. In his essay in the 1950 *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, Ina acknowledged that nude photography had suddenly increased in popularity. But, because of its focus on the human body, Ina insisted that nude photographers needed to devote greater attention to the structural qualities of light and tonal value.<sup>73</sup> Tanaka Masao outlined the problem more bluntly in the essay that followed,

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<sup>71</sup> Nihon Shashin Kyōkai, *Nihon gendai shashin-shi*, 466.

<sup>72</sup> “Etude of Nude” is the English title provided by the magazine. A more literal translation might be “Spring Research: French Nude Masterpiece Collection.”

<sup>73</sup> Ina Nobuo, “1949-Nen ni hon shashin-kai no dōkō,” *ARS Shashin Nenkan* (1950), 2.

complaining that Japanese nude photography lacked beauty as an art form.<sup>74</sup> The crux of the matter, Tanaka explained, lay in the pose and appearance of models that photographers had thus far rendered stilted and lifeless.

The contrast between European and Japanese nudes was drawn clearly and sharply in a 1951 roundtable printed in *Asahi Kamera*. Satō Kei expressed his admiration for Dutch photographer Emmy Andriesse and her skill in crafting beautiful nude photographs. Other discussants applauded Willy Ronis' ability to photograph models with a natural pose. But when they trained their eyes on Japanese nude photography, the panel complained that models were too stiff, their posing too affected and unnatural. Japanese photographers could capture a sense of energy and liveliness in the models, the critics suggested, by following the techniques employed by European photographers.<sup>75</sup>

Photography magazines provided ample opportunity for Japanese photographers to study the composition of European nude photography. Andre de Dienes (born Andor György Ikafalvi-Dienes, 1913-1985) and Martin Munkácsi, whose photos appeared frequently in *Foto Āto* and *Asahi Kamera*, proved to be two of the more popular influences.<sup>76</sup> In its March 1951 issue, *Kamera* printed a special on French nude photographers.<sup>77</sup> The frequent appearance of European nude photography piqued the interest of Japanese photographers across the stylistic spectrum—the result being that art, street, and news photographers—even the likes of steadfast

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<sup>74</sup> Tanaka Masao, “1949-Nen ni hon shashin-kai no dōkō,” *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, 1950, 5.

<sup>75</sup> Nojima Kōji, Inokuma Gen'ichirō, Satō Kei, Ina Nobuo, Kimura Ihei, “Nūdo shashin wo kataru,” *Asahi Kamera*, March 1951, 76-82.

<sup>76</sup> Andre de Dienes, for example, was featured in March and August 1951; February, August, and October 1952; and November 1953. Munkácsi appeared in the April, May, June, July, and September 1952 issues.

<sup>77</sup> “Nude furansu no kessaku,” *Kamera*, March 1951.



photojournalists such as Domon Ken and Miki Jun—all began to submit nude photographs to magazines.

Japanese photographers who wanted to emulate European photographers found additional instructions in translated essays by Western photographers. In 1953, *Asahi Kamera* published translations from Lewis Tulchin's book *The Nude in Photography* (translated in the magazine as *Nyūdo shashin no tsukurikata*). The text outlined several key points integral to a successful nude photograph, all illustrated with diagrams, sketches, and photos of Western models. The guidelines included instructions on proper composition, posing models, working with negatives, and enlarging prints. Writing to an audience that valued the creativity and artistry of nude photography, the fundamental principle behind Tulchin's intervention was that nude photography was first and foremost an art form.<sup>78</sup>

Exposure to European photographers through images and translated essays was crucial in transforming Japanese nude photography from vulgar *kasutori* culture to art photography. Nude photography's acceptance as an art form is evidenced, among other things, in the increasing number of special issues published by popular photography journals. In addition to the regular monthly issues that featured numerous nude prints, in 1951 and 1952 *Foto Āto* released three special issues focused solely on nude photography. In these special issues, the attempt to photograph the nude female form through an artistic lens is especially evident in the close attention paid to compositional elements such as line, shape, and tone. In one photograph, Domon Ken used close cropping to transform a woman's buttocks into an abstract shape of smooth curves and sharp tonal contrasts. Another photograph by Nakamura Rikkō showcases a nude form stretching diagonally across the frame. By focusing on one segment of the female model—her buttocks—through close cropping, Nakamura rendered the body into an almost

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<sup>78</sup> Lewis Tulchin, "Nūdo shashin no torikata," *Asahi Kamera*, February 1953, 50.

abstract shape, allowing the eye to follow the soft lines of the body from one corner of the frame to the other. Nakamura thoughtfully employed artistic principles of line and shape, creating a lyrical yet dynamic composition in this image, one that offered a sharp contrast to the erotic, voyeuristic nude photographs printed in earlier *kasutori* magazines. By 1953, nude photography had begun to appear in the monthly *getsurei* contests, indicating just how popular it had become among amateurs. *Kamera* even carried a notice for the publication of *American Nude Photo Album* (*Amerika nyūdo shashin-shū*), urging its amateur readers to send in submissions.<sup>79</sup> The influence of Western photographers is encapsulated in a statement made by Ina Nobuo. When asked how Japanese photographers could improve their nude photographs, he replied that they should look at the good works of foreign photographers.<sup>80</sup>

Whereas Japanese photographers primarily followed European trends in artistic nude photography to develop their skill in this genre, they examined the works of American photographers to develop their knowledge of photojournalism. They read pictorial media such as *Life* to understand the fundamentals of constructing compelling photo stories. They also read about photojournalistic trends in Japanese photography magazines, which introduced readers to the work of prominent American photojournalists. As one photographer put it, Japanese photojournalism achieved “epoch-making” developments (*kakkitekina hattatsu wo togeta*) under the direction of the U.S., the “homeland” (*sokoku*) of photojournalism.”<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> *Kamera*, September 1951. According to Ina, nude works require careful attention to composition because the beauty of the nude is determined by tonal value, lines, and shapes within the frame.

<sup>80</sup> Roundtable discussion, “Hihyō-ka ga kataru nūdo shashin,” *Foto Āto*, June 1951, 87.

<sup>81</sup> Otaku Soichi, “Photojournalism” (Hōdō shashin), *Kamera*, January 1950.

### Miki Jun, *Life* Magazine, and Photojournalism

Natori Yōnosuke first introduced photojournalism to Japan after encountering it in Germany. At the time, he called it *hōdō shashin* (journalism photography) to distinguish the genre from newspaper photography (*shimbun shashin*). Defining news photographs as nothing more than the images that illustrated newspaper articles, he considered them secondary to the text. In contrast, the pictures in journalism photography, Natori believed, conveyed the main narrative, since the genre required photographers to take multiple shots and combine them with captions to create a photo story (*kumi shashin*, or sometimes written in katakana in postwar magazines as *pikkuchua sutōrī*, or “picture story”).<sup>82</sup>

While Natori brought photojournalism to Japan in the 1930s, it was Miki Jun who transformed it in the postwar period by facilitating connections with American photographers, aided by his connection to *Life* magazine and foreign correspondents based in Japan. Born in 1919 in Okayama Prefecture, Miki learned photography under Domon Ken before working for the Nomura Trading Company from 1943 to 1946. After the war, he went to work for *Shūkan San Nyūsu* (*Weekly Sun News*), founded by Natori in 1947. Miki quit the paper one year later, right before it ceased publication due to inflation and lack of profitability.<sup>83</sup> In 1948, he took a job with International News Photos (INP),<sup>84</sup> whose offices, as fate would have it, were in the same building as *Life* magazine.

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<sup>82</sup> Torihara, *Nihon shashin shi*, 67.

<sup>83</sup> Torihara, *Nihon shashin shi*, 113.

<sup>84</sup> Katō Tetsurō, *Shōwa no shashin-ka*, 84.

Soon, Miki met the photographer Carl Mydans, who had photographed both the European and Asian theaters of World War Two with his wife Shelley,<sup>85</sup> and accepted an assignment to run Time-Life's Tokyo bureau after the war. Because the offices for *Life* and INP were on the same floor, Mydans soon became acquainted with Miki. In June 1949, a telegram arrived at *Life*'s Tokyo office with orders for Mydans to photograph a ship carrying Japanese soldiers repatriated from Siberia that was scheduled to land in Maizuru in south-central Japan. Fortuitously for Miki, Mydans could not take the assignment and recommended Miki as a “pinch hitter” (*pinchi hittā*) in his place. Miki's photo story filled seven pages of the July 18, 1949 edition of *Life* under the title “Japan's Red Army Gets Back Home (fig. 3.1).” Upon publication, the story earned Miki instant praise and a permanent job with *Life*.<sup>86</sup>



Figure 3.1. Miki Jun. “Japan's Red Army Gets Back Home,” 1949.

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<sup>85</sup> Japanese military forces captured the husband-wife team in the Philippines, and they spent nearly two years in prison camps in Manila and Shanghai. They were released in late 1943 as part of a prisoner-of-war exchange.

<sup>86</sup> Suda Shintarō, “*Shashin ka*” Miki Jun to “*Raifu*” no *jidai* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2017), 72-75.

In early 1950, the head of the *Life* Tokyo office, Frank Gibney, assigned Miki to assist David Douglas Duncan, who had just arrived in Japan to begin work on a project featuring traditional Japanese arts. Miki followed Duncan around Japan for four weeks, carrying his bags and cleaning his lenses.<sup>87</sup> One day, while working in *Life*'s Tokyo office, Miki took a snapshot of Duncan with a Nikkor 85mm F2 lens he had borrowed from a fellow professional photographer, Murai Ryūichi, who just happened to be visiting Horace Bristol's East-West Photo Agency in the same building.<sup>88</sup> In Miki's recollection, when Duncan asked him about the setup he was using, Miki replied that it was a Japanese Sonnar lens.<sup>89</sup> In response, Duncan laughed somewhat dismissively and echoed the common stereotype of Japanese as imitators: "Oh, a Japanese Sonnar. Where is a Japanese Cadillac?"<sup>90</sup> But when Miki showed Duncan the print the following day, Duncan changed his tune, exclaiming "Amazing! Very sharp! Whose product is it? Let's go to this company right away."<sup>91</sup>

Horace Bristol recalled a slightly different version of the events. Like Duncan, Bristol had expressed doubt about the quality of the lens. After all, at the time, professional photographers almost exclusively used German lenses, which were considered superior to all other products on the market. Handing him the camera, Miki insisted that Bristol test it himself. Bristol proceeded to take a series of pictures of downtown buildings viewed from his office window in the fading evening light. He then developed the film in his lab and showed the

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<sup>87</sup> Michael Wescott Loder, *The Nikon Camera in America, 1946-1953* (London: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2008), 96.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> A Sonnar is a photographic lens produced by the German Carl Zeiss AG.

<sup>90</sup> Suda, "Shashin ka" Miki Jun to "Raifu" no jidai, 86. See also "Worldwide Recognition of Japanese Products: NIKKOR's Pivotal Encounter with David Douglas Duncan," Nikon, accessed September 28, 2020. [https://www.nikon.com/about/corporate/history/oneminutestory/1950\\_nikkor/](https://www.nikon.com/about/corporate/history/oneminutestory/1950_nikkor/).

<sup>91</sup> Loder, *The Nikon Camera in America*, 96.

negatives to Duncan. The latter marveled at the intricate architectural details rendered in sharp focus, despite the less-than-ideal lighting conditions.<sup>92</sup>

Although Bristol's recollection diverges significantly from Miki's, the Nikkor lens is "discovered" in both versions. Duncan and Bristol expressed immediate interest in Nikkor and requested a visit to the factory where they were being made.<sup>93</sup> Miki then took the American photojournalists to the Nippon Kōgaku K. K. (Japan Optical Co., currently Nikon Corporation) factory in Shinagawa, where the company's president, Nagaoka Masao, gave them a tour of the lens inspection room.<sup>94</sup> Duncan and Bristol were so impressed with the quality of the Nikkor lenses that they purchased some for their Leica camera bodies that very day.<sup>95</sup>

When the Korean War broke out two days later, Duncan received orders from *Life* to stop his work on traditional Japanese arts and head immediately to Korea. Duncan took his new Nikkor lenses with him to the warfront. When he returned to Tokyo, Miki helped pack the undeveloped film while Duncan wrote up the story, shipping both to New York for publication. Upon developing the film, the New York office telegraphed Duncan to ask what lens he had used to get such sharp images. Miki later recalled the telegram's tone of astonishment: "What were *Life*'s photojournalists doing [in Korea and Japan]? What were these Nikkor lenses and what was this Nikon camera anyway?"<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>94</sup> Oshita Kouichi, "Legendary Lens Tale 36: Nikkor P.C 8.5 cm f/2," Nikon, accessed September 28, 2020. [https://web.archive.org/web/20100329061851/http://imaging.nikon.com/products/imaging/technology/nikkor/n36\\_e.htm](https://web.archive.org/web/20100329061851/http://imaging.nikon.com/products/imaging/technology/nikkor/n36_e.htm).

<sup>95</sup> "Worldwide Recognition of Japanese Products."

<sup>96</sup> Loder, *The Nikon Camera in America*, 100.

Thanks to Duncan's photos of the Korean War, news of the new quality lenses from Japan spread rapidly in the U.S.<sup>97</sup> Soon, other correspondents covering the Korean War began to outfit their camera bodies with Nikkor lenses before leaving Japan for the warfront. Among them was Carl Mydans, who visited the Nippon Kōgaku K. K. Shinagawa factory to purchase the body of a Nikon camera and a set of Nikkor lenses for his Contax. As more photojournalists came to Japan, including John Dominis (1921-2013) and Hank Walker (1921-1996), Bristol arranged to take them on tours of the Shinagawa factory before they shipped off to Korea. Walker even reportedly ditched all the camera equipment he had brought from the U.S., only taking along the equipment he had recently purchased from the Nippon Kōgaku K. K. Company.<sup>98</sup>

In fact, Miki himself became instrumental in equipping foreign correspondents with Japanese camera products. Before arriving in Japan, the photojournalists would send telegrams to Miki to arrange for the procurement of camera equipment.<sup>99</sup> Miki and a few close associates, who worked closely with *Life* photographers, were soon handling all the preparatory work before their arrival, assisting them while in Japan, and servicing their Nikon cameras and lenses upon their return to Tokyo from Korea. Thanks to the Korean War and the photographers who documented it, the popularity of Japanese camera equipment among foreign journalists skyrocketed, and PX stores increased their own stocks of the suddenly popular products, which were purchased by shutterbug GIs.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Suda, "Shashin ka" Miki Jun to "Raifu" no jidai, 92-95.

<sup>98</sup> Loder, *The Nikon Camera in America*, 100.

<sup>99</sup> Suda, "Shashin ka" Miki Jun to "Raifu" no jidai, 96.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

By December 1950, Nikkor lenses had earned such acclaim that the *New York Times* ran a feature-length article titled “Japanese Camera” that detailed the use of Japanese cameras by American photojournalists. The article reported that “On the strength of the enthusiasm expressed by its photographers in Korea, *Life* arranged for a thorough examination of the cameras and lenses by experts here.” So impressed were the experts that “a considerable quantity” of the Japanese cameras were ordered for *Life*’s staff.<sup>101</sup> The article further informed readers that Arthur Rothstein (1915-1985), then director of photography at *Look* magazine, had remarked that each of his twelve staff photographers was interested in acquiring a Japanese camera. By the following year, photographers in France and Germany had begun to test Japanese lenses as well.

The Korean War brought a steady stream of leading photojournalists from the U.S. to Japan, most of whom stayed in Tokyo on their way to or from the warfront. Before long, their photographs began appearing as feature spreads in *Asahi Kamera*, starting with Bristol’s photo story “Between Missions” (20 seki jujigun no kichi), which captured American soldiers in moments of rest or in the act of planning for military engagements.<sup>102</sup> In one of the images, pilots smile as they pass beneath a *torii* gate affixed with a sign that proclaims, “Through this TORII pass the best damn fighter pilots in the world.” Overall, the images in Bristol’s series project a cool confidence in the martial and technological superiority of the American military. Later series, however, did not portray the war in such a positive light. The American correspondents began to depict injured soldiers in blood-soaked uniforms, priests praying over war casualties,

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<sup>101</sup> Jacob Deschin, “Japanese Camera: 35mm Nikon and Lenses Tested by Experts,” *New York Times*, December 10, 1950.

<sup>102</sup> “Between Missions” is the translation provided by *Asahi Kamera*. A more literal translation is “Base of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century Forces.” The two-part series appeared in the September and October 1950 issues of *Asahi Kamera*.



and the haggard faces and tired eyes of men bundled in cold-weather gear, the steam from their breath hovering in the frigid air.<sup>103</sup>

The presence of American correspondents on assignment to Japan and Korea initially directed the attention of Japanese photographers to American photojournalism, but interest quickly expanded beyond American trends to encompass European photographers as well. The August 1951 issue of *Asahi Kamera* treated readers to Henri Cartier-Bresson's images of Matisse and his daily life. In the following issue, Robert Capa provided a similar series on Picasso, followed by a spread in October on life along the Thames River by Werner Bischof. *Asahi Kamera* rounded out the year with a photo story on London by Ernst Haas and street scenes from France by Robert Doisneau in their November and December issues, respectively. While *Asahi Kamera* was not the only magazine to spotlight the work of foreign photographers, it played a central role in illustrating the narrative aspect of photojournalism through its "Selections" series. As we have discussed, each installment of the series featured the work of a single photographer printed on seven or more pages, giving Japanese photographers ample material to study the techniques employed by European and American photographers in crafting photo stories.

Popular interest in photo stories increased steadily with the exposure of readers to foreign photojournalists in illustrated magazines such as *Asahi Kamera*. Writing about this, Hamaya Hiroshi wrote that *Kamera* magazine had chosen to emphasize photo stories because they pointed the way to the future of photography in Japan. Hamaya explained that amateurs already excelled at depicting a subject in a single picture, as demonstrated by the winning submissions to the monthly contests. But amateurs and professionals alike needed instruction in the craft of

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<sup>103</sup> See, for example, Carl Mydans' spread in the February 1951 issue, "Selections from Carl Mydans" (Kaigai yūmei shashin sakka shōkai (13)); Hank Walker's feature in the April 1951 issue, "Selections from Hank Walker" (Kaigai yūmei shashin sakka shōkai (14)); or John Dominis's spread in the May 1951 issue, "Selections from John Dominis" (Kaigai yūmei shashin sakka shōkai (15)).

creating photo stories. At the end of the column, Hamaya noted that access to *Life* and other American pictorials had already made Japanese photographers aware of the potential to convey powerful narratives through photo stories. Telling a story through pictures was akin to writing sentences with a camera, Hamaya asserted,<sup>104</sup> and Japanese photographers needed to learn the grammar of photo stories from American examples.

In a serialized essay entitled “Serials and Photo Stories” (*Rensaku to kumishashin*), written for *Kamera* in 1954, Tanaka Masao instructed photographers on how to create photo stories. The essays provided a definition of photo stories, gave a brief account of their history, and detailed techniques for constructing a compelling narrative with photographs. The first installment differentiated between serialized photographs (*rensai*) and photo stories (*kumishashin*), noting that the distinction between the two had caused much confusion among photographers. Serialized photographs, Tanaka explained, consisted of a single photo or groups of photos that took up a common theme and were published across multiple issues in installments.<sup>105</sup> To give one example, *Asahi Kamera* had printed a serial entitled “Japanese Film Directors” (*Nihon no eiga kantoku*). First published in May 1950, the series ran for sixteen issues and included photographs by Miki Jun and Akiyama Shōtarō of famous directors such as Mizoguchi Kenji (1898-1956), Ozu Yasujiro (1903-1963), and Kurosawa Akira (1910-1998). Because each installment contained only one photograph, and because the photographs as a whole did not convey any type of intended narrative, by Tanaka’s definition, “Japanese Film Directors” could not be considered a photo story.

The narrative aspect is what defines a photo story, wrote the photographer and editor Natori Yōnosuke, in the February 1954 issue of *Asahi Kamera*; and a photo story consists of a

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<sup>104</sup> Hamaya Hiroshi, “Shin Bokutō fūkei,” *Kamera* December 1952, 39-43.

<sup>105</sup> Tanaka Masao, “Rensaku to kumishashin,” *Kamera* May 1954, 119-121.

narrative related through a host of pictures, all connected by a unifying thread (*suji*). If the photos lacked a narrative thread, wrote Natori, they failed to form a photo story and were simply a photo album (*shashin shū*). Natori further elaborated that the photographer must be guided by two maxims: “how to shoot” (*torikata*) and “how to put together” (*matomekata*). That is, a photographer needed to articulate the intent behind the story before recording the pictures, and needed to assemble the photos with the skill of an editor. If the photographer could create a narrative with a beginning, a middle, and an end—the basic elements of a story—he could tell a story with pictures. For Natori, and undoubtedly for many photographers, photojournalism represented a new means of expression for a new era (*atarashī jidai no atarashī hyōgen-hō*).<sup>106</sup>

In the second and third installments of his series on “Serials and Photo Stories,” Tanaka Masao traced the origins of the photo story.<sup>107</sup> Contrary to popular opinion, Tanaka wrote, the photo story was not an entirely new concept. Dating it to the New Photography Movement (*shinkō shashin*) of the 1920s, Tanaka explained that the photo story appeared in its early iterations not as a series of pictures that expressed a coherent narrative, but rather within a single photomontage—a type of composite photography that Tanaka claimed to have originated in German photo magazines of this era. The modern format of the photo story, Tanaka suggested, was established by *Life* magazine.

In his final essay on the subject, Tanaka instructed readers on how to construct a compelling photo story with an example from *Life* magazine itself: “The Private Life of Gwyned

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<sup>106</sup> Natori Yōnosuke, “Kumi shashin to toru kokorogamae: Kore dake o mazu kokoroete oku koto,” *Asahi Kamera*, February 1954, 129-132.

<sup>107</sup> Published in *Kamera*, June and July 1954.

Filling” by Leonard McCombe.<sup>108</sup> Tanaka began the essay with a few paragraphs that offered a quick biographical sketch of Gwyned Filling, a New York City career girl originally from Missouri. Then, Tanaka analyzed each of the nine pages in turn. The opening photo captured Filling walking down a street. Tanaka emphasized that the photo showed only the woman’s upper body, a framing technique that, when combined with close cropping, gave the impression that Filling was standing on her tiptoes and stretching to her fullest height to see over the heads of people in the crowded street. In this way, Tanaka explained, the photograph effectively captured the ecology (*seitai*) of urban dwellers.

Tanaka next turned his attention to the text beneath the image, noting that it filled half a page. In Tanaka’s analysis, this balance between text and image on the first page allowed readers to obtain a brief overview of Filling’s life, but still provided ample room for the photograph placed above the text. In subsequent paragraphs, Tanaka continued to examine each page of the Gwyned Filling photo story, ending the article with more generalized instructions on crafting a compelling story with pictures. In one section, Tanaka stated that photo stories must convey the passage of time to grasp the essence of the subject, just as the photo story on Gwyned Filling constructed a narrative by following her throughout her day as she bathed and dressed in the morning, went to work, and lounged at home in the evenings.

Tanaka’s article provided readers with a detailed analysis of a *Life* photo story, and it is important to note that readers had ready access to *Life* and other pictorials thanks to the CI&E libraries. *Kamera* provided an overview of the libraries to its readers in the February 1951

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<sup>108</sup> Originally published in *Life*, May 3, 1948. Miki later wrote an essay on McCombe’s skill in crafting photo stories in a May 1954 issue of *Asahi Kamera*, entitled “The Story Told by the Camera: About Leonard McCombe” (*Kamera ga kataru sutōrī: Reonādo makkōmu ni tsuite*), 141-143.

issue.<sup>109</sup> The author organized the essay according to the type of photography reading material that could be found at the different libraries: general reference works; how-to manuals; photobooks and annuals; histories of photography; and guides on how to succeed as a professional photographer. Like Japanese magazines, the American periodicals served as primers of a sort for Japanese photographers, who tried to mimic what they found there.<sup>110</sup>

*Getsurei* began to include amateur photo stories among the winning submissions, illustrating that photo stories had become popular outside professional photojournalist circles. In its March 1955 issue, *Kamera* printed photo stories by two amateurs in the collection of winning works. Kobayashi Shinichi from Niigata submitted a story entitled “Road Construction” (Dōro kōji), which received praise from judge Domon Ken for its excellent reportage qualities (fig. 3.2). Kobayashi captured his subject from three different perspectives. The first image offers a sweeping view of two dump trucks parked on the edge of a muddy village road. Dilapidated wooden houses dot the landscape, and a sprawling field of rice paddies abuts the embankment leading up to the road. A second image brings the viewer closer to the action. Taken just above street level, the photo captures three people at work on the road against a backdrop of wheelbarrows and other equipment scattered behind them. The final image shifts perspective to highlight the plight of villagers encumbered by construction work. In it, a young boy struggles knee-deep through a morass of muck and rocks as he attempts to traverse the unfinished road while holding his bicycle aloft.<sup>111</sup> Submissions such as Kobayashi’s represented a departure from

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<sup>109</sup> Kanamaru Shigene. “CIE toshokan ni wa kon'na shashin tosho ga aru,” *Kamera*, February 1951, 58-59.

<sup>110</sup> Torihara, *Nihon shashin shi*, 171.

<sup>111</sup> The second photo story, by Kawada Kikuji from Ibaraki, includes three snapshots of women who live and work at a restaurant.

previous contests by telling a story, in multiple images, of the everyday experiences of Japanese citizens.



Figure 3.2. Kobayashi Shinichi. “Road Construction” (Dōro kōji). *Kamera*, March 1955.

Amateurs continued to submit their photo stories to magazines, which were printed as regular stand-alone features and in the *getsurei*. In one issue, *Asahi Kamera* published the works of three amateurs on the theme of “Ginza in Summer” (Natsu no Ginza).<sup>112</sup> The introductory text began with a quote from Henri Cartier-Bresson, taken from his essay “The Decisive Moment” (Kettei-teki shunkan), which had been published in the previous July issue: “The picture story is a joint movement of the head, chest, eyes, and mind,” wrote Cartier-Bresson, meaning that all images must work together to form a coherent narrative. In other words, as Natori had stressed, photo stories demanded a connecting thread. Professional photographers, of course, contributed photo stories to magazines as well. In *Asahi Kamera*, themes ranged from traveling theater troupes to wounded war veterans; from rural farms communities to coastal fishing villages; and

<sup>112</sup> “Natsu no Ginza dokusha no kumi shashin udekurabe,” *Asahi Kamera*, September 1953, 76-81.

from Sumida River vignettes to snowy days in Tokyo. *Foto Āto* printed photo stories on life by the Seto Inland Sea, while *Kamera* published stories on women's Western clothing schools, children of "water dweller" families that lived on wooden boats on urban rivers and canals, and daily life in small villages such as Kurokami on Sakurajima.

Popular enthusiasm for photo stories that documented daily life grew among professional and amateur photographers alike, and such stories became a regular feature of magazines from the early 1950s forward. In a brief essay that accompanied the photo story "New Bokutō Landscape" (Shin Bokutō fūkei) published in *Kamera*, the author explained that the magazine ran such stories to showcase the scenes of daily life that surrounded their amateur readers.<sup>113</sup> In this way, photojournalism became intertwined with two other dominant trends in postwar Japanese photography: realism and human-interest photography.

#### Realism and the Pursuit of Truth

In the 1950s, many of the most ardent advocates of realism were also the most prominent photojournalists of the time. Like photojournalism, realism was generally considered a straightforward, objective recording of the photographed subject. It was a way to look at reality as it was—or was conceived to be by the photographers who captured it—and it prioritized the depiction of reality over the photographer's subjective interpretation.<sup>114</sup> However, there existed a critical distinction between the two types of photography. Recall that Japanese photographers defined photojournalism as an act of storytelling that used multiple photographs in place of text.

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<sup>113</sup> Hamaya Hiroshi, "Shin Bokutō fūkei," *Kamera*, December 1952, 39-43.

<sup>114</sup> Watanabe Tsutomo, "Amachua no shashin nyūmon (8) omodatta shashin yōgo no kaisetsu," *Foto Āto*, April 1955, 129-131.

Unlike photojournalism, realism did not demand the use of multiple images to tell a story—a story could be told in a single image.<sup>115</sup>

Scholars trace the origins of the postwar realism movement to one individual: Domon Ken. Born in Sakata, Yamagata Prefecture, in 1909, Domon began photographing in the prewar period, submitting his works to photography magazines such as *Kamera*, *Foto Āto*, and *Amachua Shashin Sōcho*. Several factors in his pre- and postwar career prompted Domon to develop an aesthetic that pursued reality: his apprenticeship in photojournalism under Natori; his experience as a street photographer documenting Japanese society; and his avid interest in the work of foreign photojournalists such as Henri Cartier-Bresson and Margaret Bourke-White.

The realism Domon championed in the postwar period had its roots in prewar trends in photojournalism imported into Japan from Germany in the 1930s by Natori and others. Domon joined Natori's *Nihon Kōbō* in 1935, became a staff photographer for the propaganda magazine *Nippon*, and later worked for the International Culture Promotion Association (*Kokusai Bunka Shinkoka*). What Domon would later call an “absolutely unstaged” (*zettai hi-enshutsu*) image—the core principle behind his definition of realism—took root in 1943 when he participated in a roundtable discussion with the eminent ethnographer Yanagita Kunio (1875-1962). Although not a photographer himself,<sup>116</sup> Yanagita strongly advocated the employment of “snapshot” (*sunappu*) photos utterly devoid of any planning or staging by the photographer.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Fukuda Katsuji, “Abusutorakushon to riarizumu,” *Kamera*, January 1954.

<sup>116</sup> Yanagita did, however, have experience with photobooks. In the 1940s, Yanagita provided a series of essays for Miki Shigeru's photobook *Yukiguni no minzoku* (*People of the Snow Country*), published in 1944. The book contains a small selection of over 2,000 photographs Miki took while shooting a film *Tsushi ni ikiru* (*Living by the Earth*, 1941). For more, see Fujii Jinshi, “Yanagita Kunio and the Culture Film: Discovering Everydayness and Creating/Imagining a National Community, 1935-1945,” *Arts* 9, no. 2 (2020). DOI:10.3390/arts9020054.

<sup>117</sup> Putzar, “The Reality of Domon Ken,” 313.



Although Domon at first dismissed Yanagita's idea out of hand, he quickly embraced the technique of the snapshot and the spontaneity it offered in capturing a moment in time. Domon developed the snapshot concept further after his wartime experience producing manipulated propaganda. His aversion to the staged scenes inherent in propaganda drove him to develop an approach to photography focused on the "absolutely unstaged." Domon's definition of realism was often contradictory, and remains notoriously elusive even today; but key to his understanding of it is the term "unstaged" (*hi-enshutsu*). Arguing that there should be no attempt to manipulate a scene or subject, Domon eschewed staging and embraced realism as the only technique that would allow photographers to reveal the "reality" of society after being deceived by wartime propaganda campaigns.<sup>118</sup>

Domon advocated the spontaneity of snapshot photography as a means to avoid staged scenes. Following the lead of Henri Cartier-Bresson, Domon explained that failing to act upon the "decisive moment" (*ketteiteki shunkan*) produced an artificial and false image, one that ultimately resulted in "defilement" of the subject.<sup>119</sup> By taking a snapshot approach to recording the subject, the photographer could prevent his subjectivity from infiltrating the final image, thus allowing him to uncover the "objective truth in the subject motif."<sup>120</sup> If a photographer could successfully suppress his subjectivity, he could then "pay attention to the screaming voice of the subject and simply operate the camera exactly according to its indications." Accordingly, Domon explained, the photographer would be able to achieve a "direct connection between the camera

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<sup>118</sup> Feltens, "'Realist' Betweenness and Collective Victims," 64.

<sup>119</sup> Domon Ken, "Photographic Realism and the Salon Picture," in *Setting Sun: Writings by Japanese Photographers*, ed. Ivan Vartanian, Akihiro Hatanaka, Yutaka Kambayashi (New York: Aperture, 2005), 23. Originally published in *Kamera*, 1953.

<sup>120</sup> Domon and Kimura, "*Shashin ni okeru riarizumu to ha nanika?*" *Kamera*, December 1951, 56-63; Domon, "*Riarizumu wa shizen shugide wanai*," *Kamera*, December 1953, 174-177.

and the subject.”<sup>121</sup> In other words, only by silencing his own voice and pressing the shutter at the most opportune moment could a photographer uncover the objective truth of the subject.

For Domon, photographers who rooted their images in subjectivity were far too conservative, getting lost in the safety of subjectivity and refusing to confront reality. He called their posed scenes “tantamount to mental masturbation.”<sup>122</sup> He urged photographers to adopt an objective perspective and to look at reality directly, no matter how painful that reality might be. By suppressing subjectivity and capturing the “screaming voice of the subject,” Domon believed, photographers could confront the lingering ills of postwar reality, a confrontation that he considered fundamentally important to the recovery of Japan from the trauma of the wartime and immediate postwar years. “Realism,” he wrote, “is the raising of one’s eyes to look to the future.”<sup>123</sup>

The advent of realism in the postwar period is generally dated to the publication of Domon’s series “Town” (Machi) and Kimura’s series “New Tokyo Album” (Shin Tokyo Arubamu), both serialized from 1949 to 1950 in *Kamera*.<sup>124</sup> For his series, Domon focused his camera on the dark and gritty nature of postwar urban life, producing sharp photographs of prostitutes, vagrants, and shoe shiners. The sixth installment in the series captured a child sleeping on a train—his disheveled appearance matched by his equally scruffy knapsack, which was stuffed to the point of bursting and seemed far too big for the child to carry. The

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<sup>121</sup> Iizawa Kōtarō, “The Evolution of Postwar Photography,” in *The History of Japanese Photography*, 211.

<sup>122</sup> Domon Ken, “Photographic Realism and the Salon Picture,” trans. Ivan Vartanian, in *Setting Sun*, 22. Originally published in *Kamera*, vol. 18, 1953, 25-27.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Itō Ippei, *Nihon shashin hattatsu-shi* (Tokyo: Asahi Sonorama, 1975), 221.

accompanying text interpreted the knapsack as a burden symbolizing the tiredness of an exhausted child.<sup>125</sup>

Kimura's images, taken with the express intent of evoking the ethos of daily life, captured the essence of Tokyo's *shitamachi* (working class) neighborhood. The eighth installment of the series, printed in the March 1950 issue, represented a "New Tokyo" in the image of a woman in Western-style fashion walking side-by-side with her male companion.<sup>126</sup> Two elements in the picture are symbolic of the postwar cultural encounter with American Occupying forces: the woman's New Look fashion, consisting of the calf-length skirts and heels popularized by American women living in Japan, and her appearance beside a male companion. Such behavior and dress had been frowned upon in prewar Japan, and was prohibited during the war; but it became a common sight in cities during the Occupation.<sup>127</sup>

In the text that accompanied Kimura's photos, the author describes his snapshot technique as one that captures the subject with the naked eye (*nikkume de*), a term that signified the lack of any overt manipulation of the subject by the photographer—either with the lens or in the darkroom. Attentive to documenting Japanese society in stark clarity, both Kimura's and Domon's series captured Tokyo and its citizens at a moment of transition between the *kyodatsu* conditions that lingered into the 1950s and their hopes for a better future.

As realism became more popular in Japan, photographers and critics engaged in heated debates about what constituted the "real" and how best to capture reality in photographs. Historian Julia Adeney Thomas has followed one pivotal debate that played out in *Kamera* in 1953, beginning with the April issue in which Domon, exasperated by the failure of amateur

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<sup>125</sup> "Machi rensaku 6: katsugiya no ko," *Kamera*, July 1950.

<sup>126</sup> "Shin Tokyo Arubamu 8: Babasenmon fukin," *Kamera*, March 1950.

<sup>127</sup> McLelland, *Love, Sex, and Democracy in Japan During the American Occupation*, 118.

photographers to grasp the essence of realism, admonished them against what he characterized as insipid snapshots. In a slightly sarcastic outburst, he told them to photograph beautiful women (*bijin*) for a change. The root of the problem, as Domon saw it, was amateurs' inability to photograph anything but common motifs of what was then pejoratively labeled "beggar photography" (*kojiki*)—orphans, prostitutes, homeless beggars, and repatriated soldiers clad in white robes. Even though Domon frequently photographed such subjects himself, he berated amateurs for simply mimicking his photographs without evoking any kind of emotional connection to their subjects. Domon's critique foreshadowed a more significant issue that human-interest photography would later address: creating a connection between the viewer and the subject that impacted the viewer on a deeply emotional level.

In the following issue of *Kamera*, critic Tanaka Masao came to the defense of beggar photography, asserting that it was the only way for photographers to capture reality. However, Tanaka cautioned that a photograph of an orphan or beggar did not constitute realism in and of itself—what mattered was the photographer's social awareness. Unlike Domon, Tanaka argued that true reality (*shin no genjitsu*) could *only* be expressed through the photographer's *subjectivity*, not through the *subject itself*.<sup>128</sup> Most important to him was the merging of the photographer's awareness of social forces with the mechanical properties of the camera. As he put it, "only when the photographer's thoughts and views of society are reflected in the framed representation (*gamen keishō*) brought about by the mechanics of the camera does true reality emerge."<sup>129</sup>

As Thomas cautions, Tanaka's idea of social awareness was not the same as that of American social documentary photographers. Social documentarians in the U.S. attempted to

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<sup>128</sup> Thomas, "Postwar Power Made Visible," 375.

<sup>129</sup> Quoted in Thomas, 377.

instigate social reforms with their photographs, as exemplified by Dorothea Lange's images of tenant farmers in the 1930s or Jacob Riis's photographs of New York City slumdweller. Japanese realist photographers, in contrast, made no such efforts at social reform. Indeed, according to museum curator Takeba Joe, Japanese photographers tended to ignore the reality of what they were photographing: the people that they captured on film were nothing more than subjects to be photographed.<sup>130</sup> Thus, for Tanaka, simply possessing social awareness and somehow communicating that through a photograph was enough to capture reality.

The next voice in the debate over "reality" appeared in the July 1953 issue of *Kamera*, with Watanabe Kosho critiquing Tanaka's support for beggar photography. Watanabe argued that the disadvantaged individuals featured in beggar photography were not real because they constituted only a minority of the population and, as such, did not represent the reality of Japanese society as a whole. Beggar photography was thus meaningless, he argued, because it represented a "superficial darkness" when in reality the majority of Japanese society, at least according to Watanabe, lived a comfortable middle-class lifestyle. Viewing beggar photography as an exoticization of social ills, Watanabe believed that it exposed a "sick curiosity" of photographers, who were engaged in "weird 'masturbatory' fantasies."<sup>131</sup> The "real" for Watanabe was located, by contrast, in middle-class values that inspired hope for a better future, such as perseverance and social responsibility.<sup>132</sup>

Watanabe conceded that photographs of the destitute did have the potential to depict reality; but to accomplish this, the images would have to express the perseverance and social responsibility of the photographed subjects. Watanabe illustrated his argument with Bert Hardy's

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<sup>130</sup> Takeba, "The Age of Modernism," 154.

<sup>131</sup> Thomas, "Postwar Power Made Visible," 379.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 380.

images of a mother and child in a Glasgow slum, arguing that the squalid conditions Hardy captured were secondary to the optimistic message that the photo conveyed in showing the mother caring for her child. In other words, the social reality that Watanabe identified in Hardy's images emerged through actions that transcended the miserable living conditions in which the photographed subjects found themselves.<sup>133</sup> For Watanabe, beggar photography depicted reality only when its subjects were captured in a way that expressed an attempt to overcome destitute conditions.

What is important to note in Domon, Tanaka, and Watanabe's writings on realism is their emphasis on how to photograph the subject. In other words, for all their claims of objectivity, capturing the "real" actually demanded a certain measure of subjectivity. Even though Domon initially demanded that photographers pursue the "objective truth," he later urged photographers to take pictures that left a deep emotional impression on the viewer—achieved, paradoxically, through manipulation of the composition. For Tanaka, beggar photography held importance only so long as the photographer expressed his social consciousness through the image. And although Watanabe derided beggar photography, he allowed that it could depict the "real" when the subject was photographed in such a way as to inspire hope for the future.

Despite a lack of agreement on how to photograph the "real" in the early postwar debates on realism, most photographers and critics agreed on at least one point: that realism necessitated uncovering the truth of the subject. Domon argued that realism could encompass any genre, even landscape photography, so long as it pursued the objective truth of the subject. And as Watanabe Tsutomu stated, photographers understood realism "in a broader sense through the pursuit of the

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 380-381.

truth.”<sup>134</sup> But how were photographers to uncover the truth in their photographs? Here, again, the issue of subjectivity came to the fore.

According to Uramatsu Samitarō and others, photographers could convey the truth of a subject by capturing its essence.<sup>135</sup> Domon explained in one roundtable discussion that he captured the subject’s spirit by quelling his subjectivity to retain an objective viewpoint.<sup>136</sup> Miki Jun, who declared it his mission to pursue truth in his work, operated according to a similar principle.<sup>137</sup> Ina Nobuo, in his critique of Miki’s portrait of Japanese-American artist Noguchi Isamu (1904-1988), wrote that the photo provoked in him “a feeling that Noguchi is coming up from the surface.” He continued to state that “because Miki’s individual photographic personality as a *Life* correspondent does not emerge, I can appreciate that Noguchi’s character does emerge.”<sup>138</sup> Miki succeeded in evoking Noguchi’s essence, according to Ina, by suppressing his own subjectivity. Any photograph that accomplished this, most photographers agreed, achieved realism.<sup>139</sup>

As the realist aesthetic developed, it increasingly overlapped with human-interest photography (*hyumanizumu* or *hyuman intoresuto shashin*), a third major trend that emerged in the early 1950s. Japanese photographers defined human-interest photography as a “photograph that approaches social phenomena and human life with a humanistic attitude” (*hyūmanisutikku*

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<sup>134</sup> Watanabe Tsutomu, “Amachua no shashin nyūmon (sono 8),” 129.

<sup>135</sup> “Shashin geijutsu no hon mensuru kadai,” *Asahi Kamera*, October 1954.

<sup>136</sup> Ina Nobuo, Domon Ken, Watanabe Yoshio, Hasegawa Nyozeikan, Uramatsu Samitarō, “Shashin no riarizumu ni tsuite,” *Asahi Kamera*, December 1952, 98-105.

<sup>137</sup> Miki Jun, “Kongetsu no kotoba: Kōro,” *Asahi Kamera*, September 1950, 51.

<sup>138</sup> Ina Nobuo, “1950-Nen Nihon no shashin geijutsu no dōkō,” *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, 1952, 4-8.

<sup>139</sup> Hoda Kurao, “Kamera no me (22) riarizumu 159it suite” *Asahi Kamera*, March 1954, 163.

*na taido*).<sup>140</sup> Put simply, the genre was attentive to recording people in quotidian moments.

Tanaka Masao, who urged photographers to express their social consciousness, wrote in the 1952 *ARS Shashin Nenkan* that photographers must base their work in humanity.<sup>141</sup> Kimura Ihei, long a photographer of urban, working-class society, agreed. In one roundtable, he stated that his position as a photographer had always been to look at society, “record it, and wrestle with capturing human resistance and passion.” This, for Kimura, was realist photography.<sup>142</sup>

Human-interest photography in Japan, as we have discussed, was sparked by Euro-American photojournalists and street photographers, whose works were featured in Japanese photography magazines from the late 1940s. Many of these photographers ultimately traveled to Japan, including Margaret Bourke-White and Werner Bischof, where they developed close and lasting relationships with Japanese photographers. As interest in realism and human-interest photography spread, snapshots of people in moments of daily life finally made their way into photography magazines.

### Photographing People in Moments of Daily Life

Even though Japanese photographers studied American photojournalist trends, especially the art of crafting photo stories like those in *Life* magazine, the inspiration to document daily life came primarily from the influence of European human-interest photographers. Japanese photographers and critics at times distinguished between European and American humanist photography, noting that American photography exhibited staged and stylized compositions that had less emotional impact, partly due to their use of the flash. In contrast, as observed by Japanese commentators, European photographers tended to be more candid and emotive in their

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<sup>140</sup> Watanabe Tsutomo, “Amachua no shashin nyūmon (8).”

<sup>141</sup> Tanaka Masao, “1952-Nen Nihon no shashin geijutsu no dōkō,” *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, 1952, 108-113.

<sup>142</sup> “The Problems of Modern Photography,” 1953, 53-58.



work—an effect they achieved, in large part, by utilizing natural lighting. The result allowed them to convey human emotion better than could be achieved with flash photography.<sup>143</sup>

Henri Cartier-Bresson inspired countless Japanese photographers with his human-interest photographs.<sup>144</sup> As early as 1949, Japanese photographers had begun to remark on his skill in capturing “pivotal moments” (*shunkan*);<sup>145</sup> and in 1953, *Asahi Kamera* published a translation of Cartier-Bresson’s *Images à la Sauvette* (*Images On the Run*, sometimes translated as *The Decisive Moment*).<sup>146</sup> In this piece, Cartier-Bresson described his approach to photography as the pursuit to capture, in one photograph, “the whole essence of some situation that was in the process of unrolling itself before my eyes.”<sup>147</sup> In the years that followed, translated essays and photographic works contributed to Cartier-Bresson’s rising popularity.<sup>148</sup> So influential was he and other like-minded French photographers that the terms “decisive moment” (*ketteiteki shunkan*) and “humanism” (*hyūmanizumu*) became catchwords in Japanese photographic circles, appearing in articles on Western photographers as well as in critiques of Japanese professional and amateur photographs.

Cartier-Bresson’s work fascinated Miki Jun, who avidly collected every magazine he could find that had published the French photographer’s images. Miki was drawn especially to Cartier-Bresson’s ability to saturate his work with an intimacy and vitality that was absent from

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<sup>143</sup> Kanamaru Shigene, Ina Nobuo, Kimura Ihei, “Sengo Amerika shashin geijutsu: shashinka to sakufu wo chuushin ni,” *Asahi Kamera*, February 1949, 108-114.

<sup>144</sup> Torihara, *Nihon shashin shi*, 119–121.

<sup>145</sup> Kanamaru, Ina, Kimura, “Sengo Amerika no shashin geijitsu,” *Asahi Kamera*, November 1949, 113.

<sup>146</sup> Translated in Japanese as *The Decisive Moment* (*Kettei teki shunkan*).

<sup>147</sup> “Henri Cartier-Bresson, “Ketteiteki shunkan: Ni jū go-nenkan no taiken kara,” *Asahi Kamera*, August 1953, 104-106.

<sup>148</sup> *Nihon Shashin Kyōkai*, *Nihon gendai shashin-shi*, 409.

the photos of so many other photographers.<sup>149</sup> Aware that Duncan had shown Cartier-Bresson his Nikkor lens while on assignment in Cairo, and that Cartier-Bresson had expressed interest in obtaining one himself, Miki sent him a Nikon camera body with a Nikkor lens attached. In return, Cartier-Bresson wrote Miki expressing his conviction that major European photographers, including himself, might help give Japanese journalism new life.<sup>150</sup>

In 1951, clearly inspired by Cartier-Bresson's message, Miki established *Shūdan Foto*, a photography collective modeled on the international photographic collective Magnum Photos that was founded in Paris in 1947 by Cartier-Bresson, Robert Capa, David "Chim" Seymour (1911-1956), George Rodger (1908-1995), William and Rita Vandivert, and Maria Eisner (1909-1991). Miki hoped his collective might catapult Japanese photography onto the global stage, enable Nikon to gain international recognition, and entice famous photographers from abroad to visit Japan.<sup>151</sup> He asked Domon and Kimura to be advisors and invited talented young photographers such as Ōtake Shōji (1920-2015) and Inamura Takamasa (1923-1989) to join.

Miki envisioned that *Shūdan Foto* would host exhibits bringing Japanese and foreign photographers together, but many of its members remained skeptical of Miki's lofty aspirations. Not to be deterred, Miki sent Cartier-Bresson a letter explaining his ideas for an international exhibit. Inspired by Miki's dream to build international photographic connections, Cartier-Bresson replied with a package containing photographs from Robert Capa, Robert Doisneau, and Ernst Haas. Upon receiving the package, Miki rushed off to meet Kimura Ihei and Ina Nobuo. In his biography of Miki, Suda Shintarō relates that Miki was so excited that his hands shook as he

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<sup>149</sup> Suda, "*Shashin ka*" *Miki Jun to "Raifu" no jidai*, 116.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

opened the package and that Kimura was so deeply impressed by the photos that he stayed up all night ruminating on the compositions.<sup>152</sup>

In 1951, Miki included these images in *Shūdan Foto*'s first exhibition, held in Ginza's Mitsukoshi Department Store. Titled "Japan-France-US-UK Photo" (*Nichifutsu beiei rengō shashin*), the exhibition drew upwards of 30,000 visitors, proving immensely popular and inspiring photo magazines to publish even more works from foreign photographers.<sup>153</sup> Between 1951 and 1958, *Shūdan Foto* held eight exhibitions<sup>154</sup> featuring Japanese photographers alongside prominent Western names, most of whom were connected to *Life* magazine or photo collectives like Magnum.

European and American photographers were featured time and again in Japanese photography magazines as well, most connected to *Life* magazine or photo collectives like Magnum and Rapho. Rapho (short for Rado-Photo), which we have yet to discuss, was founded by Charles Rado in 1933. Its members specialized in human-interest photography, and included Brassai, Nora Dumas (1890-1979), Ergy Landau (1896-1967), Edouard Boubat (1923-1999), Willy Ronis, Yousuf Karsh, and Robert Doisneau, among others. The works of these and other photographers appeared regularly in *Asahi Kamera*'s popular "Selections" series, which emphasized their ability to capture the moment or otherwise convey a subject's essence. Robert Doisneau was praised for capturing "only the most favorable moments" (*mottomo konomashī shunkan wo tsukaaeru nisuginai*),<sup>155</sup> and Brassai for expressing humanity in quotidian

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 120-121.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>154</sup> Nihon Shashin Kyōkai, *Nihon gendai shashin-shi*, 408.

<sup>155</sup> "Robērudowanō shashin-shū," *Asahi Kamera*, December 1951, 7-14.

moments.<sup>156</sup> Both were noted for incorporating humor into their images, an element that seemed to inspire many Japanese amateur photographers.<sup>157</sup>

As humanism increased in popularity, realism came under increasing attack from critics. The chief complaint against realism was its focus on homelessness, prostitution, war orphans, and disabled war veterans, which, as discussed, purportedly created a false impression of postwar Japan.<sup>158</sup> Even the indomitable Domon had grown tired of the proliferation of such images. Despite offering encouragement to photographers in their quest to capture wretched social conditions, he believed that amateurs had begun to obsess over images of poverty and ruin. What made matters worse, in Domon's view, was that many of these photographs were actually staged—an action that prevented photographers from capturing the full truth of the subject.

One more glaring problem that critics of realism identified with the style was their sterility—that is, such a detachment from the subject as to deprive photographs of emotion. Although supportive of realism's focus on the socially disadvantaged, Tanaka Masao nevertheless criticized the genre for its lack of emotion.<sup>159</sup> Domon likewise expressed growing frustration with the abundance of unemotional photographs that amateurs submitted to magazines.<sup>160</sup> In an essay included in the 1955 exhibition catalog for “*Kyō no shashin*,” Domon wrote that the images by Japanese photographers, compared to French works, did not adequately represent reality. As he saw it, the problem was rooted in the failure of Japanese photographers

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<sup>156</sup> Uramatsu Samitarō, “US kamera nenkan 1953-nen yori,” *Asahi Kamera*, February 1954, 46-47.

<sup>157</sup> Yoshitake Genji, “Commencement,” (“Nyūgaku no hi”) *Asahi Kamera*, April 1954, 43.

<sup>158</sup> For a full explanation of “beggar photography,” see Tanaka, Masao (1953), “On Beggar Photography: The Importance of Photographing Street Urchins and Lumpen” [Original title: “*Kojiki sashinron: Furōji, runpen ōi ni torubeshi*”], trans. Holmberg, Ryan, in *From Postwar to Postmodern, Art in Japan, 1945-1989: Primary Source Documents* (New York: Duke University Press, 2012), 50-53.

<sup>159</sup> Feltens, “‘Realist’ Betweenness and Collective Victims,” 65.

<sup>160</sup> Thomas, “Postwar Power Made Visible,” 382–89.

to capture the emotional essence of their subjects. Domon felt empty, he wrote, when looking at images by Japanese photographers, but was filled with emotion when viewing the work of French human-interest photographers.<sup>161</sup>

European humanist photography became popular in Japan precisely because of photographers' desire to achieve an emotional impact. Observing their photos in magazines and exhibitions, Japanese photographers applauded Brassai as a "poet of the camera" (*kamera no shijin*)<sup>162</sup> and Edouard Boubat for capturing the "essence of the object" by pressing "the shutter at the best emotional moment."<sup>163</sup> Doisneau and Karsh likewise garnered attention for the skill with which they evoked the emotions of their subjects.<sup>164</sup> Domon cited Robert Capa in one critique of an amateur photo, urging the photographer to take note of the "deep emotion [of Capa] related to the motif." Indeed, it was only the deep feeling of the photographer, Domon explained, that could create a "truly splendid photograph."<sup>165</sup>

Human-interest photographers in France, Germany, Russia, and Italy sought to capture in their images a shared sense of humanity that wartime totalitarian regimes had oppressed.<sup>166</sup> And Japanese photographers, who shared this experience, identified with their European peers and similarly yearned to document scenes of everyday life. The series "Moods and Expressions" (*Gendai no kanjō*) in *Asahi Kamera* exemplifies the wide range of quotidian moments that

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<sup>161</sup> Nihon Shashin Kyōkai, *Nihon gendai shashin-shi*, 406.

<sup>162</sup> Domon Ken, "Camera Questions *dai ni kai*," *Kamera*, December 1948, 42-43; "Kaigai yūmei shashin sakka shōkai (31) burassai kessaku-shū," *Asahi Kamera* January 1953, 9.

<sup>163</sup> Ina Nobuo, "Kaigai yūmei shashin sakka shōkai (26) Edowāru Buuba sakuhin-shū," *Asahi Kamera* April 1952, 7.

<sup>164</sup> Uramatsu Samitarō, "US kamera nenkan 1953-nen yori," *Asahi Kamera*, February 1953, 33; "Kaigai yūmei sakka shōkai (5) Yūsafu Kāshu sakuhin-shū," *Asahi Kamera*, April 1950, n.p.

<sup>165</sup> Domon Ken, "Shin shashin sakuga kōza," *Kamera*, January 1950, 123-124.

<sup>166</sup> Peter Hamilton, "A poetry of the streets?" Documenting Frenchness in an Era of Reconstruction: Humanist Photography, 1935-1960," in *The Documentary Impulse in French Literature*, ed. Buford Norman (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001), 179.

photographers captured, as well as how they employed the stylistic nuances favored by European humanist-interest photographers to evoke the emotions of the subject. The magazine printed 69 installments of the series between 1952 and 1957, making it one of the longest-running in early postwar photography magazines. The editor offered the following introduction to the series in the first installment published in May 1952: “Confused emotions flow in contemporary Japanese society. This series is a project of *Asahi Kamera*’s editorial department to express society’s feelings, taking as material the daily life of the Japanese who live in an age of hope and hardship.” As the series would illustrate, capturing the sentiments of postwar society was fast becoming a cornerstone of Japanese photographers.

The themes and subjects that appeared throughout the “Moods and Expressions” series epitomized the social, economic, and political challenges confronting early postwar Japanese society. Yoshioka Senzō (1916-2005) conveyed social concerns in “The Children’s Fate” (*Unmei no kora*), which pictured bi-racial orphans born of fraternization between American GIs and Japanese women; and Ōtsuka Gen submitted a photograph of men, women, and children making offerings at Yasukuni Shrine—Japan’s national shrine to the war dead—that symbolized a nation grieving the young men and women who died in the Asia-Pacific War. Other photos, which captured women in a Western dressmaking school and mothers holding squirming children while getting permanents at hair salons, illustrated the passion for Western fashion that swept through postwar Japan. Crowds swarming around displays at a department store and fishermen bidding at an auction referenced Japan’s recovering industries and consumer economy. As well, popular entertainment was a common theme. The *kasutori* demimonde was represented in a scene of cabaret performers gathering in a backstage dressing room, while a photograph of a woman dancing on set in a film studio indicated the rising popularity of

television. In short, when viewed collectively, the series captured the ethos and the pathos of postwar Japan.

In each photograph of the “Moods and Expressions” series, the photographers strove to compose images that would stir an emotional response from the readers. Yoshioka Senzō’s photograph “The Children’s Fate,” mentioned earlier, ran as the second photo of the series in June 1952. Taken at the Elizabeth Saunders Home, an orphanage in Japan established in 1948 by Miki Sawada (1901-1980) for children born of relationships between Allied servicemen and Japanese women,<sup>167</sup> the image depicts a group of small children in an outdoor setting. Yoshioka zoomed in on the children, allowing nothing else to enter the frame aside from the lush trees that fill the background. Even so, the photographer kept enough distance to allow the viewer to take in the full details of the children’s clothing and appearance. The camera peers at the children from a low angle, putting the viewer on the same level as the children’s faces. Normally such a technique would allow the viewer a greater connection to the photographed subject; in this case, however, each child looks upwards towards the sky, breaking the connection between their gaze and the viewer—thus preventing the formation of a bond between viewer and children.

Yoshioka Senzō contributed numerous photographs to the “Moods and Expressions” series, including snapshots of wounded repatriated soldiers, journalists gathered at the Prime Minister’s press briefings, and recent graduates—still clothed in their distinctive school uniforms—attending job interviews. In an essay titled “My Photographic Ethos” (Watashi no sakuga seishin), Yoshioka explained that he had two eyes as a photographer. The first eye was

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<sup>167</sup> Reports on the number of children born of relations between Occupation personnel and Japanese citizens vary considerably. The U.S. military’s *Stars and Stripes* newspaper reported on 10 March, 1947, that between the start of the Occupation and June of that year, Japanese women in the Tokyo-Yokohama district would have given birth to 14,000 Amerasian babies. Two years later Miki Sawada estimated that U.S. servicemen had sired 200,000 babies in Japan. Masami Takada, head of the Children’s Bureau of the Welfare Ministry, put the figure at 150,000. When the bureau conducted a survey in the spring of 1952, though, it found a total of only 5,002 Amerasian babies. See Burritt Sabin, “They Came, They Saw, They Democratized,” *The Japan Times*, April 28, 2002.

that of the camera mechanism (*shashin no mekanizumu no me*) and the second eye was that of his heart (*watashi no kokoro no me*). Yoshioka drew on both of these eyes as he reacted in the decisive moment, capturing the essence of the subject and leaving an emotional imprint on his photographs.<sup>168</sup> In his snapshot of the orphans, Yoshioka at once created a close emotional connection to the children through an intimate and simple frame, yet managed to sever that connection by capturing them at a passing moment when all the children looked up at a bird in the sky. Additionally, the children are pictured without any adult or caretaker in the frame. In this way, Yoshioka evoked their precarious position in Japanese society. In this photograph, Yoshioka demonstrates his ability to draw on both the eye of the camera mechanism and the eye of his heart to expertly seize the decisive moment and capture the emotion of the subject, portraying in a group of small children a scene of hardship in postwar society.

Noted photojournalist Funayama Katsu was another photographer who regularly contributed to the “Moods and Expressions” series. His photograph “So Awfully Long” (*Ie o motomeru hitobito*)<sup>169</sup> illustrates how photographers expertly captured the emotion of the subject to “express the feelings of society.”<sup>170</sup> Yoshioka focused his lens on a woman seated in a crowd of people. Dressed in a patterned kimono, she leans forward to rest her head on the seat in front of her, the hard wooden surface pressing into the side of her head. Her slumped, cramped body posture and unfocused gaze convey a sense of utter fatigue. In front of her are three chairs, the only empty seats in this scene. Their vacancy provides equilibrium to the composition by opening up a small pocket of negative space that balances the mass of people crowded into the rest of the frame. In addition to providing balance to the composition, the contrast of the empty

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<sup>168</sup> Yoshioka Senzō, “*Watashi no sakuga seishin*,” *Asahi Kamera*, May 1953, 114.

<sup>169</sup> A more accurate translation would be “People Seeking a Home.”

<sup>170</sup> The photograph appeared in the 31<sup>st</sup> installment of the series, printed in the November 1954 issue.



chairs with the weary woman and other people in the frame invites the viewer to ponder the deeper implications of the photograph.

Funayama took this image when housing shortages plagued Japanese society, particularly in cities. In an initial effort to address this problem, armaments factories were converted to the production of prefabricated houses. Nevertheless, by May 1952, the number of houses in Tokyo covered only 76 percent of the city's minimum requirements.<sup>171</sup> In 1951, the Construction Ministry issued the Public Housing Law (Kōei Jūtaku Hō) to enable the central government to provide subsidies so that local governments could provide low-rent housing. Because the number of qualified applicants usually exceeded the available housing by a multiple of 10 to 20, a lottery was put in place to determine which households received a unit.<sup>172</sup>

Although the specific context is not made clear in Funayama's image, many viewers of his photograph must have wondered why so many seats were empty. Had the people given up on acquiring housing? Or had they finally received a home, leaving those left behind to wonder when it might be their turn to secure their own? Funayama employed several compositional techniques to heighten the emotional register of the image. A shallow depth of field renders the woman in the foreground in sharp focus, thus directing attention to her presence. Yet the people who fill the background—though blurred and indistinct—are part of the story as well. Funayama cropped the frame to congest it with people, most of whom seem riveted on something taking place in front of the audience. Aside from the exhausted woman slumped over in her seat, only one man has his attention elsewhere. Positioned directly behind the woman, the young man in the center of the frame gazes directly at the photographer, drawing the viewer's gaze to meet his own. By considering cropping, depth of field, and the “decisive moment” of capturing the young

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<sup>171</sup> Ronald P. Dore, *City Life in Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 43.

<sup>172</sup> Ann Waswo, *Housing in Postwar Japan - A Social History* (London: Routledge, 2002), 76.

man's gaze, Funayama combined form and content to convey the emotional turmoil of urban residents seeking a home in postwar Japanese society.

Funayama's evocative image is just one of many human-interest photographs that captured the mood of Japan and its citizens in the immediate postwar era. Taken as a whole, these photographs tell an ongoing story of a society that continued to live in desperate *kyodatsu* conditions in the wake of war and occupation, and that expressed hope for a better future.

### Photographic Contact Zones and Cross-Cultural Influences

Humanism, realism, and photojournalism, although distinct photographic styles, shared one important trait: they built on the influence of Western photographers. That this influence spread far and wide, as we have discussed, owed to photography magazines, which acted as essential sites of photographic exchange. These magazines provided readers with intimate knowledge of Western photographic trends and camera technology through roundtable discussions, interviews, feature articles, reports, and photographs. The ongoing exchange between Euro-American and Japanese photographers during Japan's first postwar decade had a deep and lasting impact on photography in Japan.

When it came to photojournalism, American influence proved dominant due to the presence of Occupying forces and the constant flow of *Life* photographers and other correspondents who stopped in Japan on their way to document the Korean War. Ironically, however, those photographers keen to develop the emotional register of their photographs looked less to the work of Americans than to that of prominent Europeans such as Henri Cartier-Bresson and Robert Doisneau. In this respect, photography reveals an important aspect of foreign cultural encounter and exchange in the early postwar. Scholarship on this period has emphasized almost exclusively the pervasiveness of American cultural influence, with one scholar even labeling the

period “Japan’s American Interlude.”<sup>173</sup> However, as this chapter has shown, European influences were equally prevalent and impactful on Japanese cultural practices. In the case of photography, the increasing popularity of human-interest photography resulted in a profusion of photographs that documented Japanese society in the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s.

As intense interest in human-interest photography took root among amateur and professional photographers, photo magazines published more and more images that depicted Japanese in quotidian moments. The photographs portrayed farm communities, coastal and remote mountain villages, and bustling urban neighborhoods. Images showed men and women at home or work and children at play. They documented the stark contrast between the lives of the seemingly wealthy, clothed in expensive fashions and living in modern, Western-style homes, and those of the destitute living in temporary housing or begging on the street. In short, as the next chapter will illustrate, the diverse representations of Japan and its people in early postwar magazines evoked the cultural fluidity of Occupied Japan, where people embraced a multifaceted range of identities.

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<sup>173</sup> Kawai Kazuo, *Japan’s American Interlude* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960).

## CHAPTER IV

### JAPAN'S SELF-IMAGE: DOCUMENTING JAPANESE SOCIETY

The steel beams running through the middle of the frame of the photograph are dark and foreboding (fig. 4.1). Ominously, they arrest the viewer's eye, pulling us into the pictorial space, yet simultaneously keeping us separated from the subject. The viewer is a voyeur gazing at a woman loitering in the street. She leans back against a brick wall plastered with peeling posters and advertisements in what appears to be a passageway beneath elevated train tracks. The eye takes in her appearance, focusing first on a white headband that contrasts with the deep luster of her dark hair. From there, it moves to the simple blouse and purse clutched at her breast, then down to her knee-length skirt. Finally, it rests on her legs, crossed at the ankle. Harsh streetlights blaze down upon the woman from somewhere outside the frame, throwing her dark shadow against the wall, where it meets and melts into the black steel beams in the foreground. The woman's posture, together with the slight tilt to her head as she looks out of the frame to the right, suggests she has paused here to wait—perhaps anxiously, as implied by the crisscrossed legs and hunched shoulders—for a midnight tryst.<sup>1</sup>

Taking one's eyes off the woman, and trying to take in the rest of the scene, is not easy: bold lines relentlessly redirect one's gaze back to the center. The two steel beams in the foreground—their dark shapes outside the reach of light in the inky shadows of the underpass—engage the woman in the middle of the frame. The eye attempts to inspect the ground, but here, too, lines formed by the cracked and dirty stone pavement bring the eye back to the woman in the center. There is no escape, no relief for the eye; the photographer forces the viewer to share his gaze, holding it on the woman in the center of the frame. While the viewer gazes straight at

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<sup>1</sup> In a special edition issue of *Kamera*, Tanaka Masao identifies the woman specifically as a *pan pan* and hails the photo for its realistic depiction of customs in the immediate postwar (*hakai-teki hihan haisen chokugo no fūzoku*). "Sunappu shashin," *Kamera: Sunappu shashin nyūmon*, 1955.

the woman, however, the woman does not return the viewer's gaze. Instead, she looks down the street at something or someone off frame, seemingly unaware of the camera intruding upon this moment.



Figure 4.1. Hayashi Tadahiko. “Night” (Yoru). *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, 1948. Hayashi Tadahiko Archives.

This image came from the camera of Hayashi Tadahiko,<sup>2</sup> a photojournalist who focused his early postwar work on the *yakeato* (burned ruins) landscape of Tokyo and the struggles of those who inhabited the bombed and ruined city. *ARS Shashin Nenkan* published Hayashi's

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<sup>2</sup> Born into a family of photographers, Hayashi's father and mother ran a photography studio in his hometown in Yamaguchi-ken. During the war, the family specialized in portrait photography, serving young clients who came in to have their faces recorded before traveling overseas to join the war. Unusual at the time, Hayashi's mother, Hayashi Ishi, learned the trade from her husband and soon excelled at portrait photography. Hayashi recalls his mother working late into the night in the darkroom, singing while she developed photographs. Hayashi moved to Beijing in 1942, where he co-founded the North China News Photography Association (Kahoku Kōhō-shashin Kyōkai). For more on Hayashi, see Katō Tetsurō, *Shōwa no shashinka* (Tokyo: Shōbunsha, 1990).

image in the 1948 annual, placing it amid a sequence of photos that evoke the ethos of postwar Japan. On the subsequent page, a lone figure again captures the viewer's attention—not one of flesh and blood this time, but rather of chiseled stone. Here, a Christian statue looms over steps bathed in shadow and a cascade of rubble. These two subjects together, Christian statues and ruins—could only be photographed in one location: the atomic fields of Nagasaki. Turning the page, the viewer meets the gaze of a golden-haired child with pigtail braids, and then a candid photo of a Japanese woman in the rural snow country whose bright smile radiates a sense of cheerfulness despite the cold and snow. The sequence of images that precedes the woman in the dark street includes the Diet (Parliament) building framed by crumbling debris and twisted rebar, a poised, kimono-clad woman drinking tea against a *shoji* screen backdrop, and a snapshot of idyllic snow country village life. Collectively, these images visualize the daily lives and cultural identity of the Japanese people in the immediate postwar period—lives framed by war, defeat, and occupation.

Hayashi believed that “capturing humans and their lives” was the “greatest task given to modern photography” in Japan.<sup>3</sup> This chapter investigates how Japanese photographers and photography magazines re-imaged Japanese cultural identity in the early postwar period by focusing on their photos that documented society. How did photographers envision their role in contributing to discussions of Japanese culture and identity? What wartime conceptions of cultural identity did their photos challenge, and what new image(s) of postwar Japan did their photos offer? And how did photographers re-image cultural identity in the context of Japan's relationship to the powerful “Other” of the Occupying Americans?

Japan's postwar photography magazines invited photographers to contribute to a new vision of Japanese culture, and photographers took up the challenge in the belief that the photos

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<sup>3</sup> Hayashi Tadahiko, “Kyō no kotoba: Puro sakka no hatsugen,” *Asahi Kamera*, November 1950.

they took were integral to broader discourses on Japanese culture and identity. Because the magazines published photos taken by amateurs and professionals from all across Japan, the images they published proffered diverse, and sometimes contradictory, representations of Japan and its people. Photographers offered a multifaceted perspective on postwar life in Japanese cities: impoverished neighborhoods, repaved streets, and reconstructed buildings, alongside traces of “old urban Japan.” In the countryside, photographers depicted idyllic villages that remained bastions of tradition. Their photos of *matsuri* (festival) celebrations evoked a sense of renewed national unity and cohesion. Photographers also took pictures people on the social margins, who signified the looming reality of defeat and occupation: wounded repatriated soldiers, sex workers who catered to the American Occupiers, and biracial orphans born from fraternization. Finally, they strove to capture the rapidly changing ethos of postwar Japanese society, including the foreign cultural influences that could be seen most vividly in Western fashion trends and sporting events.

As we examine photographs of postwar Japan taken by Japanese photographers, it is important to remember that photography in Japan was a gendered practice. Photographers at this time were overwhelmingly men and, interestingly, many of their photos were of women. Male photographers depicted women in a variety of roles: they took images of mothers and housewives that projected the domestic roles that women were expected to inhabit; and they shot women in new roles, as female bus guides and “salarywomen,” offering up the image of a new Japan replete with dynamic, modern women. Finally, they took photographs of women modeling American-style fashions and walking arm-in-arm with male companions that attested to the cultural influence of the Occupation. Meanwhile, pictures of male intellectuals, artists, and other cultural icons personified the refashioning of Japan as a “new cultural nation.”

Because Japanese photographers in the early postwar re-imaged cultural identity at a time when Japan was under American cultural and political influence,<sup>4</sup> their photographs worked to visualize Occupation power structures.<sup>5</sup> On the one hand, photographers captured a confident masculine identity in images of athletes, such as the world-record-setting swimmer Furuhashi Hironoshin—the “Flying Fish of Fujiyama”—whose image projected a healthy, powerful Japan that could compete against the U.S. on a world stage. On the other hand, pictures of female sex workers catering to American GIs reinforced Occupation authority, and those of disabled Japanese soldiers suggested a fragile Japanese masculinity vis-à-vis the occupying American forces. These images of international athletic competitions, fraternization, and wounded Japanese men at times challenged and at times reinforced Occupation authority.

Key themes of Japanese human-interest photography in the early postwar period are fully on display in the image introduced at the outset of this chapter: women and their embodiment of moral values and dangers, the urban street, and postwar poverty. The editors of the annual in which the photo appeared added meaning to the image, as I have already suggested, by embedding it in a sequence of prints that evoked ruin, loss, and occupation, as well as images that depicted icons of steadfast Japanese traditions connoted through rural settings, clothing, *shoji* screens, and other material culture. By offering up different representations of culture and

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<sup>4</sup> In his study of the political, social, and economic reforms of the Allied Occupation, political scientist and journalist Kawai Kazuo calls the years from 1945 to 1952 “Japan’s American Interlude.” Kawai stresses the significance of the American influence during this time, stating, “for six years the United States has had a free hand to experiment with Japan than any other country in Asia, or indeed in the entire world.” Kawai Kazuo, “American influence on Japanese thinking,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 278 (1951): 23.

<sup>5</sup> In her analysis of *The Japan Times* from 1945 to 1964, Fabienne Darling-Wolf argues that newspaper images were part of a process of cultural negotiation for the Japanese that was closely connected to the American Occupation. Darling-Wolf further contends that this process was one of hybridization rather than forced assimilation. Given that *The Japan Times* was an English-language newspaper written for a foreign audience, it remains unclear whether this cultural negotiation reflected Japanese struggles at reconstructing postwar identity, or whether the content was intended to present a specific representation to its foreign readers. See Darling-Wolf, “Post-war Japan in Photographs: Erasing the Past and Building the Future in the Japan Times,” in *Journalism* 5, no. 4 (2004): 403-422.



society, photography magazines opened up a space that allowed for the expression of a multifaceted Japanese cultural identity in the wake of defeat.

### The Camera as a Tool of Culture in a “Spring of Freedom”

In 1948, photographer Nagahama Keizō penned an essay for *ARS Shashin Nenkan* that described the war years as a “vacuum” (*kūhaku*) due to the government's constraints on photography.<sup>6</sup> So restrictive were wartime measures that one article in the March 1946 issue of *Kamera* blamed them for the complete disappearance of candid photography during the war years.<sup>7</sup> The end of the war brought with it liberation from these wartime constraints, engendering what one author described as a “spring of freedom” (*jiyū no haru*) for photography.<sup>8</sup> In this new era, photographers believed that they could contribute to the visualization of a new Japanese culture through their photographs.

Commentary in postwar photo magazines consistently linked photography to discussions of culture. But how did photographers—and how should we—define “culture”? Theorist Raymond Williams asserts that “culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language” because it has been “used for important concepts in several distinct intellectual disciplines and in several distinct, incompatible ways.”<sup>9</sup> Rather than offering a deductive definition of culture and attempting to link it to essentialized notions of “Japanese culture” in the immediate postwar era, this dissertation follows the lead of anthropologist Mark Hobart, proceeding empirically instead to establish how early postwar photographers “invoked

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<sup>6</sup> Nagahama Keizō, “Sengo no amachua shashinkai tenbo,” *ARS Camera Annual*, 1948, 77-80.

<sup>7</sup> Morooka Kōji, “Kyandeddofoto ni tsuite,” *Kamera*, March 1946, 18-20.

<sup>8</sup> “Arusu shuppan tayori,” *Kamera*, February 1946.

<sup>9</sup> Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Flamingo, 1983), 87. Cited in Mark Hobart, *After Culture: Anthropology as Radical Metaphysical Critique* (Yogyakarta, Indonesia: Duta Wacana University Press, 2000), 3.

the notion of culture” in image and text.<sup>10</sup> In other words, the key question here is how photographers imagined a new postwar Japanese culture *through their photographs*. To answer this question, it is essential first to outline critical Japanese conceptions of culture and identity in the prewar and wartime period.

When postwar photographers spoke of culture, they used the term *bunka*, a word that did not begin to circulate in the popular consciousness until the early 1920s. Historian Tessa Morris-Suzuki has argued that early Meiji Westernizers used the term *bunka* as an abbreviation of *bunmei-kaika* (civilization and enlightenment), itself a phrase that signified achievements born of the scientific and industrial revolutions in Europe and which encapsulated Japanese Westernizers’ aims “for the transformation of Japanese society.”<sup>11</sup> In the interwar period, the meaning of *bunka* evolved from associations with Western science and industry and came to be associated instead with literature and the visual arts. At the same time, the concept of *bunka* was central to debates over Japanese identity and its putative uniqueness.<sup>12</sup> At the core of these debates was a desire to project national unity and cohesion.

Integral to the aspiration to project national unity and delineate the unique nature of “Japanese-ness” was the fusion of culture and biology.<sup>13</sup> Historian Michael Weiner has analyzed the use of two key terms central to the connection between culture, biology, and a unique Japanese identity: *minzoku* (ethnic customs) and *jinshu* (race).<sup>14</sup> Before the Asia-Pacific War,

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<sup>10</sup> Hobart, *After Culture*, 4.

<sup>11</sup> Morris-Suzuki, “The Invention and Reinvention of ‘Japanese Culture,’” 762.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 763.

<sup>13</sup> Kilby Hammond, “The Question of Japanese-ness: Repatriation and Guilt in Postwar Japan,” *Asia Pacific Perspectives* (2015): 105.

<sup>14</sup> According to Weiner, the term *minzoku* was first popularized by Shiga Shigetaka in the 1880s. The term was used synonymously with nation and nationality, and was central in the rise of popular nationalism in early twentieth-

Weiner explains, the two terms had two distinct connotations: the former referring to cultural characteristics reflected in language, society, and customs, and the latter to biological determinants of “race” such as physical features.<sup>15</sup> As intellectuals and the media began to assert Japanese uniqueness and superiority on both cultural and biological grounds, however, the distinction between *minzoku* and *jinshu* became blurred.<sup>16</sup> In effect, the two terms became fused in common usage to connote the notion of Japanese society as culturally distinct and ethnically homogenous.

The casting of Japan as mono-ethnic and culturally unique was bound up in the ideology of *kokutai*—the “national body” or “national essence.” *Kokutai* linked the idea of a “timeless Japanese cultural essence” to the “emperor as a symbol of Japanese unity.”<sup>17</sup> Because the emperor was viewed as the “father” of the family-nation (*kokka*), the ideals of *kokutai* demanded that individuals suppress their subjectivity in order to offer their loyalty to the family of Japan. At the height of Japanese imperialism, offering loyalty to the state demanded that the emperor’s subjects help to promote Japan’s status as a leader of Asia.<sup>18</sup> Photographers contributed to this

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century Japan. Weiner, “Discourses of Race, Nation and Empire in Pre-1945 Japan,” in *Race, Ethnicity, and Migration in Modern Japan: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture in Modern Japan*, ed. Michael Weiner (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 228.

<sup>15</sup> Michael Weiner, “Discourses of Race, Nation and Empire in Pre-1945 Japan,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 18.3 (2010): 438.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 433-56.

<sup>17</sup> Yumiko Iida, *Rethinking Identity in Modern Japan: Nationalism as Aesthetics* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 5.

<sup>18</sup> Mary L. Hanneman, *Japan Faces the World, 1925-1952* (Essex, England, Pearson Education Limited, 2001), 43-44.

project, as we saw in Chapter II, by producing propaganda that fabricated sentiments of racial harmony among the disparate people of Japan's empire.<sup>19</sup>

Although Meiji leaders first promoted *kokutai*, in the 1930s, those who scorned Western cultural influence in Japan articulated the ideology with increasing fervor.<sup>20</sup> In 1942, several intellectuals specializing in fields ranging from the arts and sciences to religious and philosophical thought came together in the "Overcoming Modernity" (Kindai no Chōkoku) symposium, in which they aspired to "overcome modernity" by rejecting Western cultural hegemony and restoring an "authentic Japanese culture."<sup>21</sup> Importantly, as Richard Calichman argues, the Overcoming Modernity symposium ultimately revealed the connection between cultural nationalism and military expansionism since many believed that Japan would only overcome the West through colonialist expansion in Asia.<sup>22</sup>

Nationalism and militarism had a significant impact on visualizing Japanese cultural identity both at home and abroad. The military government espoused several ideals in propaganda, including loyalty, female chastity, discipline, harmony, notions of the body as "iron-hard and intact,"<sup>23</sup> and the idea of a socially cohesive Japan.<sup>24</sup> In the 1940s, *ARS Shashin Nenkan*

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<sup>19</sup> As Kevin Doak has shown, some advocates of *kokutai* attempted to erase the ethnic identities of the people who were brought under Japan's empire. The ethicist Yumoto Takehiko, for example, claimed that Japan was "composed exclusively of the Yamato nation (*minzoku*), and even if one maintains that it gradually came to include other ethnic nations (*i-minzoku*), these all became Japanized and did not retain their own ethics or morality as distinctive ethnic nations." Quoted in Kevin Doak, "Culture, Ethnicity, and the State in Early Twentieth-Century Japan," in *Japan's Competing Modernities: Issues in Culture and Democracy, 1900-1930*, ed. Sharon A. Minichiello (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998), 534.

<sup>20</sup> James L. McClain, *Japan: A Modern History* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2002), 428.

<sup>21</sup> Reynolds, *Allegories of Time and Space*, xiii. However, as Richard Calichman argues, this was made difficult because the participants harbored different interpretations of modernity. Richard F. Calichman, "Preface: 'Overcoming Modernity': The Dissolution of Cultural Identity," in *Overcoming Modernity: Cultural Identity in Wartime Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), xii.

<sup>22</sup> Calichman, "Preface," ix.

<sup>23</sup> Sharalyn Orbaugh discusses the inversion of wartime ideals in early postwar literature, stating that wartime devastation and the occupation made themes of wartime propaganda hard to sustain. For example, she states that

published photos that demonstrate how amateur and professional photographers perpetuated these ideals. One telling example comes from a two-page spread in the 1943 annual. On the left page, we see a group of young men dressed in simple white shirts and shorts that expose their youthful, robust bodies. *Hachimaki* (literally “helmet scarf”) emblazoned with the rising sun are cinched tightly above faces expressing lyrical stoicism, a sentiment reinforced through dramatic lighting.

The youths’ gaze toward the right side of the frame draws the viewer’s attention to the scene unfolding on the opposing page (fig. 4.2). Here, a film crew arrayed around a camera mounted on a motorized vehicle occupies the lower third of the frame. Above them, an expansive field stretches across the frame, filled with uniformed men engaged in group exercise. Their erect bodies and outstretched arms form precise, rigid lines, the repetition of which suggests mutual strength and solidarity. In both images, the photographers synthesized form and content to call forth ideals of muscular, martial bodies, group harmony, discipline, national spirit, and modern technology at work in an efficient, ordered nation.

Representations of women symbolized multiple ideals in the wartime annuals, connoted most effectively through their clothing. On the one hand, women in rural settings, or women posed demurely in stylish kimono, evoked tradition. Photographed in other locations, such as lively urban streets, women embodied modernity and cosmopolitanism. And in still other instances, the appearance of women dressed, for example, in distinctive Chinese clothing styles invoked Japan’s imperialist activities across mainland and Southeast Asia. Whether in kimono,

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Shimao Toshio draws on the idea of “dirty blood” in order “to address the general loss of the belief in the spiritual purity of the imagined Japanese social body, and also the loss of the sense of the integrity of the family, with blood symbolizing heredity. Orbaugh, *Japanese Fiction of the Allied Occupation*, 474–484.

<sup>24</sup> According to John Dower, wartime propaganda drew on ideas of a historic collective “insider” Japanese identity that marked all non-Japanese as “outsiders.” Ultimately, propaganda sought to put the world order into a proper place with a pure Japan at the helm of rulership. See *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986).

Western skirt and blouse, or Chinese *qipao*, photographs of women reinforced values of modesty and chastity and promoted the notion of working for the greater good of the nation.

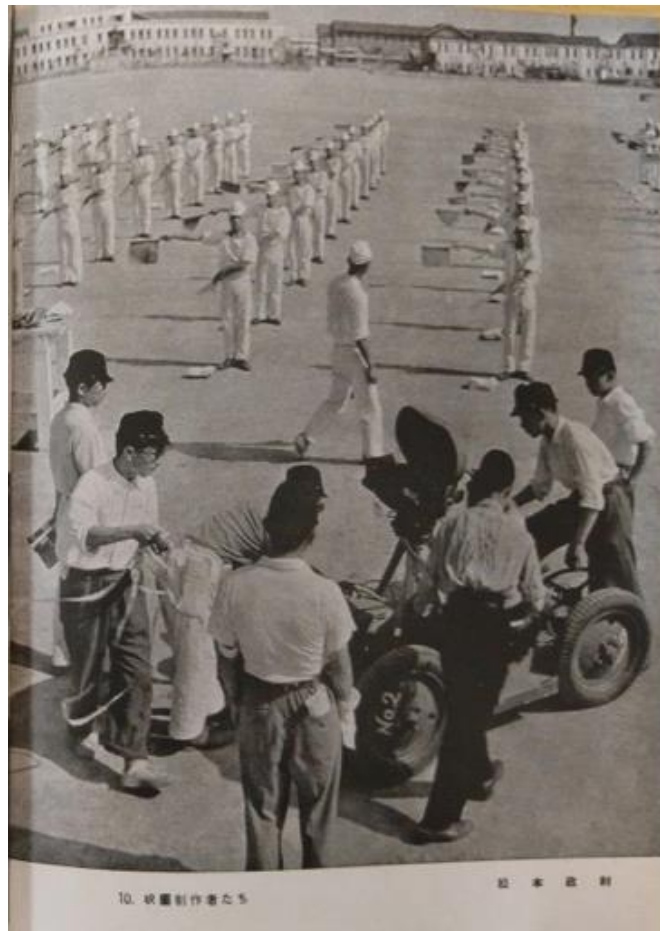


Figure 4.2. Matsumoto Masatoshi. “Filmmakers” (Eiga seisaku-sha-tachi). *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, 1943.

Depictions of women frequently intimated the supportive role they played behind men locked in battle on the frontlines. A photograph entitled “To the Warfront” (Senzen he) zeroes in on a group of women dressed in kimono taking turns in the sewing of a *senninbari*, a belt with one thousand stitches to be given as an amulet to a soldier headed to the warfront (fig. 4.3). *Senninbari* were believed to bring soldiers good luck, courage, immunity from bodily harm, and military prowess against their enemies. Because women sewed the belts for soldiers on the

battlefield, they connected women on the home front to men on the frontlines.<sup>25</sup> In photographs such as “To the Warfront,” accordingly, women projected the idea of national solidarity.



Figure 4.3. Hoshino Takaji. “To the Warfront” (Mae sen he). *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, 1941.

The wartime construction of a unique Japanese identity that reinforced unity both at home and across the empire “fell apart after the war,”<sup>26</sup> as one historian has put it. For photo magazines, this required an epochal shift—from visualizing a nation engaged in total war to visualizing one completely absent of it. Gone were glorified depictions of male bodies representing wartime spirit and martial prowess. Gone were photographs of women supporting the war effort from the home islands. Gone were photographs of children waving the Japanese

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<sup>25</sup> Hammond. “The Question of Japanese-ness,” *Asia Pacific Perspectives* (2015): 106.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

flag or training to become future soldiers. Gone, in fact, were any images even remotely suggestive of war.

In the wake of defeat, many professional photographers proclaimed the need to reflect on their wartime activities and their postwar ideological conversion, since most had been actively engaged in the production of propaganda.<sup>27</sup> Other artists joined them in expressions of remorse over their wartime activities and pledges to change the direction of Japan's visual culture in the new postwar environment. The painter Matsumoto Shunsuke (1912-1948) wrote in 1946 that Japan could not "welcome the reappearance of the art world as it was during the prewar or wartime period" because it had been dominated by those who "feigned ignorance" of what the government was doing.<sup>28</sup> Fearful, as most were, of a return to a totalitarian, military government, and thus positioning the arts as foundational to a free society, Matsumoto urged artists to remain vigilant and to refuse to "look the other way."<sup>29</sup>

Photographer Kuwabara Kineo made similar appeals when he warned Japan's photo world against a thoughtless return to its prewar condition.<sup>30</sup> But while many artists and photographers openly acknowledged their past work on propaganda and vowed to make amends in a new postwar era of freedom, others distanced themselves altogether from their complicity in producing propaganda. Natori Yōnosuke, for example, refrained from adding his name to his

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<sup>27</sup> Torihara, *Nihon shashin shi*, 121.

<sup>28</sup> Matsumoto Shunsuke, "A Proposal to the Artists of Japan," trans. Meiko Sano in *From Postwar to Postmodern, Art in Japan, 1945 1989: Primary Documents*, ed. Doryun Chong, et al. (New York, NY: Duke University Press Books, 2012), 22–30. Originally published as *Zennipon bijutsuka ni hakaru*, January 1, 1946.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Quoted in Torihara, *Nihon shashin shi*, 98.



first postwar project, *Shūkan San Nyūsu* (Weekly Sun News)—by all accounts because he was so strongly, and negatively, associated with propaganda.<sup>31</sup>

No longer compelled to produce works saturated with militaristic and nationalistic sentiment, photographers began to question what their photographs should visualize in the postwar “spring of freedom.” Writing for *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, Nagahama proclaimed that because the annual was representative of the best works of amateurs and professionals, it would contribute to the construction of a “new cultural nation” (*shin bunka kokka*). By invoking the term “cultural nation” as a defining characteristic of Japan’s postwar image, Nagahama was reacting to the “forced oppression” (*shiirareta assei*) that had dictated life under the military government over the prior decade. Now that Japan had left militarism behind, Nagahama continued, it was time for photographers to come together and bring about a “bright cultural Japan” (*akarui bunka nihon*) as soon as possible.<sup>32</sup>

Other photographers and critics similarly touted the importance of photographs and photography magazines to visualizing a new Japanese culture. According to Kuwabara Kineo, postwar recovery required not merely the revival of industry and the economy, but also the creation of new culture (*atarashii bunka*) and high art (*takai geijutsu*) that would enable both photographers and those who viewed their photographs to “fully feel the pride of being Japanese.”<sup>33</sup> Kobayashi Ikuo, for his part, called upon photographers to represent a new Japanese culture that projected “hope for a new tomorrow,”<sup>34</sup> and the magazine *Kamera* issued a statement insisting that photographers transcend the challenges of material shortages and “burned ruins”

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<sup>31</sup> Torihara, *Nihon shashin shi*, 111.

<sup>32</sup> Nagahama Keizō, “Sengo no amachua shashinkai tenbo,” *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, 1948, 77-80.

<sup>33</sup> Kuwabara Kineo, “Yakushin suru,” *Kamera*, April 1949, 31.

<sup>34</sup> Kobayashi Ikuo, “Shashin no taishū-sei,” *Kamera*, March 1948, 36-41.

(*yakeato*) to produce work of cultural significance. “We believe,” the statement concluded, “that the noblest, purest, and most brilliant of Japanese culture will be found in future ARS publications.”<sup>35</sup>

Photographers’ ambition to envision Japan as a new cultural nation aligned with a broader discourse that suggested Japan should become a pacifist country.<sup>36</sup> In an essay published in *Kamera*, Yoshida Jun (1908-2003) wrote that the aim of rebuilding Japan after the war as a peaceful, cultural nation was well known (*inshu-teki heiwa kokka, bunka kokka no kensetsu toiu mokuhyō*). As he saw it, the problem was that Japan’s educational system alone could not instigate cultural development. Rather, Japan’s cultural figures (photographers included) would need to promote fine arts, music, religion, and similar creative disciplines. Yoshida concluded that it was only by mobilizing these cultural institutions that Japan could achieve the goal of “rebuilding the cultural nation” (*bunka kokka no saiken*).<sup>37</sup>

Because wartime images of Japan portrayed the nation as an imperial power and cultural leader in East Asia, Japan had to figure out how to represent itself as a pacifist nation, creating a “new popular image of Japan in the mind of foreigners.”<sup>38</sup> In other words, photographers did not aspire merely to display images of a new cultural Japan to a domestic audience; they aspired to exhibit their work internationally as well. Hayashi Tadahiko believed that Japanese photographers would soon play an active role on the international stage and that, when the time

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<sup>35</sup> *Kamera*, February 1946. Original text: “Nihon no bunka ni okeru mottomo kōkina mono, mottomo junsuina mono, mottomo kagayakeru mono wa kongo no arusu no kankōsho ni tsuite miidasa reru koto to shinjimasu.”

<sup>36</sup> Kitaoka Shinichi, “Japan's Identity and What it Means,” *Journal of Japanese Trade & Industry* (2000). Originally published by The Japan Forum on International Relations, Inc., 1999. [https://www.jef.or.jp/journal/pdf/viewpoints\\_0011.pdf](https://www.jef.or.jp/journal/pdf/viewpoints_0011.pdf).

<sup>37</sup> Yoshida Jun, “Amachua shashin-ka no arikata,” *Kamera*, May 1948, 29-30.

<sup>38</sup> Aurora Yamagata Montoya, “Scenes of Childhood: Exhibiting Childhood as National Imagery,” *Mutual Images Journal* 1 (2016): 155-56.

came, their photographs of Japanese society would “say a lot” (*ōini mono wo iu*) to a global audience.<sup>39</sup> In an essay calling for submissions to the 1951 *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, Matsugi Fugio reminded readers that since the annual was introduced to other countries as representative of Japanese photographic works, only serious works of art should be submitted.<sup>40</sup> An advertisement for submissions to the 1949 International Photo Salon asserted that amateurs could “cooperate with the precious work of building a cultural nation” by exhibiting their photos on an illustrious world stage (*Sekai no hinokibutai*).<sup>41</sup> And Kuwabara maintained that, as more and more people took pictures, their images would “show the world a cultural Japan.” In his view, this was the “culturally correct mission of photography” (*bunkateki na tadashī shimeī*).<sup>42</sup>

What symbols did photographers employ to visualize a “new cultural nation”? The “New Japan Tourism Contest” hints at how photographers envisioned this “new” Japan. The first call for submissions, printed in *Kamera*’s September 1946 issue, stated that what remained in defeated Japan was the beauty that could be seen all over the country. The winning submissions, printed in the February 1947 issue, showed this beauty through photos of Mt. Fuji, the Imperial Palace, Kōchi Castle in Shikoku, a pagoda at Nara, a mountainous landscape at Hakone, and farmers laboring in salt fields. To cite another example, Kuwabara Kineo, writing on the importance of art for Japan’s postwar recovery, reminded readers that they possessed valuable traditions (*tōtoi dentō*), such as the Horyu-ji Temple that “shines brightly in our history.” Kuwabara asserted that photographers must take ownership of Japan’s cultural heritage in their

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<sup>39</sup> Although what he meant. By this was left open to the readers’ interpretation. Hayashi, “Kyō no kotoba.”

<sup>40</sup> “Nenkan ni wa kōiu shashin ga hoshī,” *Kamera*, November 1950, 64.

<sup>41</sup> Placed by the Japan Photography Association (Nihon shashin sakka kyōkai).

<sup>42</sup> Kuwabara, “Hansei to zenshin,” *Kamera*. Quoted in Torihara, *Nihon shashin shi*, 98.

efforts to construct a new image of Japan.<sup>43</sup> Heeding Kuwabara's call, photographers submitted photos of icons of Japan's "valuable traditions": the rural snow country, farmers reaping harvests in sun-drenched fields, bronzed fishermen hauling in the daily catch, *matsuri* celebrations, Shinto weddings, and sumo wrestlers, to name but a few. In short, photographers, ironically, relied on symbols of the *old*—quaint rural settings and traditional iconography—in their attempt to visualize the *new* Japan.

The icons of Japan's glorious traditions—most depicting or depicted in idyllic rural settings—comprised one facet of Japanese cultural identity. At the same time, many Japanese also saw themselves as increasingly urban, modern, and international,<sup>44</sup> and their photographs reflected this. The character for "new" (*shin*) in photography magazines was often associated with the urban. This is evidenced, in one instance, by two photo series titled "New Tokyo Landscapes" (Shin Tokyo fūkei) and "New Tokyo Album" (Shin Tokyo Arubamu) that ran in *Kamera* in 1950 and *Asahi Kamera* from 1953 to 1954, respectively. Wielding their cameras in urban settings, photographers documented white-collar workers emerging from multi-story office buildings, dockyard workers busily constructing massive merchant ships, crowds assembling for May Day parades, women walking down bustling streets in high-heels and New Look calf-length skirts, and posters advertising the latest Hollywood films, to name but a few subjects. The "new" in these images represented a thriving economy and international influences.

Urban modernism and rural tradition were not mutually exclusive elements of Japanese identity in the early postwar. As Jennifer Robertson has argued, "tradition" and

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<sup>43</sup> Kuwabara, "Yakushin suru," *Kamera*, May 1952.

<sup>44</sup> Wesley Sasaki-Uemura, "Postwar Society and Culture," in *A Companion to Japanese History* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 326.

“internationalization” were complementary elements of postwar Japanese culture.<sup>45</sup> This was certainly true for the vision of Japanese culture that many photographers aspired to project. Indeed, when Kuwabara instructed photographers to invoke tradition to represent a new Japan, he simultaneously urged them to embrace the new; and indeed the photos taken by postwar Japanese photographers, viewed in their totality, resisted simplistic binaries. By offering multiple perspectives on postwar Japan, photographers created diverse, and at times contradictory, images of Japanese society that represented a multifaceted cultural identity.

#### Inventing Tradition in the Countryside, Expressing Modernity in the City

In their effort to re-image Japan as a “cultural nation,” photographers invoked icons of tradition to portray a postwar identity connected to the past. But before examining what symbols of “tradition” photographers captured with their cameras, it is essential to recall first that traditions are “invented” cultural products.<sup>46</sup> Jennifer Robertson describes traditions as a “symbolically mediated” construct, not one that is “naturally given.” Stephen Vlastos offers a similar definition:

Tradition is not the sum of *actual* past practices that have perdured into the present; rather, tradition is a modern trope, a prescriptive of socially desirable (or sometimes undesirable) institutions and ideas thought to have been handed down from generation to generation.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Jennifer Robertson, “It Takes a Village: Internationalization and Nostalgia in Postwar Japan,” in *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*, ed. Stephen Vlastos (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 128. In her analysis of the concept of *furusato* (native place), a term that arouses feelings of nostalgia for one’s hometown, Roberts asserts that “cultural production is perceived in the affective and familiar terms” of constructing notions of *furusato* on the one hand, and “in the cosmopolitan terms of internationalization” on the other.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>47</sup> Vlastos, “Tradition: Past/Present Culture and Modern Japanese History,” in *Mirror of Modernity*, 3.

Notably, the materialization of new traditions, Vlastos explains, evidences broader socio-historical developments and can reflect social anxieties, tensions, and ruptures.<sup>48</sup> In the case of Japan, war defeat and the collapse of Japan's militarist regime caused many to feel that they had lost a key component of their identity. The subsequent military occupation by a former wartime enemy only compounded the "epistemologically chaotic times" by rendering the reconstruction of Japanese identity "an especially challenging endeavor."<sup>49</sup> If defeat and occupation formed the backdrop for the re-imaging of a new Japanese culture, the next question that arises is this: what symbols did photographers present as "tradition" to mitigate anxiety, and to what effect?<sup>50</sup>

For many photographers—and Japanese citizens more broadly—the agrarian lifestyle included several elements representative of Japanese tradition, such as discipline honed through physical labor and worship at Shinto shrines.<sup>51</sup> As well, the communal spirit and harmony seemingly inherent in rural life contrasted with the isolation and social dislocation believed to afflict urban dwellers. In short, scenes of daily life set in rural landscapes represented traditional Japanese customs—and even more importantly, perhaps, the characteristics that defined the putatively unique character of the Japanese population. Accordingly, life in the countryside consistently drew the attention of amateur and professional photographers alike.

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>49</sup> Orbaugh, *Japanese Fiction of the Allied Occupation*, 53-58.

<sup>50</sup> As Jonathan Reynolds has shown, artists from varying fields invoked tradition to construct notions of an authentic Japan, including painter and sculptor Okamoto Tarō, who wrote on ceramics from the Jōmon Period, as well as famed architect Tange Kenzō, whose writings connected Ise Shrine and Katsura Villa to aesthetic traditions located in the Jōmon and Yayoi Periods. See Reynolds, *Allegories of Time and Space*.

<sup>51</sup> Thomas Havens, "Katō Kanji (1884-1965) and the Spirit of Agriculture in Modern Japan," *Monumenta Nipponica* 25, no. 3/4 (1970): 256–57.

Professional photographer Hamaya Hiroshi (1915-1999) famously captured rural communities in Niigata in a project that spanned the wartime and early postwar period.<sup>52</sup> He first encountered the rural snow country as a photojournalist in 1939, and returned to the snow country many times between 1940 and 1949 to document local rituals and customs.<sup>53</sup> The photographer quickly became enraptured with a region that seemed to exist separately from the modern world, preserving traditional ways of life that had largely disappeared elsewhere. Hamaya even described the trek from Tokyo to the rural snow country as a trip back through time.<sup>54</sup> His collective work documenting the villages of Niigata, published as *Yukiguni (Snow Country)* in 1956, encapsulated a longing for the “authentic” communities of Japan’s rural past.<sup>55</sup>

The snow country captivated amateur photographers as well. One particularly evocative photo is Satō Kyūsuke’s “Snapshot in the Snowy Country” (*Yukiguni sunappu*), which captures the harshness of this environment (fig. 4.4). A heavy snowstorm burdens a horse laboring down a village street, its head hung low against the cold winter winds and blustery snow flurries. In the background, two figures walk towards the camera, their features rendered indistinguishable by winter cloaks and dense snow. As Satō later related the circumstances, he had been overtaken by a desire to take pictures when he saw the thickly falling snow. Walking through the village looking for the perfect scene, he fixed his gaze on the snow-laden horse and exclaimed, “Aha, this is it!” believing that the scene captured the essence of Japan’s rural snow country. And yet, Satō thought that the composition still missed a vital element: a human presence. Noticing this

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<sup>52</sup> According to Ross Tunney, Hamaya’s pictures of Niigata were steeped in the folklore studies that had held Hamaya’s interest. Ross Tunney, “Imaging the Rural: Modernity and Agrarianism in Hiroshi Hamaya’s Snow Land Photographs,” *New Voices in Japanese Studies* 7 (2015): 1-20.

<sup>53</sup> Judith Keller, et al., *Japan’s Modern Divide: The Photographs of Hiroshi Hamaya and Kansuke Yamamoto* (J. Paul Getty Museum, 2013), 20.

<sup>54</sup> Reynolds, *Allegories of Time and Space*, 3.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

absence, the amateur arranged for two people to walk next to the horse, both wearing what Satō described as distinctive “northern country” attire. Their addition to the scene finally conjured the atmosphere of the snow country that he sought to capture. Satō now had his perfect picture.



Figure 4.4. Left: Satō Kyūsuke. “Snapshot in the Snowy Country” (Yukiguni sunappu). Right: Aoki Tokichiro, “Asakusa Snapshot” (Asakusa sunappu). *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, 1951.

Satō’s “Snapshot in the Snowy Country” reveals that photographs were not always the spontaneous snapshots they claimed to be. Many human-interest photographers and documentarians staged or altered the setting to evoke specific impressions of their subjects. Although photographers were not always forthright in revealing whether or not they had staged a photograph, critics of the photos sometimes raised this question. This is the case for comments on one photo of two Japanese women wearing *noragi* (clothes worn for doing farm work) and *geta* depicted sharing food with two women wearing Western-style blouses and skirts. The critique of the photo observed that the lacked a sense of naturalness that, in turn, made the



composition seem staged.<sup>56</sup> In another instance, Matsugi Fujio lamented that Yamada Shūhei's photo of an urban youth reading a magazine in the street "gave him the feeling that it was a staged scene" (*enshutsu-shū o kanji saseru*).<sup>57</sup>

The veracity of snapshots was further called into question by two factors: first, photographers frequently took multiple photographs of a single subject or event but only submitted the best image for publication to magazines; and second, they often manipulated the subject's appearance through framing and other compositional techniques. Regarding the latter, magazines were filled with instructions on how to improve composition to produce photographs that demonstrated not only superior technical skill but also carried maximal emotional impact. To give one example, Domon sharply criticized an image of a wounded soldier begging on a snowy street. To better convey the reality of the soldier's anguish to the audience, Domon instructed, the amateur should have manipulated the composition to a greater extent through framing.<sup>58</sup> From manipulating the composition, to selecting only one of several photographs, to staging scenes, it is clear that photographers presented images that visualized Japanese culture and society as they thought it *should* appear.

Photographers frequently encoded their snapshots of daily life in the countryside with objects that signified a distinctive Japanese culture, such as the "northern country" garb of the villagers in Satō's snapshot. Other photographers captured women walking through idyllic fields with Mt. Fuji in the distance; children gathered for *matsuri* celebrations dressed in *yukata* (light summer robes); villagers absorbed in conversation, surrounded by *sugegasa* (conical straw hats)

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<sup>56</sup> "Sunapputeki jinbutsu shashin," in "Sutā to tomoni ōshima e *Foto Āto* satsuei-kai sakuhin," *Foto Āto*, September 1951.

<sup>57</sup> "*Foto Āto* kontesuto: getsurei A-bu nyūsen sakuhin-shū," *Foto Āto*, January 1952.

<sup>58</sup> Thomas, "Power Made Visible," 383-384.

laid out on deep winter snows; farmers tending to fields, wielding scythes and other non-mechanized tools; and men and women harvesting rice in fading autumn light. The traditional symbols employed in these and similar images conveyed the unchanging nature of Japanese-ness based on a shared culture and history.

Although most photographers used daily life in rural villages to represent the enduring traditions of Japan, Kimura Ihei endeavored to document the changes that had occurred in rural farm life in the postwar period. In an essay detailing his documentary project in Akita Prefecture, Kimura wrote that social changes were a source of distress common to all people in postwar Japan. For Kimura, the social issue that loomed largest was the conflict between the old and the new (*shinkyū ryōsha no kattō*), and he strove to highlight both sides of this conflict in his photographic work. Believing that rural villages represented an “intense microcosm” (*hageshii shukuzu*) of the conflict between the old customs and new ways, he visited Akita on several occasions in the early 1950s to document daily life and represent it in a photo story.

*Asahi Kamera* published a selection of Kimura’s photos in the June 1954 issue that show men and women working in fields and the ubiquitous presence of children playing in the village streets.<sup>59</sup> In Kusakata village, Kimura snapped several images of women wearing clothing distinctive to the region: namely, *noragi* and veils that masked their faces. Women of all ages in the village wore such veils while working in the fields to protect against bug bites and absorb sweat that flowed under the scorching summer sun. Ironically, photos of the women wearing veils, *sugegasa*, and *noragi* evoked not the social changes Kimura hoped to document, but rather the seemingly timeless essence of rural farm life. Kimura himself admitted that he was challenged to capture change in the villages. “As long as the photograph shows only the surface,” Kimura wrote, “it can be said that the reality of the rural areas only represents the

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<sup>59</sup> “Akita no nōmin taue no hitobito o utsusu,” 68-73.

feudal world, and the progressive power (*kakushinteki*) of the village is not revealed to the outside.” Believing that the progressive ideals of villagers were harbored only within their hearts and minds, Kimura lamented that his “camera eye” was insufficient to record such changes.

In his essay for the photo series, Kimura identified some of the changes that had started to infiltrate the villagers’ lives, such as the young men who worked in nearby factories or volunteered for the newly established National Safety Forces.<sup>60</sup> But Kimura was not concerned with life outside the village, so the factory workers, National Safety Forces volunteers, and other subjects indicative of change did not materialize in his photographs. In the end, Kimura only included the men and women wearing traditional farming attire at work in rice fields in his photo story. His photographs became, as he stated, representative of Akita's old, unchanged customs.<sup>61</sup>

For the most part, those photographers who wanted to photograph changes in Japanese society looked to the cities. Photographers captured a sense of speed and motion in their images to evoke an urban modernity oriented toward foreign (primarily Western European and American) cultural influences and mass consumerism and entertainment. In these images, pedestrians walk down streets clothed in Western fashions. Women model white, Western-style wedding dresses. Shoppers crowd into expansive department stores. American movie posters decorate brick walls. Couples dance the mambo on stage in front of jam-packed audiences. And women sit beneath machines designed to perm their hair, the mass of tubular heaters and curlers forming a terrifying impression of the technology needed to achieve the most stylish coiffures.

Amateur Aoki Tokichiro’s entry to the 1951 *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, “Asakusa Snapshot” (Asakusa sunappu), shows a family enjoying a Sunday afternoon in Asakusa, an entertainment

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<sup>60</sup> Following the outbreak of the Korean War, SCAP oversaw the formation of the National Police Reserves, the precursor of today’s Self-Defense Force. See Takemae, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, 142, 193.

<sup>61</sup> Kimura, *Kimura ihee kessaku-sen—essei*, 144-145.

quarter in Tokyo (fig. 4.4).<sup>62</sup> The chic family wears the latest styles: the father in a dark pinstripe suit with matching fedora and black and white wingtip shoes, the mother in a light cardigan, stylish calf-length skirt, and creeper shoes.<sup>63</sup> In the background stands a young girl dressed in a collared blouse, dark knit sweater, and dark trousers. Posters plastered on the walls in the background hint at Asakusa's entertainment ambiance. But the urban setting is not the focal point here; the family takes center stage. Aoki himself later lamented that the photo neglects Asakusa's unique downtown atmosphere and thus misses the true character of the setting. But, at the time, the family at the center of the photograph had seized his attention. As Aoki explained, he was overtaken by feelings of envy when he came upon this scene in the street because he was simply too poor to enjoy leisure time with his own family. This envy spurred him to take the picture, and he claims that he pressed the shutter almost unconsciously as he passed by. The resulting image presents the viewer with a dream coveted by many Japanese in the early postwar years: the urban middle-class ideal.

It is important to note where the editors placed Aoki's photograph of this middle-class Tokyo family: that is, across the page from Satō's aforementioned "snapshot" of the snow country (fig. 4.4). Juxtapositions of rural and urban images could be seen across photography magazines. Mountain-ringed villages blanketed in snow were juxtaposed to industrial smokestacks belching smoke. Editors placed images of women in loose *monpe* trousers and padded cotton jackets side-by-side with portraits of women in haute couture. One special-edition

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<sup>62</sup> Aoki's photo received top marks for its realistic depiction of humanity out of nearly 2000 submissions to the 1951 *ARS Shashin Nenkan*.

<sup>63</sup> The modern creeper has its roots in British soldiers who fought on the North African warfront. After returning home, the soldiers continued to wear their combat boots visiting the London nightclubs. The shoes soon came to be referred to as "brothel creepers" and, in 1949, George Cox Footwear began putting a similar style into mass production. For more see Emily Spivack, "Where'd You Get Those Creepers? The platform-soled, punk-style shoes have celebrated the 'Teddy Boy' spirit since the late 1940s," *Smithsonianmag.com*. Accessed February 29, 2020. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/whered-you-get-those-creepers-63707339/?no-ist>.

issue of *Kamera* followed a spread on the lives of farm women with a photo story depicting the daily life of a strip-show girl in Asakusa. By sequencing scenes from urban and rural life, magazines projected a cultural fluidity that encompassed both.

A two-page spread from *Asahi Kamera* provides another example of how magazines juxtaposed rustic pastoral scenes with dynamic urban settings. The spread contrasts two working women: one on a farm and one in the city. On the right is a photograph of a female bus guide and two male passengers by Nise Yoshiko, one of the few female photographers to have her work published in photography magazines (fig. 4.5).<sup>64</sup> Nise's photograph signifies urban modernity in several ways. First is the subject matter: a young female bus guide (*basu gaido*) and two male passengers inside a tour bus. As independent, working women, the job of the bus guide was "predicated upon notions of modernity, gender, and mobility."<sup>65</sup> Indeed, since bus guides labored on moving busses, their image was connected to the idea of speed, a prominent characteristic of postwar modernity.<sup>66</sup> Their work entailed entertaining passengers, assisting the bus driver, guiding walking tours, and acting as a repository of knowledge regarding the sites passed on tours.

The compositional techniques that Nise employed emphasized the scene's modernity by capturing the verticality of the bus and, through its windows, the high-rise buildings of the city beyond.<sup>67</sup> Nise achieved this effect by shooting the subjects from below so that the viewer sees everything from floor level. This technique put the subjects in a higher position relative to the

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<sup>64</sup> Nise Yoshiko, "Sightseeing Bus" (Yūran Basu)," *Asahi Kamera*, August 1950, 16.

<sup>65</sup> Alisa Freedman, "Bus Guides Tour National Landscapes, Pop Culture, and Youth Fantasies," in *Modern Girls on the Go: Gender, Mobility, and Labor in Japan*, ed. Alisa Freedman, Laura Miller, and Christine R. Yano (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), 109.

<sup>66</sup> Ann Sherif, *Cold War, Media, Literature, and Law* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 188.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

viewer and allowed the photographer to capture a tall building in the background through the bus window. The lines of the roof of the building create a diagonal trajectory that moves the eye from the upper left corner to the bottom right. These diagonal lines intersect with the line formed by the subjects' gaze, directed towards the frame's upper right corner. This single image thus evokes modernity in multiple ways: by focusing on the female bus guide, by framing the tall building in the background, and by taking advantage of the formal qualities of line and angle that create a dynamic, lively composition.



Figure 4.5. Nise Yoshiko, “Sightseeing Bus” (Yūran Basu). *Asahi Kamera*, August 1950.

The urban modernity captured in this image contrasts with the rural traditionalism of laborers pictured in a salt field on the next page by amateur Yamamoto Shōji (fig. 4.6).<sup>68</sup> Yamamoto demonstrated his technical skill with sharp tonal contrasts and strong lines, creating a highly artistic and balanced composition. A woman in the foreground first draws the viewer's

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<sup>68</sup> “Tackling the hot sand” (Nessa ni idomu), *Asahi Kamera*, August 1950, 17.

attention. She stands in profile, dressed in a striped *hippari* jacket and an *amigasa* (rice straw hat). Her elongated form directs the eye to two more individuals in the background laboring in the field. Yamamoto positioned them in the upper right corner of the frame to balance the presence of another woman on the left. The lines of the farmers' bodies and the lines created by their shovels create the impression of symmetry and harmony—that is, key expressions of traditional Japanese-ness.<sup>69</sup>



Figure 4.6. Yamamoto Shōji. “Salt of the Earth,” (Nessa ni idomu, literally “The Challenge of the Hot Sand”). *Asahi Kamera*, August 1950.

One other way in which photographers broke down binaries between “tradition” and “modernity” is by capturing symbols of the old and the new within a single frame. Yamada Teruo’s “Autumn of Echigo Plain (Echigo heiya no aki)”<sup>70</sup> appeared in the 1954 *ARS Shashin Nenkan* (fig. 4.7). In the foreground, a group of women sits down to a lunch break from farming

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<sup>69</sup> For an explanation of the historical meaning of harmony and its use as an invented tradition, see Kunio Itō, “The Invention of *Wa* and the Transformation of the Image of Prince Shōtoku in Modern Japan,” in *Mirror of Modernity*, 37-47.

<sup>70</sup> Translated in the annual as “Lunch time of Harvest Day.”

labor. They wear indigo, white-patterned *hippari* tops, simple trousers, and straw hats to protect them from the sun. As they partake in their midday meal, a group of schoolgirls walks past, accompanied by a woman clothed in a blazer and dark pencil skirt. One of the farm women pauses to look at the passing group, her chopsticks suspended in midair as she glances up at the girls in their school uniforms.



Figure 4.7. Yamada Teruo. “Autumn of Echigo Plain (*Echigo heiya no aki*). *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, 1954.

The photographer managed to strike a balance between the two groups by placing the women within a single horizontal plane. While the subjects’ placement projects unity and cohesion, the image is simultaneously disrupted by the hierarchy established between the groups. The seated women in the foreground occupy a lower portion of the frame, in contrast to the schoolgirls and woman in Western fashion who rise above them. The photographer further contrasted the two groups by freezing the farm women in a moment of stasis—seated together for their midday meal—while depicting the schoolgirls in transit as they walk past. In this photo, Yamada almost literally captured a moment in real life where tradition is juxtaposed to change.



Yet, Yamada resisted constructing a simple dichotomy between the old and new, allowing the traditional farm women, the youthful schoolgirls, and the modern woman to co-exist within a single frame.

By juxtaposing symbols of the old and new within a single photo, photographers illustrated that both were part of daily life in Japan. Kimura Ihei captured the moment when the old and new met in an urban street. The central focus of his photo is a young woman whose appearance embodies stylishness: permed hair, dark lipstick, and a fashionable blouse. A light coat drapes over one arm, and the other clutches a small handbag at her right hip. Kimura captured minute details of the woman's appearance by employing a fast shutter speed and shallow depth of field, techniques that also infuse the image with dynamism. Several elements give the impression of motion: the slight forward lean of the woman's body, the hair flowing behind her shoulders, and the out-of-focus pedestrians in the background. The modern qualities of the woman's appearance are amplified by the presence of two kimono-clad women who walk in the background. By pressing the shutter at the moment when all three appear in close proximity within the frame, Kimura showed that symbols of the old and new existed side-by-side.

While many photographers snapped images of urban Japan that evoked modernity, others strove to capture the many different faces of urban Japan and its inhabitants by documenting urban poverty and recording traces of the "old." Tokumasu Hachiro disrupted idealized notions of urban cosmopolitanism in his image of a young couple at an art museum. Like the museum gallery itself, their clothing exudes modern-ness: the man in his three-piece suit, hat, and round spectacles, the woman in her long skirt, saddle oxfords, and bobby socks. Other patrons look with interest at the photographs on the walls, but the man and woman in the

middle of the frame seem utterly indifferent. They sit slouched—perhaps in boredom or exhaustion—on a sofa in the middle of the museum gallery. Rather than featuring the young couple as fashion icons, Tokumasu has caught the pair in an unguarded moment of ennui. The effect is to cause their trendiness to fall flat.

Other photographers complicated urban cosmopolitanism by documenting the foreign (primarily Western) people and things that had infiltrated Japan's cities. Rather than presenting Japan's new Western-influenced urban cosmopolitanism as a gift, these photos drew attention to its origins in a Western-led Occupation. For the September 1953 issue of *Asahi Kamera*, the editors tasked three amateurs with creating a photo story on the theme of "Ginza in Summer" (Natsu no Ginza).<sup>71</sup> One amateur concentrated on the subtheme "foreigners" (*kotokunibito*), capturing GIs and their families buying souvenirs, stopping to have their portrait sketched by street artists, and carousing at bars and beer halls. According to the text, the scenes told the story of the "heavy colonial atmosphere" (*hokuminchiteki fūbō*) that continued to saturate Ginza even after the Occupation's official end. Another photographer, captivated by neon lights, attempted to capture the essence of Ginza's "dizzying shopping center" as dusk fell on the district. His photographs show street shoppers silhouetted against brightly lit store windows and women crowding around shopping racks laden with purses and admiring Western-style hats displayed on mannequins. Each frame is congested with merchandise, although it is unclear whether the photographer wanted to celebrate or critique the Western-oriented consumerism on display.

Images that captured traces of the past in the present further disrupted notions of urban modernity. One example comes from Kimura Ihei's photos of the Sanja Matsuri (Sanja Festival), a celebration that commemorates the three men who, according to popular belief, established the famous Senjō-ji temple in 628 C.E. One photo shows a crowd of men and children dressed in

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<sup>71</sup> "Natsu no Ginza dokusha no kumi shashin udekurabe," *Asahi Kamera*, September 1953, 76-81.

*happi* jackets gathered in front of the temple, while a second shows a man browsing trinkets for sale at an antique stall. Although the author of the caption mentions several Western-style clothing stores in the vicinity, these are not pictured here. Instead, Kimura trained his lens on smoking pipes, old coins, elaborate sword guards, and other antique curios that evoked, for the editor, evidence of the “old life” (*mukashi no seikatsu*).<sup>72</sup> In another instance, Hamaya Hiroshi provided a photo to *Asahi Kamera*’s “New Tokyo Landscape” (Shin Tōkyō fūkei, translated by the magazine as “Tokyo Varieties”) series that depicts a lumber mill in the foreground and an expanse of buildings in the background. Hamaya attempted here to capture the new reconstruction in a neighborhood decimated by the Tokyo air raids of 1945; but he admitted that “this kind of scenery [of wood and paper houses]” in New Tokyo “still leaves nostalgia for the past” (*kako e no kyōshū o nokoshite iru*).<sup>73</sup>

For many photographers, it seems that the old and the new existed simultaneously in postwar Japan. One winning *getsurei* submission to *Asahi Kamera* in February 1954 depicts the coexistence of the old and new in Osaka’s urban cityscape.<sup>74</sup> Two women in kimono walk in the foreground along a crumbling plaster wall that stretches across the center of the frame, providing a negative space that contrasts with the busy congestion of buildings crowding the top of the frame. The critique of the photo praised the amateur, Morioka Shigeru, for including an old temple, *barakku* (temporary housing), and high-rise buildings in the same photo. For the critic, this photo encapsulated the landscape of postwar urban Japan—where structures that represented the old and the new existed alongside makeshift structures that evoked the desperate state of transition in which many urban dwellers found themselves.

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<sup>72</sup> “Asakusa Festival” (Sanja Matsuri) and “Curio Store” (Kotsutōya), *Asahi Kamera*, September 1953.

<sup>73</sup> Hamaya Hiroshi, “Dusk in Kiba” (Kiba no hakubo), *Asahi Kamera*, March 1951.

<sup>74</sup> Morioka Shigeru, “Post-War Osaka” (Ōsaka fūkei, literally “Osaka Landscape”), *Asahi Kamera*, February 1954.

Photographs that revealed the dark side of cities—visualized in stagnant water at sewage processing plants, disruptive construction, and poverty—complicated the notions of modernity that circulated in postwar Japan. For its June 1951 issue, *Kamera* published a photo of impoverished men living in shacks along the Ochanomizu River in Tokyo.<sup>75</sup> In the September issue that same year, a photo of children sifting through rubble in Nagasaki won critical acclaim in the *getsurei*.<sup>76</sup> A field of rubble and debris fills almost the entire frame of the latter photo, threatening to engulf the children. *Getsurei* Judge Takano Yasuo praised the photo for capturing the children’s misery as they tried to survive in the *yakeato* environment.<sup>77</sup> To give a final example, *Asahi Kamera* chose Morita Shigeji’s photo of a homeless man as one of the winning submissions in its September 1953 *getsurei* contest, pronouncing it a superb example of social criticism (*shakai-teki hihan*).<sup>78</sup>

By publishing the works of amateur and professional photographers from across Japan, photography magazines offered a diverse representation of Japanese society and daily life. These varied representations, in turn, expressed a cultural fluidity that encompassed iconic symbols of traditional Japanese culture as well as an urban modernity oriented towards Western cultural influences. In examining these photographs, it is important to consider carefully how photographers represented men and women in their images, and what representations of gender specified about Japanese social values and cultural identity.

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<sup>75</sup> Higuchi Susumu, “Tokyo Valley” (Tokyo no tanima).

<sup>76</sup> Matsushita Kōji, “Children of the Back Alleys” (Tokai ura no kodomo).

<sup>77</sup> “Children in the Back Alleys” (Shakai-teki hihan tokai ura no kodomo), *Kamera*, September 1951.

<sup>78</sup> Morita Shigeiji, “Earthly Paradise” (Tōgenkyō).

### Men Photographing Women, and other Men

It is important to recall, as we have mentioned before, that the Japanese cultural identity envisaged in photography magazines reflected a distinctly male perspective. Articles abounded on how to photograph women (*josei o utsushi-kata*) or nude female models, but there were no similar articles on photographing men. However, the photographs provide insight into how the photographers—and those viewing the photographs—thought about women’s place in society, particularly related to domestic roles.<sup>79</sup>

In her study of prewar female factory workers and social reform, anthropologist Mariko Asano Tamanoi argues that one discourse of *kokutai* used the female body to construct the image of a homogeneous society, in the process erasing female subjectivity by depicting women only in specific roles: daughters, housewives, and mothers.<sup>80</sup> In the postwar period, the notion that women should inhabit the role of daughters, housewives, and mothers was promoted by the New Life Movement, a series of initiatives begun in the late 1940s by government ministries and women’s organizations that aimed to “improve daily life” for women in the home. Government ministries and women’s organizations promoted new hygienic practices, kitchen design, and household accounting to engender a supposedly “enlightened” and “modern” form of household management that ultimately defined and reinforced domestic roles for women.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Kathleen Canning, “The Body as Method? Reflections on the Place of the Body in Gender History,” *Gender & History* 11, no. 3 (1999): 500. See also Antoinette Burton, *A Primer for Teaching World History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012).

<sup>80</sup> Mariko Asano Tamanoi, “Japanese Nationalism and the Female Body: A Critical Reassessment of the Discourse of Social Reformers on Factory Women,” in *Women and Class in Japanese History*, 275, 280.

<sup>81</sup> For more on the New Life Movement, see Andrew Gordon, “Managing the Japanese Household: The New Life Movement in Postwar Japan,” in *Gendering Modern Japanese History*, ed. Barbara Molony and Kathleen Uno (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005).

Hata Yoshio's photo "The Brightness of Life" (Seikatsu no akarusa) demonstrates how photographers depicted women's roles as mothers.<sup>82</sup> One of the winning submissions to a contest on "Postwar Life" (Sengo no seikatsu), Hata's photo captures a home setting that links motherhood to modernity. On the right side of the frame, a grandmother sits at a square *chabudai* (traditional Japanese-style table with short legs) with her four young grandchildren. To the left, a woman whom the contest judge identified as a housewife (*shufu*) kneels on *tatami* mat flooring, possibly cleaning or doing some other household chore. The subjects appear to live in a well-appointed home: the viewer sees a sewing machine placed prominently in the foreground—a subtext that, combined with the mother's stylish Western-style dress, indicates the financial stability and cultural capital that this family possessed. The composition also demonstrates the mixing of material culture inside Japanese homes: Western fashion and electrical appliances, together with Japanese-style interior design. Notably, the home pictured in Hata's photo is filled only with women and children. The photograph on the opposing page, meanwhile, depicts only men. Here, a group of men identified as workers (*kinrō-sha*) lounge outdoors during a work break, wearing suits and sporting trendy hairstyles.<sup>83</sup> The juxtaposition of these two photographs creates a clear division between the expected roles for men and women: the latter inhabiting the role of housewife and mother, the former assuming the role of breadwinner.

Ishii Akira's photograph of a mother and child invokes the rhetoric of the New Life movement, casting women's work within the home as scientific, rational, and modern.<sup>84</sup> The mother, posing with her daughter and family dog, wears a stylish Western dress and trendy black

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<sup>82</sup> *Asahi Kamera*, October 1949.

<sup>83</sup> Ishikawa Toshiyuki, "A Moment of Calligraphy" (Sho no hitotoki), *Asahi Kamera*, October 1949, 21.

<sup>84</sup> Gordon, "Managing the Japanese Household," 431.

heels (fig. 4.8).<sup>85</sup> Various items arranged in the frame scream modernity: a table and chairs in mid-century modern style, a bowl of fruit resting in a glass bowl on the table, and issues of *Life*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and other American fashion magazines carefully arranged on the table. A picture in *Foto Āto* from 1952 similarly connects motherhood with modernity. Here, famed actress Mieko Takamine (1918-1990) poses with her son. Modeling permed, shoulder-length hair, she sits in a plush lounge chair holding her young son, who wears a knit sweater and plaid trousers.<sup>86</sup> A variety of toys surround the pair: a model train, stacks of books, and a kid-sized toy car. The mother's hair and clothing, the numerous toys, and the Western-style furniture all conjure the image of an affluent, modern family. Photographs like these, which included symbolically charged objects like toy cars and American fashion magazines, offered idealized depictions of what the home *should* be: clean, orderly, modern, and managed by a housewife/mother.

Feminine ideals that cast women as mothers and housewives are evidenced again in a photo published in *Asahi Kamera*'s January 1950 issue. One of the winning photographs of a contest entitled "Mother and Child" (Haha to ko), Murata Shirō's photo shows a mother and child beaming at the camera. While the mother's apron signifies her status as a housewife, the photo's title ultimately suggests a mother's place inside the home—and the father's place at work. *Itterashai*, translated into English as "Have a good day," is part of a set expression voiced upon leave taking. The person leaving home declares *ittekimasu* ("I'm off"), while the person remaining replies with *itterashai* ("See you later"). Together with the photograph of the apron-clad mother and child, the expression explicitly evoked the postwar domestic ideal of a father leaving home for work—and the mother staying home to care for the child.

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<sup>85</sup> Ishii Akira, "Natsu no Hōmu pōtorēto," *Kamera*, July 1951, n.p.

<sup>86</sup> Matsushima Susumu, "Photographing Mieko Takamine" (Takamine Mieko o utsusu), *Foto Āto*, April 1952.



Figure 4.8. Ishii Akira. “Summer Home Portrait,” (Natsu no hōmu pōtorēto). *Kamera*, July 1951.

The role of mother and housewife ascribed to women was further reinforced by photographs that identified mothers with their children’s education by showing mothers greeting children as they arrive home after school or taking their children to sit for entrance examinations. Here, again, men are noticeably absent. As Japan’s economy recovered after the war and more families attained financial stability, women no longer needed to supplement the family income with part-time jobs. Instead, women were expected to be full-time mothers and take on greater responsibility for their children’s education.<sup>87</sup> This responsibility is exemplified, in one instance,

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<sup>87</sup> Tipton, *Modern Japan*, 188.



in Yoshida Yoshio's "I'm a first-year boy" (*Ichī nensei*) (fig. 4.9). In the photo, a mother leans down to adjust her son's trousers. She wears *geta*, kimono, and a *haori* coat decorated with delicate spring blossoms. Her son stands rigidly at attention in his school uniform, complete with a military-style cap and backpack. Yoshida's photograph conveys a tender moment between mother and child: the woman in her elegant kimono embodying the traditional value of Japanese motherhood; the boy in his school uniform inhabiting his proper place in society as a well-disciplined male student.



Figure 4.9. Yoshida Yoshio. "I'm a first-year boy" (*Ichī nensei*). *ARS Camera Annual*, 1954.

Time and again, postwar photographers envisioned women in domestic settings. They were pictured with babies strapped to their backs or clutched at their hip, playing with their children at the park, or styling their daughters' hair. Not just snapshots of everyday life, such depictions affirmed the central role of women to postwar society. Pictures of women feeding

their children or purchasing food at the market showed them nourishing the family; photos of mothers and their children gathered at the hearth, all laughing and beaming at the camera, presented women as guardians of happy homes; and images of women doing laundry and other household chores defined their place in the home.

While photography magazines thus constructed an ideal of traditional feminine domesticity, many photographers complicated this idealized image of home life by documenting the *kyodatsu* condition that afflicted many families in early postwar society. Yoshida Jun's photo from the 1948 *ARS Shashin Nenkan* shows a mother and child outside a *barakku*, a shack cobbled together from corrugated steel, wood, and other debris (fig. 4.10).<sup>88</sup> The walls of the *barakku* jut out from an uneven jumble of dirt and sparse grass. The mother and child, dressed in loose cotton shirts and *monpe*, stand by a makeshift brazier on the bank of the Ochanomizu River in Tokyo, their backs to the camera. In the distance, a man steers a boat down the river. His appearance at first seems insignificant, relegated to the role of backdrop for a scene of poignant perseverance in the face of postwar hardship. And yet, the photographer chose to take the picture as the boat floated by, putting the man, woman, and child in direct relationship with one another in the picture plane, separated only by the flowing river. The man's presence in the scene underscores the absence of a father in the otherwise domestic setting at water's edge.

In the early postwar years, many pictures of mothers with their children noticeably lacked a male figure. While this absence usually carried the implication that the husband was off at work, in some photos it was meant to bring to mind the countless men who had died in the recent war. The caption for Sonobe Kiyoshi's photo published in the 1949 *ARS Shashin Nenkan*,

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<sup>88</sup> The bombing raids left over one million homeless, and by the end of 1946 one in twenty people lived in shacks like this. Others found shelter in subway stations. Some even made homes out of defunct busses.

for example, specifically identified the mother as a war widow.<sup>89</sup> Sitting at a *chabudai*, her body language exudes exhaustion and defeat as she engages in her work. The tight cropping creates an intimate scene that emphasizes her destitution: the floor dirty and crowded with objects; the *shoji* screen pockmarked with gaping holes; the two girls in the background grubby and disheveled. The children sit at a small table in the corner, atop which stands a framed photograph. While the viewer cannot make out the person in the frame, it is presumably the visage of the absent husband and father resting on the family's *kamidana* (household shrine). In a single frame, the photographer encapsulated defeat, exhaustion, and the tragic consequences of war.



Figure 4.10. Yoshida Jun. “Ochanomizu.” *ARS Photographic Annual*, 1948. Used with the permission of Yoshida Hitoshi.

Although many photographs published in photo magazines in the first postwar decade depicted women inside the home as mothers and housewives, photographers just as readily

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<sup>89</sup> Sonobe Kiyoshi, “Mother and Child Dorm ‘War Widow’” (Boshi ryō ‘sensō mibōjin’).

documented changing gender relations and women in the workplace by capturing the so-called “career girl” (*kyaria gāru*).<sup>90</sup> One example of the “career girl” can be found in the February 1950 issue of *Kamera*, which included a feature spread on the professional life of editor Kadokawa Michiko—hailed as a symbol of the “democratization” (*minshu-ka*) of women in postwar Japan.<sup>91</sup> To cite another example, Andō Masa captured a candid snapshot of a working woman in downtown Tokyo who wears a knee-length pencil skirt. She walks briskly across the street while people dressed in suits move busily about among the towering buildings elsewhere in the frame. The woman in the foreground rushed by at such a quick pace that Andō was unable to capture her in clear relief. Instead, the blurred edges of her form underscore her hurried stride.<sup>92</sup> Reading the title, “Rush Hour” (Shutsudō jikoku), the viewer is urged to imagine that the pedestrians, including the woman in the foreground, are returning home after a long day at the office.

Film actresses represented a glamorous ideal of the modern working woman. *Kamera* ran Mibori Ieyoshi’s (1921-2006) photo story on actress Meguro Sachiko (1926-2015) in their November 1954 issue.<sup>93</sup> The story shows the young film star in several professional settings: on the set of *Asakusa no yoru* (*Asakusa Night*), modeling fashionable Western-style clothing to a massive crowd, and taking part in a Radio Tokyo broadcast. By following the subject throughout her day, the final two-page spread presents a series of photos that recall Tanaka Masao’s

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<sup>90</sup> Of course, working women was not a new phenomenon in postwar Japan. To give one example, as Kawashima Yoko has demonstrated, small-size family farming before World War Two was “highly dependent on female labor,” and women had labored in the factory workforce since the early Meiji (1868-1912) era. See Kawashima, “Female Workers: An Overview of Past and Current Trends,” in *Japanese Women: New Feminist Perspectives on the Past, Present, and Future*, ed. Kumiko Fujimura-Fanselow and Asuko Kameda (New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1995), 272-273. And as Barbara Sato has shown, one principal representation of women in prewar media was the professional working woman. See Sato, *The New Japanese Woman: Modernity, Media, and Women in Interwar Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

<sup>91</sup> Akashita Aiko, “Female Editor Captured by the Camera” (*Kamera ga toraeta on'na henshū-sha*).

<sup>92</sup> Andō Masa, “Rush Hour” (Shutsudō jikoku), *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, 1949, 13.

<sup>93</sup> “Watashi wa hoshikuzu,” *Kamera*, November 1954.

instruction to craft a compelling narrative (see Chapter III).<sup>94</sup> Mibori's photos here show Meguro shopping, preparing a meal, chatting with friends, and reading a newspaper in bed. When he composed the photos in the actress's apartment, Mibori crowded the frame with Western material culture, depicting a modernity oriented toward the West. The various objects include a Western-style bed, a dining table and chairs, a tea kettle, and a large radio on a bedside table. As well, the caption highlights the fact that Meguro lived alone. From her independence to her fashionable clothing, and from her apartment décor to her film career, Meguro embodied the ideal of the early postwar professional working woman.

The theme of the professional woman was so popular that *Kamera* published an instructional article on how to photograph women in the workplace.<sup>95</sup> Matsuda Fumio's advice was aimed at salarymen whose amateur photography activities might be interrupted by long working hours or rainy weekend weather. The author suggested taking pictures in the workplace rather than abandoning photo-taking altogether on such days. To be more precise, the salaryman-cum-amateur photographer could photograph his company's female employees. The images that Matsuda chose to include reveal, in this instance, that a woman's status in the office differed from that of her male coworkers. The working women are pictured carrying tea trays, cleaning the office, knitting on the rooftop during lunch breaks, giving directions to visitors, and gossiping in the bathroom.

Matsuda's depiction of working women was not uncommon; other male photographers consistently portrayed women in stereotypical roles. In one issue, *Kamera* printed images of

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<sup>94</sup> Tanaka Masao, "Rensaku to kumishashin," *Kamera*, July 1954.

<sup>95</sup> Matsuda Fumio, "Shokuba no onna no ko no utsushikata," *Kamera: Onna no Utsushikata*, July 1952.

women as waitresses, telephone operators, and salesclerks selling Western-style high heels,<sup>96</sup> and *Foto Ato* ran a spread that depicted women as designers, bar madams, airline stewardesses, and department store clerks.<sup>97</sup> Even when pictured in jobs typically filled by men, women were still pigeonholed into domestic roles. One photograph of a female day laborer shows her not in a moment of work, but rather as she watches over a sleeping child. Images of women in police uniforms appeared in several magazines. But while policemen were frequently photographed at scenes of violence and unrest, restoring public order, policewomen were photographed protecting lost children or policing other women. In short, many of the images of women that appeared in postwar magazines buttonholed them as mothers and housewives. When they were cast as “career girls” or working women, they were typically typecast in roles reflexively associated with their gender.

In 1953, *Kamera* printed a *getsurei* on the theme of *musume* (a young, usually unmarried woman) that further illustrates the multifaceted range of identities that photographers projected onto women. The first two pictures were snapshots of women in an urban street, epitomizing cosmopolitan modernity with their long coats and skirts, trendy accessories, fashionable hairstyles, and black pumps. On the following page, two very different images of women appear, evoking a more traditional Japan. In one, a woman from a fishing community labors on a beach, and in the other, a woman walks along a rural cobbled street dressed in a *happi* coat, *monpe* trousers, and an apron. Other images in the *getsurei* included women walking in the snow in rural Hokkaido, women dressed in kimono assembling for a fashion show, a young girl shopping in a department store, a woman robed in a *yukata* sweeping the street in Kyoto’s Gion district, and women dressed as cowboys performing in a circus. By sequencing the

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<sup>96</sup> “5 sakka ni yoru shokuba no pōtorēto,” *Kamera*, December 1950.

<sup>97</sup> “Seikatsu to onna,” *Foto Ato*, November 1953.

photographs, the magazine editors illustrated the cultural fluidity of postwar Japan that resisted a simple binaries between tradition and modern, rural and urban, and Japan and Western influences.

Notably—and perhaps obviously—photographs of men were very different than those of women. Men were never depicted inside the home as homemakers, nor did they appear as fashion models or pose for nude photographs. Instead, one of the most popular themes when it came to photographs of men were portraits of well-known artists, authors, politicians, intellectuals, athletes, and other figures in the public eye. Their photos captured several facets of Japanese cultural identity. First, cultural icons like artists and authors projected the idea of Japan as a “cultural nation.” Second, film directors whose work was screened abroad, in addition to snapshots of photographers who traveled overseas, demonstrated Japan’s renewed postwar internationalization. Third, brawny athletes who competed against foreign opponents depicted a Japan that could stand up to Western nations—particularly the U.S.—on an international stage.

Among the many portraits and candid shots of male cultural icons that appeared in postwar magazines, a number touted the prominent place of men as guardians of Japanese tradition. One example of this can be found in Watanabe Yoshio’s photo story on an archbishop at Enkaku-ji Temple (fig. 4.11).<sup>98</sup> Watanabe incorporated several motifs integral to Japan’s cultural heritage. In one image, the dark, energetic lines of calligraphy stretch along the length of a scroll, leading the viewer’s eye to a monk sitting *seiza*-style (kneeling with the tops of the feet flat on the floor) in the top portion of the frame. Watanabe shot the image in a portrait orientation (i.e., vertical), allowing him to take in the picture scroll, which stretches from the monk’s knees in the middle of the picture plane to the bottom edge of the frame.

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<sup>98</sup> “A Buddhist Archbishop in the Enkaku-ji Temple in Kamakura” (Enkaku-ji no rōshi: Asahina sōgen-shi o Kamakura ni otonau, *Asahi Kamera*, January 1950.

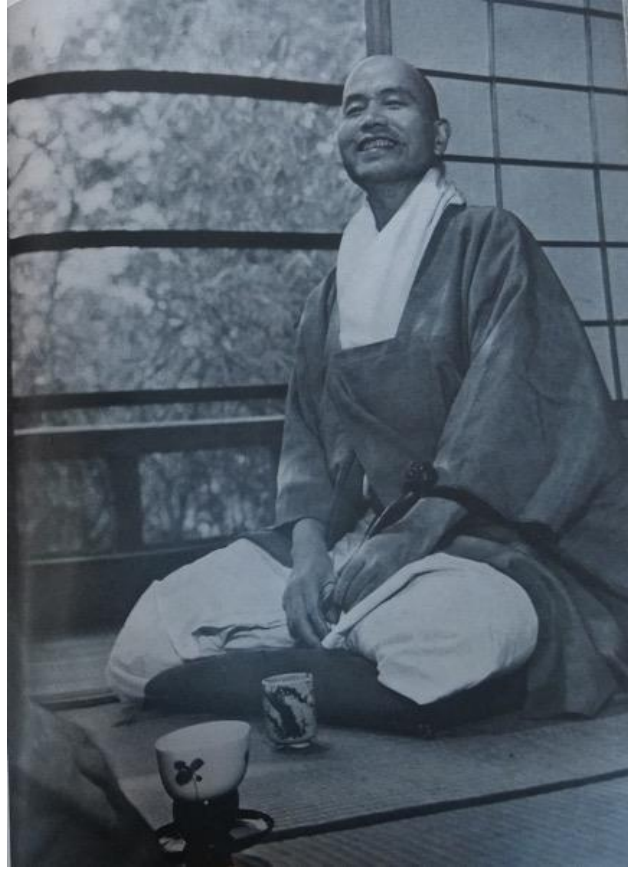


Figure 4.11. Watanabe Yoshio. *Asahi Kamera*, January 1950. Japan Camera Industry Institute.

Additional photographs hint at the serene setting of the temple complex. In one, the monk sits in *zazen* (cross-legged) fashion on *tatami* mats against a backdrop of *shoji* screens and lush foliage. Watanabe snapped the image from a low angle so that the viewer might feel as if he were sitting across from the monk, who is enjoying a cup of tea with his guest. The third image offers the viewer a rich landscape scene of the temple grounds. Here, Watanabe zoomed out so that the monk, who stands by a towering tree, seems dwarfed by the lush nature around the temple buildings: thick tree trunks flecked with moss, vibrant leaves, and a serene pond that reflects the verdant environment. The final image in the story offers a view of seemingly ancient temple buildings with thatched roofs. Calligraphy, tea, nature, and wooden temple buildings: all photographed with careful attention to framing and the camera's orientation. By matching form



to content, Watanabe has captured in these images icons of tradition that render Japan as a “cultural nation.”

Monks were just one of many cultural icons that photographers featured. Others included film and stage actors, authors, philosophers, painters, calligraphers, and intellectuals. A portrait of Kabuki actor Nakamura Kanemon shows him in an intimate pre-performance moment, applying his stage makeup.<sup>99</sup> Esteemed actor Noguchi Kanesuke (1879-1953), on the other hand, posed for the camera with one of his Noh masks.<sup>100</sup> Nihonga painter Yokoyama Taikan (1868-1958) sits on the edge of a veranda against a backdrop of ocean and lush trees,<sup>101</sup> while Yōga painter Miyamoto Saburō (1905-1974) is seen in his studio, cigarette dangling from his lips as he steps back from the easel to look at his painting.<sup>102</sup> A whole host of literary authors also appeared in the pages of photo magazines. *Asahi Kamera* printed a portrait of famed author Kawabata Yasunari (1899-1972) by Kimura Ihei, and one of Yoshikawa Eiji (1892-1962)<sup>103</sup> by Hamaya Hiroshi, as well as photographs of essayist Uchida Hyakken (1889-1971) and novelist Kazuo Hirotsu (1891-1968). *Kōga Gekkan* published Hayashi Tadahiko’s now-famous photo of Oda Sakunosuke (1913-1947) perched precariously on a bar stool; and *Kamera* included photographs of Toyoshima Yukio (1890-1955), Abe Kōbō (1924-1993), and Tanizaki Jun’ichirō (1886-1965).

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<sup>99</sup> Kimura Ihei, “Make up Mr. Nakamura Kanemon, Actor” (Nakamura Kanemon), *Kamera*, December 1952.

<sup>100</sup> Domon Ken, “Noguchi Kanesuke. (a NO player)” (Nō yakusha Noguchi Kanesuke shi), *Kamera*, December 1951.

<sup>101</sup> Kimura Ihei, “Taikan Yokohama (The Top Artist of Japanese Painting)” (Taikan Yokohama), *Asahi Kamera*, June 1950.

<sup>102</sup> Funayama Katsumi, “Painter Saburo Miyamoto” (Miyamoto Saburō gashitsu), *Asahi Kamera*, September 1950.

<sup>103</sup> Yoshikawa Eiji was celebrated for his interpretations of literary classics, among them *The Tale of the Heike* (*Heike Monogatari*) and *The Tale of Genji* (*Genji Monogatari*).

*Asahi Kamera* even published a portrait of Yanagita Kunio in the March 1950 issue.<sup>104</sup> Photographed in his study by Hamaya Hiroshi, the esteemed folklorist sits at his desk, seemingly deep in thought as he stares off into the distance towards the right side of the frame. The caption describes Yanagita's study as "Western-style," but notes that the traditional *tatami* mat flooring made the room a perfect space for meditation and reflection. The text further draws attention to Yanagita's Japanese-style clothing, which gives the impression of "intuition, insight, and a sharp understanding." Clearly, clothing carried the symbolic weight, in this case, of Japanese-ness.

Across from Yanagita's portrait in the same issue of *Asahi Kamera*, the editors placed a photo of Hasegawa Nyozeikan (pen name of Yamamoto Manjirō, 1875-1969) standing in a garden surrounded by cedar trees at Nara's Todai-ji temple. Like Yanagita on the opposite page, Hasegawa is clothed in Japanese style: *hakama* pants and what appears to be a long *tanzen* coat. An ardent social critic, Hasegawa co-founded a political magazine to promote social democracy in 1919, published a critique of Japanese fascism in 1932, and remained one of the few public intellectuals to oppose militarism throughout the war.<sup>105</sup> By including his photograph in the magazine, especially alongside other well-known visual, literary, and musical artists, the editors tacitly evidenced their commitment to a peaceful and democratic Japan.

Other artists and intellectuals whose portraits appeared in magazines were esteemed for their expertise in artistic media that had absorbed foreign influences. Woodblock illustrator Munakata Shikō (1903-1975),<sup>106</sup> for example, was associated with the *mingei* (folk art) and *sōsaku-hanga* movements, which had applied a distinctly modern aesthetic to a centuries-old

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<sup>104</sup> "Mr. Yanagita Kunio" (Yanagita Kunio Shi), *Asahi Kamera*, March 1950, 23.

<sup>105</sup> For more on Hasegawa, see Mary Hanneman, *Hasegawa Nyozeikan and Liberalism in Modern Japan* (University of Washington, 2007).

<sup>106</sup> Photographed in *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, 1952, and *Kamera*, May 1954.

craft. Munakata himself had been drawn to an artistic career after viewing paintings by Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890), and even claimed that he wanted to be the “van Gogh of Aomori.” He achieved international recognition in the 1950s, winning the “Prize of Excellence” at the Second International Print Exhibition in Switzerland (1952), first prize at the São Paulo Biennial Exhibition in Brazil (1955,) and the Grand Prix at the Venice Biennale (1956).

The early 1950s was a time when many Japanese artists began to receive international recognition, leading to the global popularization of Japanese culture.<sup>107</sup> In 1952 and 1953, *Asahi Kamera* ran a series on film directors photographed by Miki Jun and Akiyama Shotarō. Among the directors featured were Shibuya Minoru and Imai Tadashi, whose films were screened at the Cannes Film Festival in 1953 and 1954, respectively. The series also included a snapshot of Kurosawa Akira (1910-1998), whose film *Rashomon* was first screened at the 1951 Venice Film Festival and later won an honorary Academy Award for outstanding foreign language film. The photos of these and other directors signified not only the internationalization of Japanese film, but also of Japan’s renewed—and peaceful—engagement with foreign nations.

Internationalization was a vital element in the reconstruction of Japanese national and cultural identity,<sup>108</sup> and photography magazines provided space to visualize it. In addition to the aforementioned snapshots of newly-acclaimed Japanese film directors, magazines promoted internationalization by publishing images from Japanese photographers’ trips abroad. Starting in the early 1950s, many Japanese photographers began traveling to India, China, Korea, the U.S., and Europe. As previously mentioned, *Asahi Kamera* published Natori Yōnosuke’s photographs

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<sup>107</sup> Meghan Warner Mettler has examined, in particular, the popularity of the “shibui” aesthetic among upper-middle-class Americans. To Americans, *shibui* represented a “graceful, minimalist” aesthetic believed to be the essence of Japanese culture. American interest in Japanese culture was thus highly selective, focused in particular on products representative of the *shibui* aesthetic, like ikebana and bonsai. See Mettler, *How to Reach to Japan by Subway: America’s Fascination with Japanese Culture, 1945-1965* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press), 2018.

<sup>108</sup> Robertson, “It Takes a Village,” 112.

of the U.S. in 1950, originally taken for *Life* and *Fortune* magazine.<sup>109</sup> Then in 1954, *Foto Āto* published a spread on Kondō Hideozō's trip to China;<sup>110</sup> *Kamera* ran a multi-page special feature on photographers who had visited New Delhi;<sup>111</sup> and *Asahi Kamera* printed amateur photographers' color photographs of Korean streets and devoted several covers to European streetscapes taken by Ishibashi Kanichirō.<sup>112</sup>

Among the most famous of these peripatetic photographers was Kimura Ihei, who journeyed to Europe in the 1950s at the invitation of Werner Bischof. Kimura's photographs, serialized first in a ten-part installment in *Asahi Kamera* and later published in two monographs, documented scenes of daily life from across Europe.<sup>113</sup> In Italy, he snapped a florist surrounded by colorful foliage in her shop, a curbside market, and children playing in a Roman slum. His photographs of Parisians included women gossiping at a café, a chestnut vendor, and men and women talking at bookstalls along the Seine River. Kimura captured a village musical band in the French countryside, upper-class gentlemen and ladies in London, and a girl on a bicycle in Berlin. Kimura's own visage even appeared in one image, snapped by the esteemed Henri Cartier-Bresson at the bank of the Loire River in France as Kimura stood on a ladder to photograph something off frame while a woman and children gathered in a doorway behind him (fig. 4.12).

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<sup>109</sup> "State-Side Pieces of Yonosuke Natori" (Natori yōnosuke taibei sakuhin-shū).

<sup>110</sup> "Travel Snapshots of China" (Chūgoku no ryokō no sunappu), *Foto Āto*, November 1954.

<sup>111</sup> "Trip to New Delhi" (Nyūderī e no tabi), *Kamera*, July 1954.

<sup>112</sup> Tōyama Seiya, "South Korea after the War" (Kyūsen-go no Kankoku), *Asahi Kamera*, September 1954.

<sup>113</sup> *Kimura Ihei on World Tour I* (Kimura Ihei gaiyū shashinshū: Dai ikkai) and *Kimura Ihei on World Tour II: Impressions of Europe* (Kimura Ihei gaiyū shashinshū: Dai nikai: Yōroppa no inshō).



Figure 4.12. Henri Cartier-Bresson. “Mounsier Kimura.” *Asahi Kamera*, April 1955. Foundation Henri Cartier-Bresson.

Western photographers’ images of foreign places and peoples published in Japanese photo magazines further asserted Japan’s postwar internationalization.<sup>114</sup> In a conversation in 1950 on photographic annuals from Europe and the U.S., the discussants observed that the American annuals had an “international feel” (*intānashonaruna kanji*) because they were filled with photographs of European scenes.<sup>115</sup> The same could be said for Japanese photography magazines, which, as the previous chapter revealed, dedicated a great deal of space to

<sup>114</sup> Darling-Wolf, “Post-war Japan in Photographs,” 414.

<sup>115</sup> Roundtable discussion, “Arusu shashin nenkan gappyō-kai,” *Kamera*, August 1950.

photographs taken in locations across the globe. Additionally, when magazines published transcripts of roundtable discussions with Euro-American photographers, they included pictures that documented their encounters with (male) Japanese photographers.

The images of men we have described thus far presented Japan as a new cultural nation engaged in renewed internationalization during the postwar period. But other photos revealed something very different: men beset by masculine insecurities that mirrored the insecurities of a nation in transition. These insecurities, represented in images of disabled or elderly Japanese men—and indirectly in pictures of Japanese women fraternizing with American GIs—were antagonized by the presence of the Occupation and its authority over Japan.<sup>116</sup> Although censorship laws restricted the types of images of GIs that could be published in the early postwar years, after the Occupation ended in 1952, magazines began to print images of the American forces who remained in Japan. When Japan signed the Treaty of San Francisco in 1951 to restore Japan's sovereignty, after all, it also signed onto the Japan-America Security Alliance, effectively making the U.S. responsible for Japan's military defense. By 1955, upwards of 200,000 American troops remained in Japan, compared to the 120,000 or so stationed there in 1950.<sup>117</sup>

The presence of American service members in the streets regularly reinforced the authority of the American military forces. According to Sharalyn Orbaugh, this presence engendered a new “visual economy” for Japanese men that contrasted “small, ‘raced,’ linguistically inept, materially impoverished” Japanese against “large and white,” affluent

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<sup>116</sup> Darling-Wolf, “Post-war Japan in Photographs,” 408.

<sup>117</sup> Tim Kane, “Global US Troop Deployment, 1950-2003: A Report of the Heritage Center for Data Analysis,” The Heritage Foundation, 2004, 5. <https://www.heritage.org/defense/report/global-us-troop-deployment-1950-2003>. Okinawa remained in U.S. possession until 1972, at which sovereignty reverted, not to the Okinawans, but back to Japan.

American servicemen.<sup>118</sup> Japanese men were especially aware of the conspicuous physical and material differences that marked them as inferior to the powerful, seemingly wealthy American servicemen. Kasumoto Sama, former president of the Minolta Corporation, remembers:

The tall, handsome and healthy GI's, wearing crisp olive uniforms with brilliant white helmets, took turns directing traffic with choreographic flair. Young Japanese women admired the style and authority of those Americans, then cast sidelong glances at underfed Japanese men like me, who waited to cross the street with bowed heads and shabby clothes, jealous of the Americans, knowing we could not compete.<sup>119</sup>

Photographer Saeki Yoshikatsu used a military base to represent the uneven balance of power between Japan and the U.S. (fig. 4.13).<sup>120</sup> The two Japanese men in the center of the frame immediately draw the viewer's attention. One man stands to the left, his body parallel to a wooden fence post in the background. A white bandanna is wrapped around his closely-shaven head, likely sopping up the sweat that flowed under the scorching sun. A bundle of driftwood hangs from his back, small compared to the heavy load shouldered by his companion. Gripping a saw, the second man waits patiently as his companion lashes a rope around his driftwood burden. Only after the eye takes in the detail of these two men does it notice the barbed wire running in vertical and diagonal lines behind them, and further afield, a military base sprawled across the sandy ground. The intersecting lines of the barbed wire keep the eye moving between the men in the foreground and the base beyond, but the wire also represents an obvious barrier between the base and the laboring Japanese men. Marked as outsiders, they are denied entry into the space occupied by the American military.

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<sup>118</sup> Orbaugh, *Fiction of the Allied Occupation*, 390.

<sup>119</sup> Kusumoto Sama, "Japanese Enlightenment," *The New York Times*, March 24, 1991, accessed March 18, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/1991/03/24/magazine/personal-account-japanese-enlightenment.html>.

<sup>120</sup> Saeki Yoshikatsu, "Old Fishermen (Uchinada)" (Uchinada no ryogyofu), *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, 1954.



Figure 4.13. Saeki Yoshikatsu. “Old Fishermen (Uchinada)” (Uchinada no ryogyofu). *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, 1954. Japan Camera Industry Institute.

In his notes on the photograph, Saeki wrote that the Uchinada Sea was calm that day. Walking along the fence, the photographer encountered the men struggling in the sand with bundled twigs on their backs as they returned home. The scene of the sea and the fishermen that initially greeted Saeki was marred by the seemingly unending line of barbed wire—an “iron fence” as he described it. The American flag fluttering high from the base nearby—one of over 700 U.S. bases scattered across the Japanese archipelago—signaled to Saeki that a foreign country existed within the Japanese homeland. The scene left a deep impression on the photographer, who saw sadness and anger burning in the eyes of the elderly, impoverished men.

The above represents an example in which photographers reinforced American authority in Japan by invoking symbols of hardship and poverty contrasted with American military might. At other times, photographers projected male insecurities vis-à-vis the Occupation by recording sexual encounters between American GIs and Japanese women. In this, they were not alone. Literary scholar Michael Molasky contends that many male authors, believing that Japanese



society under the Occupation had been stripped of its masculinity, employed “metaphors of linguistic and sexual subordination” to create “allegories of national humiliation.” By representing the experience of defeat and Occupation through sexual violence against women, male authors constructed “a gendered national allegory of the Occupation era” that ensured Japanese men a place “among those victimized by the foreign occupiers.”<sup>121</sup>

Photo magazines rarely, if ever, published images that documented violent sexual encounters between Japanese women and American servicemen. Instead, editors projected masculine insecurities by juxtaposing images of impoverished or disabled Japanese men to those of hale and healthy American servicemen, while photographers also took photos of obviously disgruntled Japanese men near scenes of fraternization. One example of how editors juxtaposed images can be found in the 1953 *ARS Shashin Nenkan*. Watabe Yūkichi’s photo on the right shows two GIs in Yokosuka (Fig. 4.14). The sailor on the right, his body facing the camera, first captures the viewer’s eye. With his hat pushed down at a jaunty angle and his left leg thrown casually over the right, the sailor projects a cocksure attitude as he leans against the wooden façade of the building. The viewer’s eye follows his outstretched arm as it reaches into an open doorway. A foot sheathed in shiny black heels pokes out of a long skirt, presumably that of a woman standing just inside. Her hand intertwines with the sailor’s, inviting him over the threshold. The other sailor stands with his back to an electric pole, staring down the street at the backs of retreating women. With his hands resting on his hips, this GI, like his compatriot, exudes an authoritative, confident air. The appearance of the two men soliciting the companionship of Japanese women in a grungy back alley artfully conveys the photographer’s impression of GIs in this harbor town: imposing men who enjoyed the companionship of Japanese women.

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<sup>121</sup> Molasky, *The American Occupation of Japan and Okinawa*, 9.

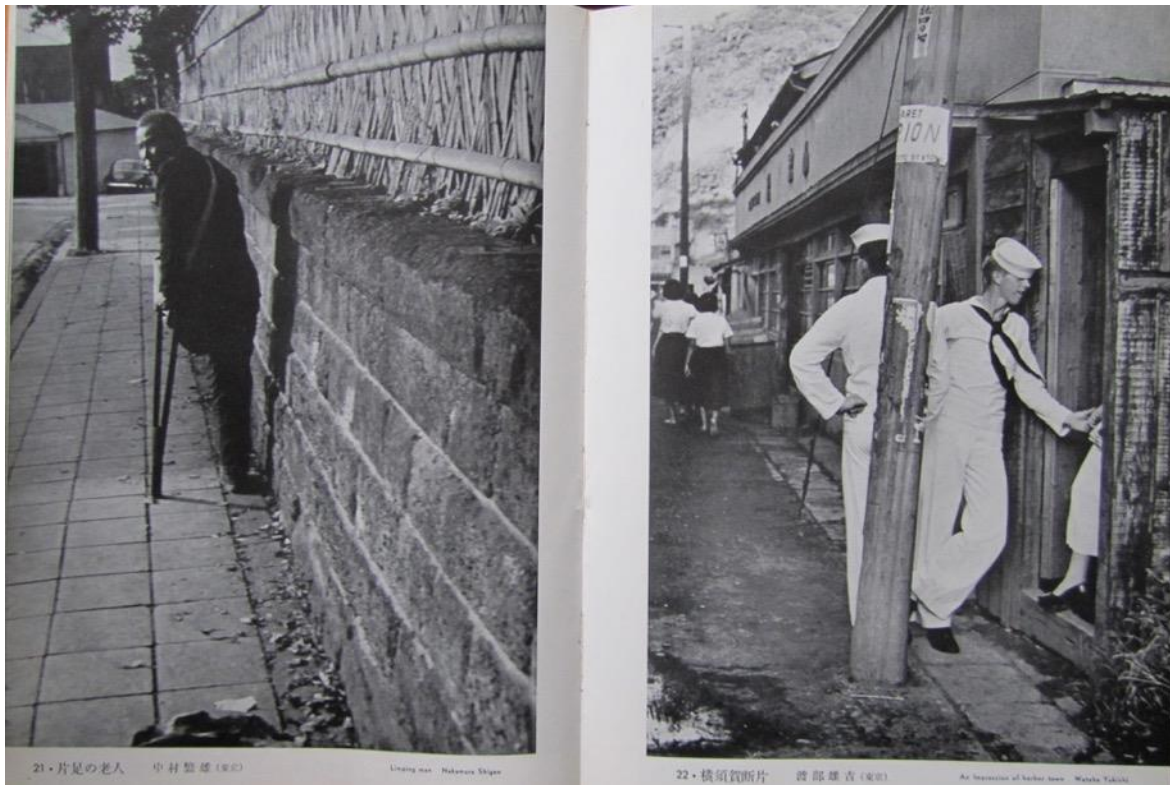


Figure 4.14. Left: Nakamura Shigeo. “Limping Man” (Kataashi no roujin). Right: Watabe Yūkichi. “An Impression of a Boarder Townn” (Yokosuka no dampen). *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, 1953. Japan Camera Industry Institute.

The image on the opposing page of the spread adds another layer of meaning to the photograph of the GIs. In “Limping Man” (Kataashi no rojin), the eye is immediately drawn to a dark figure in the center of the page. With the help of a crutch, the man stands uneasily on his one remaining leg, paused halfway down a sidewalk strewn with dead leaves. His shadow climbs up the rough stone retaining wall topped with a bamboo fence that rises to the top of the frame, towering oppressively over the man and forming a physical barrier between him and the scene playing out on the next page—almost as if the editors were marking him as separate from the seedy world that GIs inhabited in Japanese base towns. The man leans over his shoulder to look back at the camera, the motion causing him to seem unsteady as his body shifts to the left. His face is cast half in shadows so deep that they obscure the left side of his face. The other half is lit by bright sunlight that emphasizes his furrowed brow. Moving downward from his face, the

viewer notices highlights on the man's hand as well, accentuating fingers gripped around the handle of his crutch. The wooden supports pull the eye down further still, coming to rest on the void where the man's missing left leg should stand. Disabled by his missing leg and caught off balance by twisting around to look at the camera, the man projects anguish, destitution, and hardship.

The editors added meaning to this photo, obviously, by placing it opposite Watabe's image. When contrasted to the robust sailors soliciting a Japanese woman, the man's physical disability and poverty are amplified. He stands alone, precariously, a vision of solitude, physical infirmity, and economic hardship. The photograph of the sailors, in contrast, projects their cocky, confident attitude as members of the U.S. armed forces. By placing these photos side-by-side, the editors have revealed Japanese masculine insecurities made manifest under the authority of the Occupying American "Other."

Images like "Limping Map" that evoked the fragile masculinity of Japanese men in the postwar era were countered by other images that conveyed renewed confidence. Although rare in photo magazines, photos of the Japanese Police Reserves represent one good example of this. Formed after the start of the Korean War, when units of the U.S. Armed Forces were transferred from Japan to the Korean peninsula, the Japanese Police Reserves formed the foundation of today's Self-Defense Force.<sup>122</sup> *Asahi Kamera* printed a photo spread on Japan's new quasi-military force in December 1950 that showed Japanese men in uniform absorbed in munitions practice and other aspects of training. In May 1951, *Asahi Kamera* ran another spread on the Police Reserves with photographs taken by Horace Bristol and Shugano Yoshikatsu. In these pictures, young Japanese men march through the snow with rifles slung over their shoulders, eat in the mess hall, and practice combat training.

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<sup>122</sup> Takemae, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, 193.

Some of these photographs captured members of the Police Reserves in moments of leisure: playing in arcades or dancing with Japanese women—images remarkably similar to photos of American GIs in Japan. Apparently, magazine editors noticed this resemblance as well. The July 7, 1954 issue of *Asahi Guraifu* included a spread on the “Japanese ‘GI.’” The text stated that the Japanese men “spend their weekend in a fashion they learned from American GIs stationed in Japan. They pick up girls around the station and enjoy transient romance in various places.” The write-up on the “Japanese GI” ended with the simple observation that before 1945, “Japanese soldiers were never allowed to be seen with girls in public.” By contrast, these images of the “Japanese GI” displayed a new masculine identity—an identity inspired, ironically, by the Occupation forces who openly cavorted with Japanese women.

The above photos represent rare depictions of Japan’s cautious remilitarization. More commonly, photographers used athletes as a foil to connote rehabilitated masculinity. Because sporting events provided a means for Japan to reassert its place in the world, the nation’s reentry into an international community of sports was “an enormously important goal” for postwar leaders of Japanese athletics.<sup>123</sup> One early sports hero was Furuhashi Hironoshin (1928-2009), whom American sportswriters dubbed the “Flying Fish of Fujiyama” due to his prowess in the swimming pool. *Asahi Kamera* printed his picture alongside fellow competitors Jim McLane (1930-2020) and John Marshall (1930-1957) in a report on the America vs. Japan Swimming

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<sup>123</sup> The popularity of athletes—and perhaps importance—as photographed subjects is suggested by the fact that *ARS Shashin Nenkan* included at least one photograph of sporting events in every postwar annual except their 1954 edition. Featured sports included baseball (1948, 1950), track and field (1949), rugby (1951), skiing and marathon races (1952), and even a money changer at a horse racing event (1953). Sports photographs in other magazines ranged widely, from basketball to tennis, professional and sumo wrestling, boxing and judo, and swimming and bicycle races.

Contest.<sup>124</sup> In the late 1940s, Furuhashi set over twenty freestyle world records competing in Japan and the U.S., feats celebrated across Japan.

Photographers further represented the internationalization of Japan with images of tennis, baseball, and boxing. *Asahi Kamera* featured a portrait of tennis champion Kunamaru Jirō, who competed in the Davis Cup in the U.S.<sup>125</sup> In the January 1954 issue, *Asahi Kamera* printed a two-page spread on American baseball players who had visited Japan to play a series of matches against Japanese teams,<sup>126</sup> and *Kamera* published an instructional article on how to photograph a baseball game that included photos of American as well as Japanese baseball players.<sup>127</sup> Haneda Toshio documented a boxing match between Shirai Yoshio (1923-2003) and Marino Dado (1915-1989), the latter an American boxer of Filipino heritage.<sup>128</sup> By showing Japanese male athletes competing on the international stage, photography magazines proclaimed Japan's place among a community of nations.

Sports also presented Japan with the opportunity to reassert national pride. Beginning in the 1950s, as Japanese grapplers took on American rivals, professional wrestling provided an outlet for Japanese spectators to confront the U.S. vicariously. Many of the weekly events featured Rikidōzan, a former sumo wrestler whose televised matches against Americans and other foreign challengers captivated the nation. In the matches, Rikidōzan and his foes acted out a scripted narrative. The challengers, who posed as villains by cheating, were usually paid to

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<sup>124</sup> Okawa Sadao, "'Three Flying Fish' McLane, Marshall, Furuhashi at the America V. Japan Swimming Contest" (Rikiei no hyōjō: Nichibeitaikō suijōkyōgi taikai yori), *Asahi Kamera*, November 1950, 44-45.

<sup>125</sup> Morimatsu Hideo, "Kunamaru Jirō" (Kunamaru Jirō senshu), *Asahi Kamera*, July 1951.

<sup>126</sup> Namaezawa Yoshio, "From the Major League Baseball Japan All-Star Series" (Nichibeiyakyū yori), *Asahi Kamera*, January 1954.

<sup>127</sup> Wakamatsu Fujio, "Baseball Photos are Captured in this Way" (Yakyū shashin wa kōshite kyatchi suru), *Kamera*, May 1950.

<sup>128</sup> Haneda Toshio, "The Thrill of Boxing and How to Photograph It" (Kentō shashin no suriru to sono utsushi-kata), *Kamera*, August 1951, 33-36.

endure Rikidōzan's blows, and Rikidōzan played the hero by subjugating his American opponents.<sup>129</sup> When he did so, spectators could imagine a Japan that stood up to the U.S.

As physically imposing figures who regularly bested foreign opponents, Rikidōzan and other wrestlers countered narratives that cast Japan as weak and diminutive. According to Yoshimi Shunya, Rikidōzan understood that the wrestling matches were “a national symbolic drama” and thus projected “himself as a brave, small-built Japanese going against American wrestlers who were constantly committing fouls.”<sup>130</sup> A two-page spread in *Kamera* by Hayata Yūji shows Rikidōzan locked in battle with the Sharpe brothers, Ben and Mike. One photo shows the Japanese hero with his legs wrapped around his opponent's neck. Another photo captured one of the brothers subdued in an arm lock. Rikidōzan leans into the maneuver, pressing his opponent into the mat. In all three images, Rikidōzan triumphs over the Sharpe brothers.

Rikidōzan was not the only pro wrestler to take on foreign challengers. Okawa Sadao's photo of Yamaguchi Toshio (1914-1986), printed in the June 1954 issue of *Asahi Kamera*, shows the wrestler battling an American opponent.<sup>131</sup> At another event, Okawa captured Kazama Eiichi (1916-2001) exchanging blows with American William Weick (1932-2017). The description briefly notes that Weick won the match; however, the photo shows Kazama restraining Weick by wrapping his hands around the American's torso. Thus, even though the Japanese wrestler lost the match, viewers see Kazama's athleticism and strength being brought to bear against his American opponent.

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<sup>129</sup> Allen Guttman and Lee Thompson, *Japanese Sports: A History* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 169.

<sup>130</sup> Yoshimi Shunya, “From Street Corner to Living Room: Domestication of TV Culture and National Time/Narrative,” trans. Jodie Beck, *Mechademia* 9, (2014): 128-129. Ironically, Rikidōzan was actually *zainichi* (ethnic Korean).

<sup>131</sup> “Pro Wrestling,” (Puroresuringu), *Asahi Kamera*, June 1954.

Sugano Yoshikatsu captured yet another wrestling match, this time of two teams—one Japanese and one foreign—inside the Kuramae Kokugikan in Tokyo’s Taitō ward.<sup>132</sup> Upon looking at the image, the viewer’s eye is immediately drawn to the center of the photo, where bright lights spotlight the men. The rest of the arena, filled with spectators, is obscured by inky shadows that lie beyond the reach of the spotlights. A man from each team stands outside the ring, waiting for their turn to enter the match. In the center of the ring, an unidentified wrestler—albeit one who closely resembles Rikidōzan—wraps his arm around his opponent’s leg and pins him in an awkward position on the floor.

This photograph was published as *Asahi Kamera*’s 41<sup>st</sup> installment of “Made with a Japanese Camera” (Kokusan kamera no pēji), a monthly feature that, as the series’ name suggests, showcased photographs taken with cameras manufactured by Japanese companies. Sugano snapped his photo with a Yashica Flex, a medium format twin-lens reflex (TLR) camera manufactured between 1953 and 1959. For the editors, we might surmise, Sugano’s photo was packed with symbolism: here, you see Japanese wrestlers besting their foreign opponents through the lens of a Japanese camera. That the photo was taken at a time when Japanese cameras had come to be prized for their superior quality—overtaking the American and European products that had hitherto dominated the market—clearly drove the point home.

The sumo wrestler was another common athletic icon, one that arguably represented the epitome of traditional masculinity in Japan.<sup>133</sup> In photo magazines, pictures of sumo wrestlers emphasized their hulking bodies and physical presence in the *dohyō* (sumo ring). Yoshida Senzō’s photo of sumo wrestler Chiyonoyama Masanobu (1926-1977) obviously celebrates the

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<sup>132</sup> The Kuramae Kokugikan opened in 1950. Sumo tournaments were held in the arena until 1984, after which tournaments were held in the new Ryōgoku Kokugikan.

<sup>133</sup> Guttman and Thompson, *Japanese Sports*, 14

physical power and imposing presence of the male body.<sup>134</sup> The wrestler's torso fills the frame, captivating the viewer with its corporality. Chiyonoyama's slightly disheveled hair and the sheen of sweat on his face and chest suggest that Yoshida had captured him in the midst of, or just after, a match or practice. The wrestler looks down at his arms, drawing the viewer's attention to his bulging biceps and popping veins. In this image, Chiyonoyama offers a strong counter to photographs such as "Limping Man," discussed earlier in this chapter, which depicted the Japanese male as frail or infirm.

The portrait of Chiyonoyama appeared second in a sequence of images in the frontispiece of *Asahi Kamera*'s September 1950 issue. This sequence begins with a portrait of Princess Takanomiya draped in elaborate ceremonial garments. Following the photos of the princess and sumo wrestler are two landscape scenes, taken at the site of one of the oldest Shinto shrines in Japan. The sequence was completed with two photographs of the renowned Kabuki actor Jitsukawa Enjaku (1921-1991). Each of these subjects on its own carried heavy symbolism of traditional Japanese culture, but by sequencing them, the editors accomplished much more. In essence, they created a sense of cultural belonging by invoking a series of icons that embodied Japanese tradition.<sup>135</sup>

While photographs of sumo wrestlers commonly evoked traditional Japanese masculinity, they were also used to call attention to cultural differences and, by extension, cultural exclusion. To cite one example, *Asahi Kamera* placed side-by-side in the February 1953 issue a photograph of sumo wrestlers training in their stable and one of Brazilian track-and-field athlete Adhemar Ferreira da Silva (1927-2001). In this juxtaposition, the sumo wrestler clearly represents Japanese identity, while da Silva represents the foreign "Other." The November 1954

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<sup>134</sup> "Fighting Spirit" (Tōkon), *Asahi Kamera*, September 1950.

<sup>135</sup> Guttman and Thompson, *Japanese Sports*, 180.



issue of *Foto Ato* offers us another example. On the right page is a photograph of biracial children at an orphanage in Yokosuka, while the left page shows a sumo wrestler sitting on tatami flooring. The hulking man looks across the page to the children in the opposing photo, who in turn look across the page at the wrestler. The direction of their gazes locks the two subjects together, even though they inhabit separate photographs. Arranged in this way, the presence of the sumo wrestler across the page effectively marks the “mixed-race children” (*konketsuji*) as “Others,” a designation reinforced by the sign in the background. Penned in English with no Japanese translation, it reads: “Kei Mei Gakuen Orphanage. Sponsored by Petty Officers Club.”

Photographers’ attempts to visualize a new Japanese culture, as these examples suggest, relied heavily on images that offered contrasting representations of the “Other.” Identifying difference is, of course, a fundamental aspect of identity formation. As sociologist and cultural theorist Stuart Hall states, “it is only through the relation to the Other . . . to what is not” that identity can be constructed.<sup>136</sup> The difference between “us” and “them” or the “Other” is manifested through symbolic systems of representation and binary oppositions of inclusion and exclusion.<sup>137</sup> In postwar Japan, photographers targeted as outsiders those subjects connected to war, defeat, and occupation: female sex workers, war orphans, abandoned biracial children, the destitute, and white-robed repatriated soldiers.

### Marking Outsiders and Constructing National Unity

Writing in the 1952 *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, Ina Nobuo reflected on the feelings of “anxiety and chaos” that were carved deeply into the modern world, a condition that defined the reality of

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<sup>136</sup> Stuart Hall, “Introduction: Who Needs ‘Identity’?”, in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart and Paul Du Gay (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 1996), 5.

<sup>137</sup> Woodward, “Concepts of Identity and Difference,” 15-33.

Japan where the legacy of the war remained. Society was full of social and economic threats, pollution, and deception, Ina wrote; however, there was also an ardent desire to overcome the chaos and move forward toward peace and stability. Amateur photographers in 1952, at the end of the Occupation, had taken a step forward by working to showcase reality without fleeing from its ugly truth—an exciting moment, Ina declared, for Japan’s photographic industry.<sup>138</sup>

Nevertheless, many photographers and critics argued that those subjects who continued to inhabit a *kyodatsu* existence and whose very existence recalled war and defeat represented only a fraction of Japanese society. As the passage of time provided distance from the war, photographers represented these subjects as the increasingly marginalized “Other” through several techniques, including careful framing of the scene to isolate the subject from his or her surroundings, thus effectively imprinting marginal status on the subject. As well, editors clustered together images of outsider groups to amplify their marginality. Meanwhile, images of ethnic minorities in Japan, such as the Ainu or resident Koreans, were rarely included in magazines. Their absence, I would argue, reflected the popular belief that Japan was a mono-ethnic nation.<sup>139</sup>

As discussed earlier in this chapter, women inhabited a variety of roles in photographs, including housewife, mother, working woman, and modern urban woman. In addition, some depictions of women addressed moral dangers—most notably, images of prostitution. The woman staring out of the page in a photo entitled “Denigration” (Tenraku) looks directly at the camera. If the title alone did not suffice to intimate the woman’s occupation, the cigarette held between lips painted a deep red, a patterned kerchief tied around permed hair, and a low-cut,

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<sup>138</sup> Ina Nobuo, “1952 Japanese Photography World Outlook: Amateur Photography” (1952-Nen Nihon shashin-kai tenbō: Amachua shashin), *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, 1952.

<sup>139</sup> For more on Japan’s “hidden minorities,” see George Hicks, *Japan’s Hidden Apartheid: The Korean Minority and the Japanese* (Brookfield, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing Company, 1998).

Western-style dress with bold stripes definitively marked her as a *pan pan*. The woman's stance, with arms crossed and shoulders squared, together with the harsh tonal contrast, projects an arrogant, aggressive attitude frequently reprised in photographs of sex workers.

The combative visage of the woman is not surprising, given the negative attitude of the general public toward sex workers—and especially of those who catered to American GIs. In an interview held in 1973, author Kanzaki Kiyoshi recalled *pan pan* derisively as women who attached “themselves to power and money” (i.e., American GIs), noting that their very existence aggrieved him because he “was struggling through each day on the brink of starvation.”<sup>140</sup> Uemura Tamaki, a prominent Christian minister and leader of the YWCA, described *pan pan* as “mite-like women” who attached themselves to foreigners as she voiced her support of anti-prostitution laws. And famed novelist Takami Jun (1907-1965) turned his pen against sex workers, writing in his diary:

Yesterday in Yokohama Station, I saw a woman who I could tell was a prostitute at first glance. She impudently walked up and down the crowded corridor, chewing her gum in a most arrogant manner. Her conceit must have come from the pride of being pursued by American soldiers. I felt like I was being shown a clear image of someone who had lost all sense of shame. I realized then that when a woman loses her most valuable asset as a woman, it is not the only thing that she loses—she also loses her integrity as a human being. This is a frightening thing, and a piteous thing.<sup>141</sup>

Even children looked at young female sex workers with a critical eye. One elementary school girl from Sasebo wrote in a school essay that seeing “a woman of the night” walking “hand in hand with a foreigner . . . makes me very hateful.”<sup>142</sup> Indeed, the animosity towards *pan pan* was

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<sup>140</sup> Kiyoshi Kanzaki, 'Amerika-gata seikōdō no dentatsushatachi no jittai dai 3 kai: pan-pan g?ru' (The reality behind importers of American-style sexual activity #3: pan-pan girls), in *Weekly Post, Tokyo*, September 14, 1973, 80–81. Quoted from Tanaka, “The Sexual Contact Zone in Occupied Japan,” <http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue31/tanaka.htm#n18>.

<sup>141</sup> Jun Takami, *Haisen Nikki* (Defeat in the War Diary) (Tokyo: Chūkō-Bunko, 2005), 438–39. Quoted from Tanaka, “The Sexual Contact Zone in Occupied Japan.”

<sup>142</sup> Tanaka, “The Sexual Contact Zone in Occupied Japan.”

sometimes so visceral that it spilled over into violence ranging from verbal threats to outright physical attacks.<sup>143</sup>

According to Sarah Kovner, most Japanese today associate *pan pan* strictly with Occupation personnel due to pictorial, literary, and film representations of their fraternization with Allied troops.<sup>144</sup> This association was certainly true for photographers. In 1952, for example, Higuichi Susumu captured an American sailor conversing with a Japanese woman, the pair leaning out of a building window in Ginza.<sup>145</sup> Kawayama Hideo's image, snapped from behind, showed a Japanese woman walking in the embrace of a tall American man in military uniform;<sup>146</sup> and Ōtsuka Gen trained his lens on a bustling street in Yokosuka filled with American military personnel seeking the companionship of Japanese women.<sup>147</sup> In June 1954, *Asahi Kamera* devoted its "Gendai no kanjō" (Moods and Expressions) series to amateur photographers, who submitted photographs of American GIs, likely on leave during the Korean War, fraternizing with Japanese women.<sup>148</sup> Many of these pictures included a disgruntled Japanese man in the frame, noticeably separated from the GI and Japanese woman (fig. 4.15). In photographs such as these, *pan pan* prostitutes were not merely marked as outsiders, but as a threat to Japanese masculinity itself.

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<sup>143</sup> Kovner, *Occupying Power*, 74–78.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> "Talk" (Katarai), *Kamera*, September 1952.

<sup>146</sup> "Early Morning" (Asa gaeri), *Kamera*, July 1955.

<sup>147</sup> "Yokosuka after Dark" (Yokosuka), *Asahi Kamera*, April 1953.

<sup>148</sup> "Gendai no kanjō nyūsen sakuhin," *Asahi Kamera*, June 1954.



Figure 4.15. Kishimoto Shigeo. “Facial Expression on a Bench” (Benchi no hyōjō). *Asahi Kamera*, June 1954.

Amateur Tokiwa Toyoko, one of the few female photographers at the time, offered a more nuanced perspective of sex workers than her male peers. Her work depicted *pan pan* as women who were victimized by American GIs and Japanese society alike—and humanized the women in the process. Tokiwa began her amateur photography career in the early 1950s photographing foreign military families in the port city of Yokohama, but soon began photographing Japanese working women. In contrast to male photographers who covertly photographed sex workers from afar or evoked the specter of confrontation in their images, Tokiwa aimed to photograph women’s lives from a position of familiarity. She accomplished this, remarkably, by approaching women in the city’s red light district and asking if she could photograph their living quarters. When women consented, Tokiwa was afforded an intimate look into their lives beyond the street (fig. 4.16).



Figure 4.16. Tokiwa Toyoko. From *Yokohama saigen: futari de usushita haisen sutorii*.

Tokiwa's interest in photographing and humanizing *pan pan* also led her to hospitals, where women apprehended by the police were forced to undergo medical examinations under the guise of combatting venereal disease and other sexually transmitted infections.<sup>149</sup> On one trip to the hospital, Tokiwa captured a group of women who were made to lie face down, bare buttocks exposed, to receive penicillin shots (fig. 4.17). Thinking back on the day, Tokiwa recalled the purple smoke from the women's cigarettes gathering in a haze as they stripped from the waist

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<sup>149</sup> By early 1946, close to 90 percent of those working for the Recreation and Amusement Association (RAA) in Tokyo, an organization established by the Japanese to provide prostitution services for Occupation servicemen, were infected with venereal disease. See Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 130. The roundups of suspected *pan pan* swept women off the streets indiscriminately, whether or not they were sex workers. A report from 1950 describes the case of two young women on their way home one evening, who were caught in a roundup at Ikebukuro Station by the Tokyo Metropolitan Police. The police took them first to the nearby police box, then to Itabashi Police Station, despite protests from the two girls that they were not sex workers. Joining a group of 70 other women, the girls were subjected to rapid-fire questioning at the police station: "How often have you been brought here?" "How old are you?" "You must have had intercourse with several men?" One woman, a stage dancer, was asked to perform for the policemen. Another reported that the men "seemed to enjoy the examination." After questioning, the girls were bussed over to Yoshiwara Hospital and forced to undergo a physical exam paid for out of their pocket. One nurse told the girls they were lucky that night, because sometimes there were five or six American MPs present during the exam. Tired and violated, the two women were finally released hours later, but had no way to get home. In a seemingly endless nightmare, they had no alternative but to stay the night in the cold, drafty hospital. See "Solicitation of Troops for the Purpose of Prostitution," September 1950. <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/9895480>.

down to receive injections from the nurses' needles.<sup>150</sup> In one image, a woman sits propped up on her hands and knees, her pants pulled down to expose her backside. Head facing downward, her short, dark hair falls forward to obscure her face—and preserve her anonymity. Two nurses work on the left side of the frame, one scrawling a note in the patient's chart, the other walking towards the camera. Neither has her eyes on the patient—indeed, they seem utterly indifferent to the plight of this woman, who appears exposed and vulnerable.



Figure 4.17. Tokiwa Toyoko. From *Yokohama saigen: futari de usushita haisen sutorii*.

Tokiwa's photographs of female prostitutes emphasized the vulnerability of the women and offered a sympathetic view that illustrated their rough treatment at the hands of the medical staff. Like the image described above, some of her photographs of female sex workers show women who have been ostracized by society for the supposed threat they posed, literally and

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<sup>150</sup> Tokiwa Toyoko, *Watashi no naka no Yokohama Densetsu: Tokiwa Toyoko Shashinshū 1954–1956* (Tokyo: Jimusho, 2001).

figuratively, to its health. Still other photos, however, show the same women celebrating holidays, watching over their children, relaxing, socializing, and enjoying moments of leisure—that is, leading remarkably normal lives.

Among the other groups marked as outsiders that drew the attention of photographers were repatriated soldiers. Returning home in droves at war's end and throughout the subsequent decade, their presence increased the population of Japan by eight percent between 1945 and 1948.<sup>151</sup> Because these soldiers symbolized the old militarist regime, war defeat, and occupation, they received an ambivalent reception when they returned to Japan. Rumors about wartime atrocities committed by Japanese soldiers only deepened the public condemnation of veterans.<sup>152</sup> Although most men returned home and tried to resume normal lives, a few became visible fixtures of postwar Japan, as beggars on the streets of its cities. In a society that already viewed physical handicaps and mental illness as taboos, those who suffered directly from the war came to inhabit a new category of social impropriety.<sup>153</sup> Clothed in distinctive white robes, with their wounded bodies and psyches, the former soldiers easily fell prey to the camera of countless photographers. Whether purposely or not, these photographers solidified their status as “Others.”<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Beatrice Trefalt, *Japanese Army Stragglers and Memories of the War in Japan, 1950-75* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 25.

<sup>152</sup> For example, Unit 731 located in Harbin performed human experimentation in the pursuit of biological and chemical warfare research. See Tanaka Toshiyuki, *Hidden Horrors: Japanese War Crimes in World War II* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996).

<sup>153</sup> Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 61.

<sup>154</sup> Japanese society viewed physical handicaps and mental illness as taboo. Those soldiers who returned from the war front with physically damaged bodies and PTSD were frequently pushed to the margins of society. Stephen Mansfield, *Tokyo A Cultural History* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 59-61.



One photograph of repatriated soldiers, evocatively titled “Injured People,” appeared in a feature on urban snapshots.<sup>155</sup> Two men stand in the center of the frame, one playing the accordion while the other holds a donation box (fig. 4.18).<sup>156</sup> Several elements converge in the image to mark the soldiers as isolated outsiders. Both wear the white robes typical of wounded war veterans, and both have eye patches that mark them as physically disabled. A short depth of field and fast shutter speed captured the two men in clear focus, but simultaneously reduced the passersby to blurred forms. Clearly paying close attention to the flow of pedestrian traffic, the photographer pressed the shutter just as a space opened up in front of the two men. While this affords us a clear view of the central subjects, the empty space simultaneously creates a line of separation, literally and figuratively, between the veterans and the men, women, and children in the photo who are simply going about their daily lives.



Figure 4.18. Ikuno Noburo. “Injured People” (Shoi no hitotachi). *Kamera*, March 1950.

<sup>155</sup> Series title “Snapshot Album of the City” (Machi no sunappu arubamu), *Kamera* 1950.

<sup>156</sup> Ikuno Noburo, “Shoi no hitotachi” (“Injured People”), *Kamera*, March 1950.

Amateur photographer Jōdai Iwao's three photographs of a man begging on the street provide another example in which the photographer isolated the photographed subject to mark him as "Other."<sup>157</sup> Although not identified in the text as a repatriated soldier, the man's military hat and jacket, as well as his amputated legs, mark him as such. In two of the photographs, the man sits apart from other individuals in the frame. In one of these, a group of children openly stare at the man but stand back so that a rift of negative space keeps the man segregated from the children. In a third image, Jōdai has zoomed in on the veteran to isolate him as the only person in the frame. In contrast to these photos, Morimatsu Hideo's image of a repatriated soldier shows us a man in close physical proximity to the other subjects in the frame.<sup>158</sup> In this instance, the white-robed veteran is being apprehended by police. According to the caption, the man was one of 80 veterans who had participated in a hunger strike to protest against their forced removal from a nearby hospital. The image of a police officer physically apprehending an ex-soldier for protesting against the denial of healthcare speaks to the utter marginalization that disabled veterans especially had begun to suffer.

Needless to say, repatriated soldiers were not the only victims wounded by war. Hikita Hideo's photo "Envy" (Sen) depicts a small child propped up on a crutch so that he can look over a brick wall; one amputated leg curls around the top of the support while the other leg struggles for purchase against the rough brick wall (fig. 4.19).<sup>159</sup> The wall itself prevents the viewer from seeing what the boy sees on the other side. A wooden building in the background,

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<sup>157</sup> Jōdai Iwao, photographs included in the special feature "One Day One Hour, My Town, My Village" (Aru hi aru toki waga machi waga mura), *Kamera*, November 1952, 44.

<sup>158</sup> Morimatsu Hideo, "White Coat and Black Coat" (Hakui to kokui), *Asahi Kamera* July 1952, 23.

<sup>159</sup> One 1948 report estimated the total number of orphaned or homeless children at just over 123,000. Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 63. The government established a Children's Bureau in early 1947, guided by Father Eduard J. Flanagan who arrived in Tokyo the same year to oversee welfare efforts. By early 1949, over 175,000 children were sheltered in orphanages. Takemae, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, 418-420.

perhaps a school or row of businesses, suggests a lively scene taking place beneath the boy's gaze—something compelling enough, obviously, to convince him to take the dangerously awkward position he has assumed. Nevertheless, the boy remains separated—by the wall and by his disability—from whatever has seized his attention. The sequencing of the images around this photo magnifies the boy's isolation: in the previous spread, children gather together to partake in yearly *undōkai* (Sports Day) competitions—long a symbol of communal spirit and national unity—while in the next two-page spread, a group of laughing children sits in the embrace of Communist leader Tokuda Kyuichi (1894-1953).



Figure 4.19. Hikita Hideo. “Envy” (Sen). *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, 1950.

As the photographs of the disabled boy and children at a sports day gathering attest, photographs of children could signify social dissolution as well as social formation. Still other

depictions of children, however, referenced Japanese fears about citizenship and belonging.<sup>160</sup> Biracial children were labeled *konketsuji* (*konketsuji* literally means “mixed-blooded child” but it is commonly translated as “hybrid” or “half-breed”), a derogatory term applied specifically to “the children born to foreign military personnel and Japanese women from the end of the Pacific War onward.”<sup>161</sup> The marginal status of such biracial children is apparent in Nonaka Kazuro’s photograph “Half-breed” (*Konketsuji*), submitted to the 1953 *ARS Shashin Nenkan*. In the photo, a girl’s furrowed brow and hands clasped in front of her chest radiate concern and apprehension of the camera leering at her from above. The photographer wrote that when he stumbled upon this brown-haired child with wavy hair, who glowered at him with brown eyes, there was a group of children playing nearby without her. When he snapped the image, Nonaka cropped the frame so that the girl with wavy brown hair stood alone on the street, further segregating her from the other children.

The photograph directly above Nonaka’s, which presents a lyrical portrayal of a small Japanese boy, amplifies the distinctiveness of the little girl. Dressed in a striped *yukata*, the boy holds a Japanese-style parasol aloft as he totters down the street. In the caption, the photographer writes that the child’s face, which gazed intently at the umbrella, attracted him and that he took photographs freely as the youth played. The paper parasol and *yukata* identify the boy as Japanese, and also distinguish him from the biracial girl in Nonaka’s photo. The girl’s otherness is further amplified when compared to other photographs of Japanese children throughout the *ARS Shashin Nenkan* annuals and other photo magazines: boys playing together on baseball

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<sup>160</sup> The estimated number of illegitimate children born of relationships between GIs and Japanese women vary considerably. In 1949 the head of the Children’s Bureau of Welfare estimated the number of biracial children to be around 150,000. But Miki Sawada, founder of the Elizabeth Saunders Home, claimed that there were upwards of 200,000. Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> Quoted in Jaehwan Hyun, “In the Name of Human Adaptation: Japanese American ‘Hybrid Children’ and Racial Anthropology in Postwar Japan,” *Perspectives on Science* 30, no. 1 (2022): 174.

teams or swimming in groups, for example, and girls dressed in identical school uniforms. Across countless pages, Japanese children laugh and play in groups or are looked after by their mothers. By contrast, biracial children were typically pictured in institutional settings, being cared for, not by family, but by Catholic nuns or other non-familial caretakers—or, in the case of the girl in Nonaka’s photo, seemingly not cared for at all.<sup>162</sup>

The “mixed-race” children born of fraternization were stigmatized, in part, for their supposedly impure blood. The idea of purity—and its opposite, pollution—has been a longstanding element of Japanese cultural identity, one that confers outsider status on the “Other.”<sup>163</sup> In the postwar era, Japanese citizens feared that the children of “mixed blood” would contaminate the “purity” of Japanese society.<sup>164</sup> Additionally, their abandonment at orphanages became a considerable social concern in the 1950s, leading the Japanese government to conduct a nationwide survey to determine the number of abandoned “hybrid” children, identify social problems created by their existence, and outline resolutions. One proposed solution was segregated education, since the children did not have “pure” Japanese blood and were thus foreigners in Japan.<sup>165</sup> Photographer Yoshida Jun conveyed the fears surrounding the children’s

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<sup>162</sup> Furthermore, there was virtually no coverage of the abandoned children getting adopted by Japanese families. Indeed, the only instance of adoption recorded in photo magazines was when entertainer and civil rights activist Josephine Baker (1906-1975) visited the Elizabeth Saunders Home in 1954. The photos include Miki Jun, “Sodachi yuku ko-ra,” *Kamera*, July 1954 and Ōtake Shoji, “Josefin bēkā,” Josephine Baker Adopts Orphan, *Asahi Kamera*, August 1954. Baker adopted a number of children of different ethnicities as part of her work for the American Civil Rights Movement, calling her children “The Rainbow Tribe.”

<sup>163</sup> John Dower, “The Pure Self,” in *Race, Ethnicity, and Migration in Modern Japan*, ed. Michael Weiner (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 41.

<sup>164</sup> Some groups even performed studies under the guise of science to prove that biracial children were inferior to “pure blooded” Japanese. Sabin, “They came, they saw, they democratized.”

<sup>165</sup> In the early 1950s, a Japanese father to have Japanese citizenship. Thus, children born of relationships between Japanese women and Allied Occupation personnel were not legally Japanese citizens. Having a non-Japanese father, together with their foreign appearance, condemned these children to the margins of society. Harumi Befu, “Concepts of Japan, Japanese Culture and the Japanese,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Japanese Culture*, ed. Yoshio Sugimoto (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 33.

blood purity and their place in Japanese society in a statement attached to his photo of four orphaned children. “The mixed-race children born of defeat,” the photographer stated, “are reaching the age of entering elementary school.” As parents confronted the possibility that “black-skinned races” might soon be sitting at desks with their children, Yoshida continued, they increasingly looked at biracial children as a social problem because they could not “boast of the purity of the Yamato race.”<sup>166</sup>

On the opposite page, the editors presented yet another story of “otherness.” Here, a photograph projects an aura of motherly love glaringly absent from Yoshida Jun’s picture of orphaned biracial children.<sup>167</sup> Yoshida Yoshio captured a mother cradling her young son in her lap, her chin resting gently atop the boy’s head and the boy leaning into his mother’s chest while staring at the camera from eyes peering over chubby cheeks. The title and accompanying text identify the pair as Ainu. In his critique of the photo, Ina Nobuo celebrated the motif as a story of sorrow rooted in the decline of Ainu ethnicity. Ina’s statement echoed a common discourse on Japanese national and cultural identity that excluded Ainu from narratives claiming Japan’s ethnic homogeneity. When acknowledged at all, Ainu were perceived as inferior and subordinate.<sup>168</sup>

Yoshida Yoshio was one of very few photographers in the immediate postwar period to publish photos of Ainu. In one series of images, several elements converge to confer marginal

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<sup>166</sup> “Orphans” (Unmei no otoshi-ji), *Kamera*, December 1952. The photographer seemed to question the logic behind these sentiments, asking, “what, after all, is the sin of an innocent child?”

<sup>167</sup> Yoshio Yoshida, “Ainu Mother and Child” (Ainu no boshi), *Kamera*, December 1952, 16.

<sup>168</sup> Richard Siddle, “Ainu: Japan’s Indigenous People,” in *Japan’s Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity*, ed. Michael Weiner (London: Routledge, 1997), 17. Ainu came into increasing conflict with the Japanese government after it colonized Ainu homelands in Hokkaido following the Meiji Restoration in 1868. After decades of discrimination and forced assimilation, the Ainu advocated for full social equality at the start of the Occupation in 1945, but found little support for their rights under Occupation policies. See Takemae, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, 439-440.

status upon an elderly Ainu woman.<sup>169</sup> A dark robe covers her frail frame. The garment is embroidered with thorn patterns and geometric designs, motifs stitched on the back and along the sleeves of Ainu garments to prevent evil spirits from entering the body through the openings of the neck or sleeves. The woman has distinctive lip tattoos—believed to repel evil spirits—indicating that she has reached maturity. Despite the cultural importance of these tattoos to the Ainu, they were outlawed repeatedly by the Japanese government. In addition to the robe and tattoos that identify the woman as the “Other,” Yoshida photographed her in a setting that evoked primitiveness. Sitting on the ground against a background of stacked firewood, she twists a bundle of yarn that has been placed on a makeshift loom of two tree branches propped up in a battered tin canister.

Yoshida’s description of the photographs further conveys his negative impressions of the Ainu people. Referring to Ainu villages as “*buraku*” (a derogatory term for village), Yoshida claimed that “pure” Ainu were nearly extinct due to their mixing with Japanese (*wajin*) over the previous century. The woman in his photo was lonely, Yoshida further claimed, “as if she was saddened by the perishing of her people.” Whether or not the Ainu were in actuality nearing a state of extinction, their rare appearance from photo magazines reinforced the common view that they had no place in Japan’s supposedly ethnically homogeneous society. Moreover, Yoshida’s three photos of the Ainu woman appeared alongside Tōmatsu Shōmei’s photograph of a young boy with curly hair: one of the many “international children” (i.e., not Japanese) with “mixed blood,” the caption states, seen on the street corners in Tōmatsu’s hometown in Aichi prefecture. The proximity of images of Ainu and biracial children on these pages, needless to say, amplifies the marginalized status of both subjects.

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<sup>169</sup> Yoshida Yoshio, photographs included in the special feature “One Day One Hour, My Town, My Village” (Aru hi aru toki waga machi waga mura), *Kamera*, November 1952, 40.

In photography magazines, the absence of minority groups suggests that most photographers visualized a mono-ethnic Japanese society. Throughout the Occupation, in fact, ethnic minorities in Japan were slowly stripped of their citizenship rights.<sup>170</sup> When the San Francisco Peace Treaty took effect on April 28, 1952, the Justice Ministry divested Koreans and Chinese of their Japanese nationality, solidifying their outsider status.<sup>171</sup> One of the only photos of resident Koreans published in photo magazines is entitled “Seizing the Properties of the Red Korean League (Kyū Chō ren zaisan setsu no shin). In it, police forcibly remove a group of Koreans from a wooden building, likely a schoolhouse.<sup>172</sup> All the Koreans under attack are children, and their numbers are smaller than the group of stern men hoisting them through an open window. The image is charged with the threat of violence, a feeling reinforced by the uniformed policemen wearing helmets and wielding batons.

The exclusion of ethnic minorities from photography magazines reinforced the notion that Japan was a monoethnic society. At the same time, notions of national cohesion were constructed through images that depicted cultural practices familiar to all Japanese. This chapter has already discussed several traditions or icons of “authentic” Japan that photographers invoked, including scenes of the rural snow country, farming villages, sumo wrestlers, kimono, and other distinctive elements of Japanese material culture. Other icons of invented tradition

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<sup>170</sup> Koreans, Formosans, and Chinese were excluded from voting in general elections. In 1949, Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru’s aide proposed to SCAP’s Diplomatic Section that all 650,000 Koreans be deported at the government’s expense. SCAP declined the proposal, but agreed that Koreans should not remain in Japan. Takemae Eiji, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, 265.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 511.

<sup>172</sup> As Takemae points out, the Occupation’s anti-communist polices were largely aimed at resident Koreans, specifically those enrolled in Korean schools. SCAP opposed autonomous Korean schools that proliferated in the immediate postwar period. Eventually, in 1947, the Occupation ordered the Japanese government to forcibly close Korean schools. In one incident on April 26, General Robert Eichelberger issued an order to shoot-to-kill in response to a group of protestors in Kobe. One 16-year-old boy died immediately, and a 14-year-old girl later died from head wounds. For more, see Takemae, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, 462-464.



captured on film include Shinto wedding ceremonies<sup>173</sup> and *budō* (martial arts, including judo and karate). One particularly iconic subject, photographed with increasing frequency in the early postwar, was the *matsuri* (festival).

In Japan, *matsuri* are considered traditional events with unchanging customs that connect the present to the past.<sup>174</sup> In his comments on a photo of the New Years' Fire Festival at Dazaifu Shrine in Fukuoka, taken in 1950, Yanagita Kunio noted that the festival dated back 900 years. The photo itself certainly evoked Japan's premodern past: men wearing padded cotton coats hold aloft torches that stand out in the darkened setting.<sup>175</sup> Underscoring the ancient tradition of *matsuri*, Tanuma Takeyoshi's introduction to his photo story on Asakusa's Sanja Matsuri explains that the festival is famous for occurring since "ancient times" (*mukashi kara*).<sup>176</sup> Amateur photographers snapped images of the Sanja Matsuri as well, among them such as Yamamoto Zennosuke who received praise in one *getsurei* for capturing the atmosphere of the Tokyo festival, conveyed through his image of shirtless men sporting fearsome *irezumi* (tattoos) shouldering a *mikoshi* (portable shrine), with the Senso-ji temple in the background.<sup>177</sup>

Photos of *matsuri* evoked unchanging tradition by highlighting customs and material culture specific to *matsuri*. Additionally, because *mikoshi* and other items were common to most *matsuri*, the festivals would have been a familiar spectacle to any viewer. Yoshida Hajime's photo zoomed in on men wearing *happi* coats and carrying a *mikoshi*, the portable shrine that is

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<sup>173</sup> As Kiyoshi Shida demonstrates, Shinzen weddings are actually a product of the modern era, and have their roots in serving as a counterpart to Christian wedding ceremonies. See "The Shintoist wedding ceremony in Japan: an invented tradition," *Media, Culture, and Society* 21 (1999): 195-204.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Yanagita Kunio, "Nihon no Matsuri," *Kamera*, November 1950.

<sup>176</sup> "Edomae Sumemr Festival" (Edomae natsu matsuri), *Asahi Kamera*, September 1955.

<sup>177</sup> "Sanja Festival" (Sanja matsuri), *Asahi Kamera*, October 1955.

the central focus of nearly all *matsuri*.<sup>178</sup> In one of his photos, amateur Komaki Kiichirō from Tokyo captured a *yukata*-clad *ondotori otoko* (chorus leader) holding a *sensu* (folding fan).<sup>179</sup> The description of the photo states that the *ondotori otoko*'s presence projects a festival-like atmosphere, a sentiment further amplified by the other men in the background dressed in *happi* coats and *sugegasa*. To offer yet a third example, Kurae Kōkichi's photograph of two young girls at a *matsuri* shows them wearing makeup in the guise of *obake* (demons) for the yearly *setsubun* festival, a celebration of the beginning of spring that was first adopted in the eighth century.<sup>180</sup>

*Matsuri* constituted a shared cultural experience that often produced feelings of nostalgia among Japanese. For Saeki Kizaburō, *matsuri* evoked something akin to homesickness.<sup>181</sup> Tamura Sakae likewise wrote that the tradition of festival days made for nostalgic memories. In his critique of a photo of a festival stall, he fondly recalled childhood festival days when he would receive pocket money from his parents and search the stalls to buy whatever struck his childish fancy.<sup>182</sup> Not surprisingly, many *matsuri* photos included children. Since the children participated in *matsuri*, and many others watched the festivities with their parents, the memories passed naturally from one generation to the next. In this way, photographs of *matsuri* connoted shared family and community history.

When he sifted through the submissions to *Asahi Kamera*'s October 1949 *getsurei*, one judge was astounded by the many photos of *matsuri*. Wondering why there were so many, the

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<sup>178</sup> "An Expression that Deceives" (Katsugu kao), *Kōga Gekkan*, January 1954.

<sup>179</sup> "Chorus Leader" (Ondotori otoko), *Foto Āto*, December 1954.

<sup>180</sup> "Child in the Appearance of a Ghost" (Obake sugata no ko), *Kamera*, August/September 1954.

<sup>181</sup> "Shadow of Light and Water: Recording the Summer" (Hikari mizukage: Natsu o kiroku suru), *Kamera*, August 1953.

<sup>182</sup> "*Foto Āto* kontesuto getsurei shashin A-bu jun nyūsen sakuhin," *Foto Āto*, July 1952, 83.

judge surmised that it must be because festivals were easy to photograph. Indeed, images of *matsuri* proliferated in photography magazines, not only because of their cultural importance, but also because of their accessibility to amateur photographers as photographed subjects. In an article on summer matsuri published in *Foto Āto*, Uchida Isao proclaimed that neither expensive cameras nor great skill was required to photograph a *matsuri*—virtually anyone could do it.<sup>183</sup> In his aforementioned article, Saeki Kizaburō hailed the *matsuri* as a subject readily available to amateur photographers no matter where they were in Japan.

Because they constituted a custom familiar to all Japanese, *matsuri* created a shared sense of belonging. At the same time, *matsuri* also comprised an “intensely local focus of identity.”<sup>184</sup> Saeki Kizaburō wrote in one instructional article that each region in Japan had *matsuri* with unique customs and events, such as the Water Matsuri at Tokyo’s Fukugawa Hachiman shrine,<sup>185</sup> and one other commentator celebrated *matsuri* as an expression of “local color” (*rōkaru karā no hyōgen*).<sup>186</sup> In the November 1952 issue of *Kamera*, the editors identified *matsuri* and other seasonal celebrations as subjects that expressed local customs (*rōkaru-tekina fūzoku*).<sup>187</sup>

As more and more amateurs submitted photos of daily life like *matsuri* to the annuals and magazines, their images created a shared network of images that brought people from regions across Japan together in a single space.<sup>188</sup> In this way, magazines facilitated the

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<sup>183</sup> “Natsu matsuri, *Foto Āto*, August 1951, 58-59.

<sup>184</sup> Dore, *City Life in Japan*, 252.

<sup>185</sup> “Hikari, Mizu kage: Natsu wo kiroku suru.” *Kamera*, August 1953, 68.

<sup>186</sup> Wada Ikumitsu, “Shirakawa Women’s Hana Matsuri” (Shirakawa Onnna no Hana Matsuri), *Kamera*, July 1953, 18.

<sup>187</sup> “November’s Camera Memo,” *Kamera*, November 1952, table of contents page.

<sup>188</sup> Benedict Anderson has argued that print culture created unified fields of exchange and communication, and by extension communities of readers connected through print. See *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition (London: Verso, 1991).

expression of regional and national identities, allowing both to exist simultaneously. Domon highlighted the ability of magazines to bridge cultural differences by bringing together amateurs from disparate locations. In a conversation with Kimura Ihei, Domon described magazines as a “photographic society” because they provided a “place” (*ba*) for amateurs to come together in a shared activity.<sup>189</sup> In his essay on re-imaging Japan as a peaceful, cultural nation, which we discussed earlier in this chapter, Yoshida Jun avowed that amateurs, specifically, were crucial to the endeavor to re-image a cultural Japan because they were “scattered all over the country” and thus could offer a wide-ranging view of Japanese people and landscapes.

A map of Japan printed in a special edition issue of *Kamera* demonstrates how photography facilitated cultural fluidity between regional and national identity (fig. 4.20). Upon looking at the map, the first thing one notices is the geography that constitutes the political boundaries of Japan: namely, the four main islands of the Japanese archipelago. This map differed significantly from that of a decade earlier, when the Japanese empire extended across the Pacific Ocean and into Southeast and Northeast Asia. Each of the four islands on the map is filled with illustrations of photogenic subjects specific to each region. In Hokkaido, we see a cartoon of a photographer aiming his camera at a bearded Ainu man dressed in distinctive robes and standing next to a bear or wolf. On Shikoku, cameramen snap away at temples, mountains, rivers, and lighthouses. On Kyūshū, the mapmakers emphasized sandy beaches, churches, and a towering castle. And on Honshū, the biggest island, we see palanquin bearers in Hakone, skiing in the Alps, a woman in elaborate kimono in Kyoto, and a row of small buildings in Minakami, Gunma prefecture. Each distinct area on the map is linked by a road connecting the disparate locations into a national whole.

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<sup>189</sup> Kimura Ihei and Domon Ken, “Kamihanki no shinsa o oete,” *Kamera*, July 1953, 161.



Figure 4.20. *Kamera* special edition *Amachua satsuei nyūmon*, 1953.

One series illustrative of how magazines projected a “mental map”<sup>190</sup> of the Japanese nation ran in *Kamera* in 1955 under the title “The East is the East, the West is the West: A Nationwide Tour of Train Stations” (Higashi ha higashi, nishi ha nishi: zenkoku eki meguri). Each of the twenty-four installments featured a different train station: Sapporo, Hakodate, and Ashikawa on Hokkaido; Shimonoseki, Hirosaki, and Sendai on Honshū; Nagasaki and Kumamoto on Kyūshū; and Uwajima and Marugame on Shikoku. Photographers snapped away in port towns (Kure), in inland towns (Utsunomiya, Morioka), in the snow country (Niigata, Nagano), in resort towns (Hakone), at stations surrounded by dunes (Tottori), and in towns known as bastions of traditional Japanese culture (Kyoto).

<sup>190</sup> In his examination of Iwanami photobooks, Hayashi Michio concludes that the photos contributed to a “mental map of Japan as a modern nation.” The 286 books published between 1950 and 1958 included topics such as cotton, insects, Americans, and photography, prefectures. Importantly, Hayashi argues that the books fostered a sense of harmony and national cohesion by avoiding “socio-political problems or conflicts.” Hayashi Michio, “The Imagined Map of the Nation: Postwar Japan from 1945 to 1970,” *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 26 (2014): 285-303.

Despite the wide range of locations, however, the photographs do not highlight the regional distinctiveness of each locale. Instead, the series projects an image of homogeneity. Schoolboys race across the frame in their uniforms. Women stop to chat, laden with the day's shopping. Train conductors sweep the station grounds with bamboo brooms. Shops sell sweets and other knickknacks. People gather on crowded platforms. And families walk together through stations, their appearance encapsulating Japanese domestic ideals: fathers in business suits, mothers in kimono, and children in school uniform. By bringing these different places and their people together in their pages, photography magazines created a shared visual field that allowed readers to see the wider world within Japan, but that also reinforced the idea that, beyond the differences in scenery, Japanese shared a culture and way of life familiar to all, no matter the region.<sup>191</sup>

### Expressing Cultural Fluidity in Photography Magazines

In their first postwar issue, published in early 1946, *Kamera* released a statement proclaiming that the magazine would project the “most brilliant of Japanese culture.” Other photography magazines echoed this sentiment, and photographers called on Japan's photo world to use their cameras to re-image Japan as a “new cultural nation.”

Photography magazines published images taken by photographers from across Japan that depicted a diverse range of subjects and motifs. Photographers constructed images of traditional Japan in scenes of the rural snow country and *matsuri* celebrations. They celebrated urban modernity in dynamic cityscapes and fashionable women in downtown shopping centers. But they also found traces of the “old Japan” in cities that complicated notions of urban modernity, as did their images of poverty and urban ruin. Photographers expressed a number of gender

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<sup>191</sup> Ariella Azoulay, trans. Rela Mazail and Ruvik Daniell, *The Civil Contract of Photography* (New York: Zone Books, 2008), 113.

identities in their images: mothers and housewives, working women, male cultural icons and athletes, and the down-and-out begging on the street. And their images portrayed both regional and national identities.

By publishing photos of people and places from disparate locations, magazines provided space for the expression of a cultural fluidity that encompassed a multifaceted Japanese identity. At the same time, photographers reconstructed Japanese identity against the “Other.” Their photos made claims to what Japanese culture was not by inscribing marginalized status on repatriated soldiers, war and biracial orphans, sex workers, and other subjects symbolic of war defeat and Occupation.

The postwar re-imaging of Japanese cultural identity was also mediated against another group that took up residence in Japan in late 1945: the occupying American “Other.” Although censorship constrained the types of images that they could publish, Japanese photographers still captured many different facets of the Occupation on film: jeeps, GIs in uniform, military parades, and cultural influences evident in Hollywood film posters, Christmas displays, fashion, and other American cultural material. The varied subjects that photographers recorded, as we shall illustrate in the next chapter, shed light on the complex engagement between Japan and the U.S. during the Occupation and in the immediate post-Occupation years.

## CHAPTER V

### GAZE OF THE OCCUPIED: JAPANESE PHOTOGRAPHERS LOOK AT THE OCCUPATION

The previous chapter explored how Japanese photographers and photography magazines employed photographs of Japanese people in moments of daily life to represent Japan as a “new cultural nation.” The photographs that they submitted to magazines expressed a cultural fluidity that portrayed multifaceted identities. Because constructing identity relies on marking the differences between “us” and the “Other,” this chapter focuses on photographs of the Occupation taken by the Occupied. Here, we ask: first, what aspects of the Occupation did photographers capture and publish in their photographs? Second, how did their representation of the Occupation change over time, and why? And third, taken together, how did these photographs portray the Occupation?

Historian John Dower has described the Occupation as a “neo-colonial revolution” in which General Douglas MacArthur wielded hegemony over Japan through the military and Occupation personnel—and in which the latter lived as “a privileged caste, class, and race” in segregated spaces.<sup>1</sup> Takemae Eiji similarly describes Occupied Japan as a “colonial enclave,” pointing to the appearance of American flags hoisted over buildings, the requisition of buildings for American use, and the relabeling of streets, buildings, and other areas with American names.<sup>2</sup> The Occupier’s authority pervaded almost every aspect of Japanese society, from the Occupation government that “ruled by fiat,” to the personnel who lived in the “colonial enclave[s],” and on to the “old racial paternalism” that infiltrated daily interactions between Japanese citizens and

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<sup>1</sup> Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 206.

<sup>2</sup> See Takemae, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, 73.



Occupation personnel.<sup>3</sup> As the chief of censorship for the CI&E, Colonel Donald Hoover, told a Japanese journalist at the outset of the Occupation: “General MacArthur desires it to be understood that the Allied powers do not regard Japan as an equal in any way.”<sup>4</sup>

Beyond the fact of Japan’s military occupation by the United States—and also because of it—America was a looming presence in Japan’s first postwar decade. Sociologist Yoshimi Shunya argues that postwar Japanese identity formation was “mediated by a sense of desire and prohibition related to the representation and appropriation of the [American] ‘other.’” This process began during the Occupation when Japan had to negotiate with American authority as it recovered from the war and began to determine its future. As Yoshimi puts it:

“America” presented itself as an overwhelming source of authority, against which it was very difficult to mount any challenge. “America” was more than just an image of new lifestyles and culture. It was an ever-present force intervening in people’s daily lives, whose word could not be challenged. It was a directly present “other” with which people had to deal on an everyday basis.

According to Yoshimi, the American Occupation affected Japanese daily life on two levels. On the one hand, the policies that the Occupation implemented—particularly the system of censorship—established its authority in Japan and thus made “America” appear as a “‘prohibiting’ presence.” On the other hand, the many GIs and other personnel visible in Japanese society became a “‘seducing’ presence” in terms of cultural influences, such as material goods and media images.<sup>5</sup>

Building on Yoshimi’s analysis, this chapter argues that photographers portrayed multiple “Americas” in their images. Photography magazines and news pictorials portrayed

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<sup>3</sup> Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 209-211.

<sup>4</sup> Koshiro, “The U.S. Occupation of Japan as a Mutual Racial Experience,” 312.

<sup>5</sup> Yoshimi, “What Does ‘America’ Mean in Postwar Japan?,” *Nanzan Review of American Studies* 30 (2008): 83-84. By the late 1950s, Yoshimi concludes, two Americas began to appear in Japan: one “embodied in violence” and therefore the object of anti-base protest, and one connected to material goods and media images and thus an object of lifestyle consumption.

America as a “prohibiting” presence by visualizing American authority through images of GIs and American tanks rolling down Japanese streets during military parades, as well as through symbols of the Occupation such as English-language road signs and buildings appropriated and renamed by the Occupiers. Meanwhile, America appeared as a “seducing” presence in fashion, Hollywood films, and other material culture that projected a bright image amidst the miserable material conditions that pervaded Japan’s *kyodatsu* society. Challenged with severe shortages of even the most basic necessities, many Japanese looked with longing to the American affluence on display.

In addition to visualizing America as both a “prohibiting/authoritative” and “seducing” presence, photographers also portrayed it as a “liberating” presence from Japan’s wartime government. One of the first postwar photobook publications, *Tokyo Fall of 1945 (Tōkyō ichikyūyōgo-toshi aki)*, was a collection of images that captured the atmosphere of Tokyo immediately after Japan’s surrender. Written in English and Japanese and sold as a souvenir item in post exchange (PX) stores to GIs, the photobook portrayed America as a liberator from the wartime militarists. Some photographers, however, trained a more critical lens on the Occupiers. Amateur photographer Okumura Taiko, for one, regularly engaged with the Americans in the streets of Yokohama, producing photos that cast the Occupying forces in a negative light. In his images, GIs fraternizing with Japanese women ignore repatriated soldiers begging on the street, and seemingly affluent base housing contrasts with ruined Japanese neighborhoods. However, his critical portrayal of Allied forces was constrained by SCAP-imposed censorship of the media, meaning that most of his work was left unpublished until after the Occupation.

Not until the Occupation officially ended in 1952 could the media freely publish images of the U.S. military’s continued presence in Japan—labeled by some as the “post-occupation

Occupation.”<sup>6</sup> Once they were no longer under the thumb of the Occupation, photographers problematized the American presence in Japan with images of crimes committed by GIs, fraternization with Japanese women, and the orphaned biracial children born of relationships between Japanese women and American GIs.

### America the Liberator in Tokyo Fall of 1945

In the fall of 1945, Tokyo was a city ravaged by war. Between December 1944 and August 1945, 65 air raids had assaulted Tokyo with incendiary bombs. The worst destruction came on the night of March 9, when 334 American aircraft targeted an area estimated to be nearly 85 percent residential.<sup>7</sup> Matsue Yoshiharu, a fire warden at the time of the raids, remembers the “horrifying roar of the low-flying B-29s” that “dropped cluster after cluster of canisters, each containing dozens of projectiles that burst in midair and bathed everything in flames.” So intense was the heat from the infernos that window glass melted, and those who sought refuge in air-raid shelters suffocated.<sup>8</sup> Others drowned in the Sumida River or were trampled in desperate efforts to flee the flames. Water was useless against the raging fires, and firefighters resorted to using clothes and quilts to squelch the flames. But nothing worked, and the city burned.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Hoaglund, “Protest Art in 1950s Japan.”

<sup>7</sup> Mark Selden, “A Forgotten Holocaust: US Bombing Strategy, the Destruction of Japanese Cities & the American Way of War from World War II to Iraq,” *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 5, no. 5 (2007), <https://apjpf.org/-Mark-Selden/2414/article.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Matsue Yoshiharu, “March 10, 1945,” in *Cries for Peace: Experiences of Japanese Victims of World War II* (Tokyo: The Japan Times, 1978), 100. <https://www.scribd.com/document/40248814/Cries-for-Peace>.

<sup>9</sup> Yoshida Tomio, “Twice,” in *Cries for Peace: Experiences of Japanese Victims of World War II* (Tokyo: The Japan Times, 1978), 101.

It is estimated that between 80,000 and 100,000 civilians died in this one raid alone,<sup>10</sup> and over one million were left homeless.<sup>11</sup> Bonner Fellers, MacArthur's psychological warfare chief, later wrote that the fire bombings were "one of the most ruthless and barbaric killings of non-combatants in all history."<sup>12</sup> Tokyo, of course, was not the only city targeted by U.S. bombers. By the end of the war, 66 Japanese cities had been subjected to airstrikes that obliterated at least 40 percent of Japan's urban areas and left homeless at least 30 percent of the inhabitants of each city.<sup>13</sup> Historian Jackson Bailey (1925-1996), who served in the Occupation as a cook at a billet for enlisted men, described his first impressions of Tokyo viewed from a bus in late 1945:

You couldn't tell when you were in the city and when you weren't and of course the whole Tokyo-Yokohama area was still just flat from the March and May bombings . . . There would be a central chimney here and there sticking up but mostly just flat. . . . You'd see people out puttering around and you'd see a neat pile of bricks there and something else here. And it was clear that there was human activity going on, but it was an overwhelming sense of how that area had just been flattened and there was nothing.<sup>14</sup>

Much of Tokyo remained in ruins when Eleanor Jordon arrived there in 1949. Despite the reconstruction underway, there were still "whole sections of [the city] where nothing would be standing" except for a single storehouse. The Japanese, she further recalled, were desperate for even the most basic of supplies. Women in particular "would do anything for a bar of soap or something from the PX."<sup>15</sup> Ukita Tomiko, a pregnant mother of four when the bombs fell on

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<sup>10</sup> Dower, *War without Mercy*, 40-41.

<sup>11</sup> Selden, "A Forgotten Holocaust."

<sup>12</sup> Takemae, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, 26.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> University of Maryland, College Park Oral History Project on the Allied Occupation of Japan. Interviewed by Marlene Mayo, Washington D.C., March 22, 1980.

<sup>15</sup> University of Maryland, College Park Oral History Project on the Allied Occupation of Japan. Interviewed by Marlene Mayo, College Park, Maryland, April 24, 1981.

Osaka, was one such woman. Unable to find any soap in the city, Ukita and her family had to forego bathing, and their clothing was “infested with lice” as a result.<sup>16</sup>

It was this destruction, and the people struggling to rebuild their lives among the ruins, that Kimura Ihei and Kikuchi Shunkichi<sup>17</sup> documented with their cameras. Kimura and Kikuchi were established photographers with illustrious careers. As we have already discussed, Kimura had achieved notoriety in the prewar period with his photographs of the *shitamachi* (working-class) districts of Tokyo; then, during the war, he contributed propaganda photos to publications such as *Nippon* and *Front*. Kikuchi, who graduated from the Oriental School of Photography in 1938, likewise worked for *Front* starting in 1941. In the postwar, both men turned to photographing the streets of Tokyo. Together with a small group of other photographers, they established the Bunka-sha publishing company in 1946. In April of that year, they released one of its first publications: *Tokyo Fall of 1945*.<sup>18</sup>

*Tokyo Fall of 1945* presents the reader with over one hundred compelling images across 64 pages that depict life in Tokyo in the fall of 1945. The brevity and crude paper quality of the photobook, as well as the subject matter of black markets and homelessness, together illustrate the desperate scarcities that afflicted Japanese society at the time. Interspersed among images of Tokyo are photographs of the Occupation that document its conspicuous presence in Japan’s capital city: GIs loitering in Ginza or playing with Japanese children, English-language signs posted along city streets, and jeeps parked in downtown Tokyo.

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<sup>16</sup> Ukita Tomoko, “Saving Them from Starvation,” in *Cries for Peace*, 88.

<sup>17</sup> Kikuchi took photographs of Hiroshima in September and October 1945 for the Japanese Ministry of Education, although his photos were not published until much later. It is said that the photographer’s death as a result of Leukemia at the age of 74 is a result of exposure to radiation while photographing the aftermath of the atomic bombing.

<sup>18</sup> While *Tokyo, Fall 1945* proved popular, the publishing company did not enjoy lasting success. By the end of the year, Bunka-sha only employed a total of five staff, a drastic cut from over 100 staff at its peak. See Torihara, *Nihon shashin shi*, 96.

Many photographs in *Tokyo Fall of 1945* document with stark realism the urban devastation that resulted from U.S. bombing raids. Rather than portray America's actions as a horrific act of war,<sup>19</sup> however, the images and text together recast the raids and subsequent Allied Occupation as an act of liberation.<sup>20</sup> According to the opening essay, written in Japanese and English, Japan's government was an "extremely malignant malady" (*kiwamete akushōna byōki*) responsible for the streets of Tokyo breaking down like a "malignant ulcer" (*akushōshuyō no hyōhon*). Japan needed a "big surgical operation" (*dai shujutsu*), and this could only come in the form of American B-29 bombers. Labeled the "Great Silvery Bird" in the English text and the "big swan" in Japanese (*ai ina hakuchō*), the American bombers conducted "surgical operations" that ultimately put the city, and Japan, on a path to recovery.

As the essays move from wartime destruction to postwar recovery, the narrative details American efforts to rehabilitate Tokyo. The essays pressed the medical metaphor, characterizing the city as a convalescent in need of "continuous injections and blood transfusions" (*aema no nai chūsha to yuketsu*). In turn, it cast the Occupation as a kind of medical intervention, arguing that the English-language road signs and jeeps that had appeared in Japan would "stitch the wounds" of war (*kizuguchi o nui tte iru*). In short, the text cast America as both liberator and rehabilitator.

The photograph printed alongside the essay parsed above displays some of the English-language road signs that the text claimed would aid Japan in its rehabilitation. The English and Japanese captions identify the location as Yotsuya-Mitsuke, an area of Tokyo just east of the Imperial Palace. In the image, seven road signs have been nailed to a barren tree on the side of a

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<sup>19</sup> John Dower describes the Tokyo War Crimes Trials as an act of "victor's justice." One reason he points to is the double standard of the Allied prosecution of war crimes when they had utilized terror bombing of Japanese cities and the atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki—acts Dower defines as crimes against humanity. See Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 472-473.

<sup>20</sup> The narrative of America as a liberator was not restricted to photographic media or to the erasure of militarized society. As Jan Bardsley highlights, 1950s discourse on women's postwar liberation and progress in Japan was based on the "narrative of American rescue." See *Women and Democracy in Cold War Japan*.

road—a signboard affixed to a literal scar of war. As the clear focal point of the image, the road signs immediately grab the viewer’s gaze and pull it up vertically to each new sign in turn: “VBC,” “HQ5th Air Force,” “Route 7 Tokyo,” 384<sup>th</sup> Air Sv GP,” “1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division,” “1344 E,” and “Rodeo.” Several elements in the image combine to suggest the authoritative place of the Occupation in Japan: the signpost’s proximity to the Imperial Palace, the strong vertical lines constructed by the signs,<sup>21</sup> and the English-language placards that indicate U.S. military locations. The use of close cropping and negative space around the signs further reinforces the authority of the Occupation. There is nowhere else to look in the frame, no other subject to draw the eye—thus riveting the reader to the signs and the English lettering upon them.

The impact of this image is magnified in the subsequent three photographs. The first, of bombed ruins, fills the next two pages. The caption identifies the area as Ningyō-chō, a neighborhood between the Sumida River and the Imperial Palace. Some buildings remain standing in the background, but their presence only accentuates the vacant lots and rubble left by the bombing raids. Turning to the next page, the reader sees two images of jeeps parked outside the Meiji Seimei building that served as the General Headquarters (GHQ) of the Occupation until it was returned to Japanese ownership in 1956. In both images, the photographer employed a close-up perspective and tight cropping to make the jeeps fill the frame, lending them an imposing aura. These four images together convey both the destructive potential of the U.S. military and its authoritative presence in Japan. At the same time, by placing the photo of Ningyō-chō between images of English-language road signs and jeeps, the editors have visualized the proclamation that these symbols of the Occupation are the “gut which was used to stitch the wound[s]” of Tokyo.

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<sup>21</sup> Because vertical lines call attention to height, they are frequently employed as a design element to suggest stability, rigidity, and authority. For more, see Terry Barrett, *Criticizing Photographs: An Introduction to Understanding Images*, third edition (Mountain View, California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 2000), 26-28.

One question that arises, of course, is why *Tokyo Fall of 1945* cast the U.S. as the liberator of Japan. Printed in Japanese with some English translations, the photobook was available to Japanese as well as American audiences, made available to the latter in PX stores as a souvenir item. The GIs who purchased the book would have undoubtedly agreed with the sentiment that America had come to rehabilitate Japan. Indeed, many Americans arrived in Japan with a sense of unbridled enthusiasm, seeing themselves as liberators of the Japanese people from evil militarists and bureaucrats bent, in American eyes at least, on world domination.<sup>22</sup>

Most Japanese, it seems, accepted the Occupation with painful bitterness—as a bitter pill that needed to be swallowed. But many, as is well established, went much further than this to cast the Occupation as an act of deliverance and American forces as liberators. Among the many hortatory letters sent to General MacArthur extolling the *virtues* of the Occupation, one from Yagi Chōsaburō said it all:

Ever since you entered Japan, the face of the country has been changing. Your leadership is truly godlike. Your vision penetrates every corner of Japanese society, and every one of your directives is superbly on target. We are all deeply grateful that your guidance is humanitarian, and that your directives are good government that Japanese politicians will never match.<sup>23</sup>

In a letter dated February 18, 1946, Shiyomi Kitarō of Okayama City begged MacArthur to make Japan a colony of the United States because Japan's leaders, in his view, did not care about Japanese citizens and the Americans were "kinder than the Japanese."<sup>24</sup> Noticeably, both Yagi and Shiyomi wrote of the goodness of the Americans in contrast to Japanese leaders—a sentiment that *Tokyo Fall of 1945* echoed.

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<sup>22</sup> Marius B. Jansen, *The Making of Modern Japan* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 688.

<sup>23</sup> Sodei Rinjirō, *Dear General MacArthur: Letters from the Japanese during the American Occupation* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006), 25.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 22. According to Sodei, Shiyomi's plea for Japan to become a colony of the US was stated with sincerity.



Consistent with its written text, which we have already discussed, *Tokyo Fall of 1945* unambiguously *visualized* America as a liberating force. The photos of jeeps and English-language signs mentioned earlier were sequenced with images of urban ruins, reinforcing the claim made in the text that these were the surgical instruments necessary to mending Japan's war wounds. Other images in the book put a friendly face to the Occupation, portraying GIs as a kindly presence in the city, playing with children, browsing curios on display at street stalls, and playing baseball games with Japanese teams. Finally, the book displayed images of labor rallies and free political expression that demonstrate the liberating effects of SCAP's democratization effects on Japanese society.

The photobook begins and ends with photos of English-language road signs that suggest America's role in rebuilding Japan. The last photo in the book captures three road signs posted in English: Route 9 Tokyo, Route 25 Tokyo, and Route 7 Tokyo. The Diet Building looms in the background, flanked by two electrical towers pointing to the top of the frame. Wires and bare tree limbs cross the sky, providing a line for the viewer's eyes to follow. The viewer looks first to the Diet Building, dark in the background, then up to the electrical towers, across the wires, and down the bare tree branches to finally settle on the English-language road signs in the foreground.

The electrical wires, tree branches, and trolley rails offer a conduit for the eye to travel between the Diet Building in the background and the signs in the foreground. By situating the Diet Building near the English road signs, and by framing the image with electrical towers and a landscape free of ruin, the photographer has linked the idea of a rebuilt Japan with the Allied Occupation. The preceding image further reinforces this sentiment. Here, a bird's-eye view of Ginza shows multi-story ferroconcrete buildings that stretch across the urban landscape, filling

both the foreground and background. But a large swath of destruction slices through the middle of the frame, visualizing once again a war wound attributable to the wartime government. By placing this photo of ruins before the photo of English-language road signs, which had been posted in front of an intact Diet Building flanked by towering electrical wires, the editors demonstrate again that the Occupation would rehabilitate Japan from a state of defeat to one of recovery.

The motif of English-language road signs is carried throughout *Tokyo Fall of 1945*. Early in the photobook, one block of text asks readers if they remember Tokyo before the war when shop signs across Tokyo displayed words in English and *rōma-ji* (Japanese written in roman letters). The author lamented that the war had resulted in the complete disappearance of English, but that the language was now reappearing. The accompanying photo provides an example of the renewed visibility of English: a map of Ginza and Tsukiji, posted on the corner of Ginza Yonchōme, labeled entirely in English. Two uniformed GIs stand in front of the map, orienting themselves to the district. According to the text, the signpost on display here, which contained only English and no Japanese, symbolized “post-surgery Tokyo” (*shujutsu-go no Tōkyō*).

Noticeably, very few images in *Tokyo Fall of 1945* place evidence of urban destruction together with symbols of the Occupation in a single frame. The images of ruin and suffering that do appear, such as bombed urban sites, the homeless seeking shelter, and sprawling black markets, are instead sequenced with pictures of American servicemen or other symbols of the Occupation. The flow of images throughout the book from devastation and suffering, to photos of the Occupation, and back to ruins demonstrates the opening essay’s proclamation that America would stitch together Tokyo’s war wounds.

America's role in rehabilitating Japan, specifically, appears in another succession of photographs in *Tokyo Fall of 1945*, which juxtaposes images of Japanese people suffering with GIs playing with boisterous children. The first two-page spread in this sequence presents four images of hardship and ruin. On the left page is a photograph of flowers and weeds sprouting through rubble and broken roofing tile. A few buildings rise in the background, but the photographer used a shallow depth of field to blur them almost to abstraction and instead renders the weeds and rubble in the bottom half of the frame in sharp focus. On the opposing page, three images depict the homeless sheltering at Asakusa's Higashi Hongan-ji Temple. In one, two elderly women wearing *monpe* and wooden *geta* sit on rocks. In another, an older, bespectacled man with a towel wrapped around his head stares at the camera with mouth agape as if caught by surprise, while in the background, adults and children sit on the steps to the temple. A woman huddles next to a windowless, beat-up car stripped of its tires in the third image. Behind her, a barren field stretches to meet a cluster of intact buildings on the horizon. Together, the four photos present the reader with the bleakness and hardship that dominated the lives of Tokyoites in the initial postwar years.

Turning the page, the reader is presented with a group of images bursting with joy and optimism. Here, children laugh and play. One photo shows a GI and a group of children in Ueno Park holding hands as they walk toward the photographer. The GI, positioned in the middle of the frame, smiles straight into the camera lens. In a photo on the opposing page, a small group of children clambers around a GI parked in a jeep in Kudanshita, a district just north of the Imperial Palace in central Tokyo. The caption states that the children are learning to speak English, which explains why two children and the GI are pointing to their noses. While the children here are learning to speak English, in similar photos, jeeps and GIs were associated with food, especially

chewing gum, chocolate, and other candy.<sup>25</sup> As literary scholar Michael Molasky writes, the image of GIs giving chocolate and chewing gum to children is so fixed in Japan's collective memory that some describe the early postwar generation as the "Give me chocolate [or chewing gum] generation."<sup>26</sup>

Like the picture of GIs with Japanese children, most images of Allied personnel in *Tokyo Fall of 1945* suggest a friendly presence in Japan. Kimura and Kikuchi captured Americans shopping for souvenirs at street stalls and browsing the displays at a Ginza florist. Americans play a friendly baseball game against a Japanese team at the Meiji-Jingu Stadium, and sit on *tatami* floors at Tokyo's Gokoku-ji Temple to enjoy tea and *wagashi* (Japanese sweets). Photos of scenes like these, published so soon after Japan's surrender, undoubtedly assuaged fears on both sides concerning the potential for hostility or outright violence following the exceptionally brutal Pacific War. The Japanese, for their part, initially prepared for belligerence from their former enemy but were surprised to encounter relatively benign Occupying forces.<sup>27</sup> Americans, meanwhile, arrived in Japan anticipating "a traumatic confrontation with fanatical emperor worshipers," but instead found a "populace sick of war" and "contemptuous of the militarists

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<sup>25</sup> Takemae, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, 74.

<sup>26</sup> Molasky, *The American Occupation of Japan and Okinawa*, 9.

<sup>27</sup> To give one example, officials in Japan feared that aggressive Americans would wantonly assault Japanese women, and so Japan's Security Bureau of the Ministry of Home Affairs ordered the establishment of "special comfort stations" specifically for Allied servicemen. Japanese officials entreated women to perform a patriotic act by enlisting in Recreation and Amusement Associations (RAA), as the comfort stations were called. These officials argued that these women could protect "the daughters of the well-born and middle classes" from American soldiers by sacrificing their bodies. See Takemae, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, 68.

who had led them to disaster.”<sup>28</sup> In the absence of widespread animosity, the former enemies came together in cordial scenes such as the above.<sup>29</sup>

A third way *Tokyo Fall of 1945* portrays America as a liberating presence is by showing the effects of liberation on Japanese society. This is seen, in one instance, in a photo of two college students enjoying *Ginbura*, or strolling along the Ginza. In this image, notably, the couple walks side-by-side. Although *Ginbura* (and *Shinbura*, or Shinsaibashi Strolling in Osaka) dated back to the early twentieth century, the activity did not go beyond these lively urban neighborhoods. In smaller towns and villages, it was frowned upon for young men and women to associate freely in public. But during the war, this changed even in Ginza and Shinsaibashi as social restrictions increased and police began to apprehend unmarried couples who consorted in public.

When the war ended, Japanese men and women began interacting differently in public after observing American Occupation servicemen.<sup>30</sup> Tsurumi Shunsuke goes so far as to claim that for most Japanese, “the most durable influence of the Occupation was on the Japanese

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<sup>28</sup> Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 23-24.

<sup>29</sup> Despite SCAP’s attempts to create policies that would restrict casual, everyday engagement between Allied personnel and Japanese citizens, friendly incidences of encounter occurred with some frequency. Emerson Chapin, who worked on a divisional newspaper for the 98<sup>th</sup> Infantry stationed in Osaka, later wrote that he befriended a Japanese family who had a villa in Oiso and often visited the villa on weekend trips. Chapin also frequented “big sukiyaki feasts” at his maid’s house, and even attended her wedding as an honored guest. See University of Maryland, College Park Oral History Project on the Allied Occupation of Japan. Interviewed by Marlene Mayo, February 9, 1979, Montclair, New Jersey. Joe O’Donnell, a Marine photographer who documented the effects of American bombing raids (see Chapter VI), recorded numerous encounters with Japanese men, women, and children. In her autobiography, photojournalist Sasamoto Tsuneko recalls the day she invited *Stars and Stripes* staff photographer Helen Bruck to her grandmother’s house to see traditional *Hinamatsuri* (Doll’s Day Celebration) displays. Sasamoto, who admired Helen Bruck as a female photographer from America, was introduced to Bruck by a colleague and interviewed the American photojournalist for a magazine. Unfortunately, their relationship was cut short. Bruck committed suicide shortly after the two became acquainted. See Sasamoto, *Raika de shotto*, 183-189. And as discussed in Chapter III, the lively interaction between Japanese and Euro-American photographers such as Carl Mydans, David Douglas Duncan, and Werner Bischof shaped the development of Japanese photographic trends.

<sup>30</sup> McLelland, *Love, Sex, and Democracy in Japan During the American Occupation*, 118.

lifestyle, especially with respect to relationships between women and men.”<sup>31</sup> Contemporary observers noticed this change as well. Lucy Crockett, who lived in Japan during the Occupation, asked a Japanese man about this change:

Crockett: “I suppose you let her walk beside you when you go out?”

Japanese man: “Yes, yes, of course. In cities Japanese men and women walk side by side [sic], just like in America. Only sometimes I forget. And, too, if we are with older people my wife walks behind. It is more customary.”<sup>32</sup>

Many photographers recorded similar scenes of *Ginbura*. Hayashi Tadahiko’s photo “Ginbura’s Revival” (*Ginbura no fukukatsu*, 1950) shows a couple linked arm-in-arm walking towards the camera with a self-assured air.<sup>33</sup> The man wears a three-piece suit, round spectacles, and a fedora, and the woman wears dark slacks and a knit cardigan, with hair permed in the latest style. Nagano Shigeichi likewise captured a young couple enjoying a stroll through lively Ginza streets. In his image, a man wearing a light-colored suit and bowtie walks astride a woman clothed in a flowy summer dress, round sunglasses, and high heels.<sup>34</sup> In both images, the couples’ trendy clothing points to American fashion influences, a subject explored in greater detail below.

*Tokyo Fall of 1945* again expressed the effects of liberation on Japanese society in a two-page spread that shows Japanese engaging in free speech. The text on these pages addresses a new sight in postwar Tokyo: people who “know the modern way” (*kindai-tekina hōhō o shitte iru*) queuing to buy cinema and theater tickets. Urging readers not to judge the mentality of Tokyo based only on those eager for entertainment, however, the text reminds them that the pulse of the city could be observed in many other settings: in rallies in public squares, in posters

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<sup>31</sup> Quoted in McLelland, *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Sontag, *On Photography*, 167–179.

<sup>33</sup> Hayashi, *Kasutori jidai*, 178.

<sup>34</sup> Nagano, “Ginbura,” *Foto Āto*, August 1955, 102.

advertising new political parties and advocating for the investigation of war criminals, and in advertisements for new magazine publications. Many photos in this spread, accordingly, show posters plastered across public places in Tokyo that demonstrate a renewed freedom of expression.

Another image from this two-page spread shows a man addressing a crowd gathered in Hibiya Park. The banners behind the man are blurred to the point of illegibility; however, the caption reveals that this gathering is a rally in support of a labor dispute at the *Yomiuri Shimbun*. Although not identified explicitly, the dispute in question is almost certainly the one sparked in October 1945 when a group of left-wing journalists at the newspaper advocated for the removal of Shōriki Matsutarō due to his support of wartime policies. Shōriki, who owned the paper, immediately fired the group's leading members; and, in response, the journalists instigated a strike on October 27, 1945.<sup>35</sup> The conflict lasted until December when Shōriki was arrested as a Class-A war criminal and sent to Sugamo Prison, where he remained until his release 21 months later.<sup>36</sup> The editors have added symbolic weight to this image by enlarging it to nearly twice the size of the other images on the page. Its dominance in comparison to the other images immediately arrests the viewer's eye. But the other images of political posters, advertisements, and messages of condemnation for war criminals are not without significance. Together, the images depict a population eager to act on democratic ideals and quick to condemn the wartime militarists.

Although *Tokyo Fall of 1945* primarily casts America as a liberating presence, some photographs were clearly intended to convey American authority in Japan. A two-page spread

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<sup>35</sup> Theodore Cohen, *Remaking Japan: The American Occupation as New Deal* (New York: The Free Press, 1987), 240-259.

<sup>36</sup> "Japan's Citizen Kane," *The Economist* (London) 405, no. 8816 (2012): 60.

towards the beginning of the photobook offers us a good example. At the top of the right-hand page, one photograph depicts a group of Occupation personnel facing the Imperial Palace. Their erect bodies and feet planted firmly on the ground give them an imposing, authoritative appearance. Opposite this photo is one that depicts three English-language road signs posted alongside the Imperial Palace moat. A third image beneath this one captures another scene of GIs in Tokyo: two men in uniform walking alongside jeeps parked in the Marunouchi area. Finally, a fourth photo captures three people bowing in front of Yasukuni Shrine, a famous (or infamous) site commemorating the war dead.

While each of the individual images in the spread is loaded with meaning, their significance is amplified when they are viewed together. The image of the English-language road signs posted near the Imperial Palace becomes even more a symbol of American authority when placed next to a picture of uniformed personnel walking alongside jeeps parked in Marunouchi and an image of the Occupiers gazing at the Imperial Palace. All three show America's presence in the heart of downtown Tokyo, near the center of government and the residence of the Emperor himself.

Only one of the photos in the aforementioned spread features something other than the Occupiers: the scene at Yasukuni Shrine. Were this image isolated from the others, it might merely convey a moment in which three individuals pay their respects to the dead. However, this photo has been placed beneath that of the group of American soldiers gazing at the Imperial Palace. In the photo taken at Yasukuni, the Japanese bow towards the shrine with their backsides to the camera. Thus, as the eye travels up the page, the Japanese effectively bow to the American military men in the image above. The positioning of the photographed subjects in these two images further reinforces the notion of Japan's defeat.



While *Tokyo Fall of 1945* crafted a narrative of America's "liberating" presence, in other words, it also reminded readers that the liberators wielded supreme authority. As we shall see in the next section, photo magazines and news pictorials echoed this reality in their photographic representations of the Occupying American forces.

### America's "Authoritative" Presence

Photography magazines and news pictorials printed very few direct representations of the Occupation before 1950 (i.e., images of uniformed GIs or American war matériel). As we have discussed, censorship regulations remained in effect from 1945 until the end of 1949, and SCAP censored unfavorable depictions of Occupation forces as well as anything that posed a security risk to Occupation authority and power. Because censorship rules were ambiguous, and because the penalties for violating censorship could be financially severe, editors refrained from publishing depictions of the Occupation that threatened to draw condemnation. It is important to note, however, that SCAP did not prohibit media from publishing photographs of the Occupation per se, but rather strove to regulate how the Occupation *could be portrayed*.<sup>37</sup> In other words, censorship restricted the media from printing anything that would tarnish the Occupation's authority.

Photographers evoked America's authoritative presence under the Occupation in several ways. First, photographs alluded to American authority by portraying spaces occupied by Allied forces as well as spaces that otherwise indicated the Allies' presence: English-language street signs, "Off Limits" lettering stenciled on buildings, base housing sites, and dependents in city

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<sup>37</sup> To give one example when censorship came down on news pictorials: censors deleted three images from the December 1, 1946 issue of *Sekai Gahō*: one was a close-up of Jewish people crammed behind barbed wire fencing, arrested after British police found an arms cache during an inspection in Palestine; the second portrayed Black Americans protesting in Washington D.C. with anti-lynching placards following the lynching of four men in Georgia; and the third showed a cocktail waitress standing over the body of a man shot dead by a revolver—the caption explaining that the man was killed in a fit of jealousy over another waitress. A line of text at the bottom of the censorship report, beneath translated captions for each of the three images, explained why the photos and text were deleted: they conveyed criticism of the U.S. and Britain.

streets. Second, news pictorials provided coverage of the Tokyo Trials, a series of military trials between 1946 and 1948. Even though an international tribunal conducted the trials, photographs portray American MPs watching over the Japanese defendants, scenes that make clear their hegemonic position over the defeated nation. Lastly, news pictorials published images of GIs strolling about in uniform and or marching in military parades that displayed American military might.

One of the few images of GIs printed in photography magazines before 1950 is Akaho Eiichi's photograph of two American MPs in front of the Seiko Building in Ginza (fig. 5.1).<sup>38</sup> The MP on the right has his back to the camera, while the one on the left looks down at his watch—neither seems aware of the camera pointing in their direction. Akaho took the photo from a low angle, a technique that emphasizes the tall stature of the two men. The Tokyo PX sign is visible on the right side of the frame, affixed to the side of the Seiko Building. By accentuating the robust stature of the two men and including the Tokyo PX signboard within the frame, which marks a space that the Allies have appropriated, the image highlights American authority. Because the image presents a favorable depiction of American forces, it would have easily passed through censorship. American authority is further evident in the text at the top of the page: bold font declares this scene a “New Tokyo Landscape” (*Shin Tokyo fukei*), suggesting that Occupation personnel were now an ordinary, everyday sight in the city.

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<sup>38</sup> Akaho Eiichi, “Ginza,” *Kōga Gekkan*, December 1947.



Figure 5.1. Akaho Eiichi. “Ginza.” *Kōga Gekkan*, December 1947.

Throughout the Occupation, the Tokyo PX—which was off-limits to the Japanese—was a space identified with the power and wealth of the U.S. One Occupation dependent wrote that the Japanese were always outside “watching the customers come in and out, flattening their noses against the show windows, gazing in silent awe at the display of merchandise. . .”<sup>39</sup> For one of the photos in his “Tokyo Album” series, Kimura Ihei photographed a woman standing in front of the PX display windows.<sup>40</sup> As an example of early postwar color photography, Kimura stated that he wanted to show the customs (*fūzoku*) and the color of the present age. The woman wears a sea green jacket and gray slacks, black gloves, and a pink and red scarf around her head.

<sup>39</sup> Lucy Herndon Crockett, *Popcorn on the Ginza*, 186.

<sup>40</sup> Kimura Ihei, “New Tokyo Album #8” (Shin Tōkyō arubamu 8), *Kamera*, May 1950.

Behind her, the display windows pop with color: an assortment of canned and packaged foodstuffs have been set up on towering pink, green, and white display stands. Here, Kimura has provided an example of the alluring display of American wealth and abundance.

Akaho and Kimura both offer us examples of how photographers incorporated Occupied space into their urban snapshots. In three photos submitted to *Kamera* in 1947, collectively titled “Tokyo Landscape” (Tōkyō fūkei), Gotō Tanekichi similarly portrayed the Occupation as part of Japan’s everyday landscape. One photo is a street snapshot of three American women sitting in rickshaws pulled by Japanese men, while another captures an urban landscape that highlights the recognizable dome of Memorial Hall. In between these two photos is one of the Diet building framed by a brick wall. Individually, each of these subjects was a prominent icon in Tokyo’s urban landscape. But when viewed together, they project the Occupation’s authoritative presence in Japan’s capital city.

In the first photo, the American women’s position in the rickshaws places them in a hierarchical relationship with the Japanese men whose job it is to pull them. The photo of the Memorial Hall is likewise a symbolically charged text. Formerly the Kokugikan (National Sports Arena), the building was first built in 1909 by Tatsuno Kingo (1854-1919) to hold sumo tournaments. At first, the Allied forces allowed sumo matches to continue, but they requisitioned the building, renamed it “Memorial Hall,” and turned the arena into an events center and skating rink. For the photo of the Diet building, Gotō employed careful framing so that Japan’s center of government appears adjacent to a crumbling brick wall—evoking the destruction that had resulted from American bombing raids. Sequenced in this way, the photos evoke the authority of

the Occupation by showing Japanese subservience to Americans,<sup>41</sup> the destructive potential of American military power, Japan's defeated status, and the appropriation of Japanese cultural space.<sup>42</sup> This was the new "Tokyo Landscape."

Like the Memorial Hall, many buildings left standing in Tokyo after the American airstrikes of 1945 were renamed by the Occupying forces: the Takarazuka Theater became the Ernie Pyle Theater, and Hibiya Park became Doolittle Field, to offer but two examples. English-language signage like the "Memorial Hall" and "Doolittle Field" proliferated in Tokyo and other major urban areas, proclaiming the Occupation's presence and its authority to appropriate Japanese space.<sup>43</sup> Additionally, many photographers alluded to occupied space by including English-language signs. Several photographs portray seemingly innocuous subjects, such as railroad signs with warnings displayed in English<sup>44</sup> and a map labeled "INFORMATION" posted along the side of a city street.<sup>45</sup>

In other photos, the plethora of English-language signage projected the Occupation's presence in Japan as a "colonial enclave," to borrow a phrase from Takemae Eiji, by portraying spaces overflowing with English lettering.<sup>46</sup> One photo that clearly expresses this sentiment is one taken by a college student of a bus stop in downtown Tokyo.<sup>47</sup> Aiming his lens along a sidewalk in Marunouchi, Keio University student Kasawara Heita framed his photo with a

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<sup>41</sup> This type of image was a common motif of the Occupation. In a February 1946 issue of *Asahi Guraifu*, a full-page photo depicts American sailors posing in rickshaws in front of the Imperial Palace, a backdrop that further evokes the audacity of American hegemony.

<sup>42</sup> Guttman and Thompson, *Japanese Sports*, 180.

<sup>43</sup> Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 207.

<sup>44</sup> Murakami Masato, "Snowy Night" (Yuki no yoru), *Kamera*, January 1950.

<sup>45</sup> Yokota Yusuke, "Kan-eki ko kei," *Amachua Shashin Sōsho*, May 1949.

<sup>46</sup> See Takemae, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, 73.

<sup>47</sup> "Marunouchi Landscape" (Maru no fūkei), *Foto Āto*, January 1950.

ferroconcrete building on the left and a row of parked buses on the right (fig. 5.2). Two women stand halfway down the sidewalk, but the eye is drawn first to a large signboard jutting out from the building, its dark surface making it pop against the white clouds floating across the sky. White lettering on the signboards declares that the space inside the building is a “GHQ Bus Terminal Waiting Room.” Additional signs in the frame—also in English—include a notice to bus drivers regarding regulations for loading passengers and signs that designate the bus routes for Pershing Heights (Zone 3),<sup>48</sup> the 49<sup>th</sup> General Hospital (Zone 2), and Ginza (Zone 1). Two women who seem deep in conversation stand beneath the “GHQ Bus Terminal” sign, directly in front of the camera. Both wear calf-length, billowy skirts, ensembles suitable for warmer weather. Immediately behind them, the viewer can just make out a jeep in the intersection at the end of the block.



Figure 5.2 Kasawara Heita. “Marunouchi Landscape” (Maru no fūkei). *Foto Ato*, January 1950.

<sup>48</sup> Located in Shinjuku’s Ichigaya district, Pershing Heights served as Far East Command headquarters from 1945 to 1955. Previously, the compound was Japan’s Imperial Army Academy and War Ministry headquarters. During the Occupation, the former War Ministry building (Building No. 1) served as the location for the Tokyo War Crimes Trials.

*Foto Ato* published Kasawara's photo as one of the selections from a university photo exhibition.<sup>49</sup> The image appeared again as one of the winning selections for *Asahi Kamera*'s November 1951 *getsurei*. The *getsurei* judge immediately noted a lack of Japanese writing or Japanese people within the frame, an absence that had transformed Marunouchi into an "American landscape" (*Amerika fūkei*). In his final assessment, the judge declared that the photo excelled because it captured the ethos of the early postwar era by portraying a space completely altered in America's image.

During the Occupation, English-language signs displaced all Japanese script entirely in the downtown area of central Tokyo (i.e., Marunouchi), the site of the GHQ.<sup>50</sup> In other parts of Japan, public notices, signboards, and street names were put up in English as well as Japanese. A two-page spread entitled "Feeling of the Reopened Port" (Saikai Minato jōcho), which appeared in a September 1947 issue of *Sekai Gahō*, featured images of cityscapes in Kobe.<sup>51</sup> In some photos, shopping signboards in English dominate buildings to the exclusion of signage in Japanese. The October 15, 1945 issue of *Asahi Gurafu* suggested the oppressive impression left

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<sup>49</sup> "Big Six University Photo Exhibit Work" (Roku daigaku shashin ten sakuhin). Other images include a woman's portrait, a small Japanese boy dressed in a padded cotton jacket, two boys walking on a dirt path alongside ripe rice paddy plants, and a snapshot of a Ginza sidewalk in the afternoon.

<sup>50</sup> Takemae, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, 73.

<sup>51</sup> The news publication *Sekai Gahō* had roots in the prewar period as it was a revival of the magazine *Gurafikkusu* (*Graphics*), first published in 1936 but dissolved in 1941. It restarted postwar publication in 1946. Prominent photographers involved in the publication included Watanabe Tsutomu and Tamura Shigeru, two individuals who actively contributed to photography magazines as well during this same period. In addition to Japanese photographers, the weekly news publication printed photographs supplied by the CI&E as well as American and Japanese news agencies, including the Associated Press, Sun Foto Jiji Press, and Sun Acme. Inspired by American periodicals such as *Life* and *Look*, *Sekai Gahō* aimed to inform the public of current events through photographs. One editorial stated that *Sekai Gahō* wanted to make full use of the camera's ability to depict subjects in a frank and direct manner. Photographers, the editor proclaimed, could record real-life events by mechanical means (i.e., the camera) and report them to the general public. The editor attributed readers' desire for objective reporting on current events to the lack of such reporting in wartime, where censorship and propaganda had reigned. In short, the editor concluded, readers wanted to see photos that they had been prohibited from seeing during the war. "Postscript" (*Hen ha atogaki*), October 25, 1947.

by English-language signs in a spread titled “Big Flood of Letters” (Eiji no dai hanran).<sup>52</sup> The spread evokes the plethora of English signage that suddenly blanketed Tokyo: subway stop signs on train platforms, street signs in Ginza, notice boards, directions to Occupation buildings, lettering on taxi cabs, and placards set up on shopping street stalls. The English language even appears on Japanese bodies: one photo shows a uniform-clad Japanese man with a “POLICE” armband.

Photographers used evidence of English signage to connote the Occupation’s authoritative presence by drawing attention to the separated lives of Allied personnel and Japanese citizens. “Landscape with Jeep” (Jīpu no aru fūkei), published in *Kōga Gekkan* in April 1949, shows a scene that was utterly commonplace during the Occupation (fig. 5.3).<sup>53</sup> A sign pictured prominently to the right side of the dark, grainy landscape warns in English and Japanese that this is a “Bathing Place Exclusive to the Occupation Forces.” As if to confirm the statement, the viewer sees a jeep parked on the shoreline in the distance, tire tracks snaking lazily through the sand to the left side of the frame. By placing visual emphasis on the signboard, situating it between the viewer and the jeep, and rendering the photo in somber, dark tones, the photographer synthesizes form and content to connote the barriers that separated the lives of

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<sup>52</sup> *Asahi Guraifu* was one of the most successful weekly pictorial magazines from this period. It began publication in 1923 as a “newspaper for reading and looking.” *Asahi Shimbun Hyakuneshi Henshu Iinkai* 1995, 197. Quoted in Hirofumi Utsumi, “Nuclear Images and National Self-Portraits: Japanese Illustrated Magazine Asahi Graph, 1945-1965,” *Annual Review of the Institute for Advanced Social Research* 5 (2011): 3.

In the wake of defeat, *Asahi Guraifu* actively distanced itself from its wartime role producing propaganda by brandishing slogans such as “criticism and entertainment” and “satire, aphorism, irony, parody, and humor.” (*Asahi Shimbun Shuppankyoku* 1969, 265-270. Quoted in Hirofumi, 4.) Enjoying a large circulation, *Asahi Guraifu* published for a general audience that spanned multiple social classes. An indication that *Asahi Guraifu* aimed to grab the attention of a mass audience is suggested by the content of its covers. With few exceptions, beautiful female models (*bijin*) adorned nearly every weekly issue. To give some indication of the penchant to illustrate their covers with beautiful women: in 1955, *Asahi Guraifu* ran a contest for cover girl candidates. The October 12, 1955 issue included a portrait of fifty contestants out of an original 612 applicants. By the December 7 issue, the candidates had been narrowed down to twenty.

<sup>53</sup> A similar image appeared in an April 1953 issue of *Foto Āto* under the titled “At a Certain Paradise” (*Aru iku raku-chi nite*). It won top prize in a monthly *getsurei* judged by Tamura Sakae.



Japanese and the Occupying forces. It is a simple, almost minimalistic image, yet one that reinforces the unquestioned authority of the Occupation.



Figure 5.3. Sasae Mitsuhiro. “Landscape with Jeep” (*Jīpu no aru fūkei*). *Kōga Gekkan*, April 1949.

Watabe Yūkichi’s photograph “Dead End” (*Deddo endo*) provides another example of how photographers used English-language signs to evoke the separation of Occupier from Occupied. The photo’s title takes its name from a large “Dead End” sign that occupies most of the frame, affixed to a chain-link fence skirting the perimeter of what looks like base housing.<sup>54</sup> A group of Japanese boys gazes through the towering fence at the whitewashed wooden buildings on the other side. Beyond the base, the viewer can see the Diet building rising in the distance. The angle from which Watabe took the photo makes it seem as if the building is also behind the fence, adjacent to the U.S. base. The sign and the fence demarcating boundaries, and the Diet building positioned within the picture plane near the base structures, are obvious symbols of American authority in Japan. The children have reached a “dead end,” literally and

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<sup>54</sup>*Kamera*, August 1951.

figuratively, unable to climb the fence separating them from the urban space inhabited by Americans.

“Off Limits” and other similar signs were one of the most common symbols of the Occupation in photography magazines and news pictorials. One image from *Kamera*’s February 1948 issue shows a couple standing on a sidewalk huddled underneath an umbrella.<sup>55</sup> An “Off Limits” sign is displayed on the building in the background. For its part, *Tokyo Fall of 1945* featured a photograph of Tokyo University’s famous *Akamon* (Red Gate) with an “Off Limits Allied Military Personnel” sign affixed to the left-hand pillar. Since Japanese were similarly prohibited from entering buildings and other areas reserved for the exclusive use of the Occupation, photographs that included such signage undoubtedly reminded viewers of the physical boundaries that separated Japanese citizens from Allied personnel.

One element conspicuously missing from photographs of GIs in particular, and the Occupation more generally, is casual, everyday encounters between Japanese and Americans. In some images, photographers used framing techniques or otherwise arranged the composition to suggest separation, such as Ōtake Shoji’s photo “At the Moat” (*O horibata nite*), printed in the April 1951 issue of *Kamera* (fig. 5.4). The focal point is two sailors, who stand prominently in the center of the frame. In the background, a Japanese woman to one side of the frame aims a camera at a Japanese man on the other side posing in front of the Imperial Moat. As in most pictures of Occupation personnel, the sailors do not look at the camera; here, they gaze down at an object that one of the men holds in his hand. Their gaze leads the viewer’s eyes down, then to the Japanese man on the left; and his gaze, in turn, directs the viewer toward the woman standing on the right.

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<sup>55</sup> Included as one of the photos in “New Words from Hayashi Tadahiko” (Hayashi Tadahiko Shinsaku-shū), *Kamera*, 1948.



Figure 5.4. Ōtake Shoji. “At the Moat” (O horibata nite). *Kamera*, April 1951. With permission from Ōtake Ayumi.

There is no interaction between the couple in the background and the sailors in the foreground; the two pairs appear entirely oblivious of one another’s presence. Compositional components further set the sailors and the Japanese couple apart. The sailors wear dark uniforms that contrast with the white civilian clothing of the man and woman. Additionally, the photographer balanced the composition by positioning each figure in one-third of the frame: the Japanese man on the left, sailors in the middle, and woman on the right. Yet, the sailors appear to stand between the man and woman, ultimately breaking their connection and thus adding another layer of apartness. Ōtake’s photograph conveys a subtext that would have been deeply felt by many Japanese at the time: that the worlds of Japanese citizens and the occupying American

forces were utterly distinct. The sailors—and other Allied forces—might live in Japan, but they appear wholly detached from the daily life of the Japanese around them.

Other photographs evoked the separation between the Japanese and the Occupying forces through careful cropping to isolate the subjects within the frame. A January 1946 issue of *Sekai Gahō*, for example, included an image of a rodeo in a column titled “Occupation Forces Snapshot” (Shinchūgun sunappu). Although the event is not identified, the picture was likely taken on the International Allied Armistice Day Rodeo held at the Meiji Stadium in Tokyo on November 11, 1945.<sup>56</sup> American news photos from this event recorded Japanese and Americans seated together watching the rodeo. But the photo in *Sekai Gahō* excluded the Japanese spectators and only showed the events within the ring. By only including American subjects in the photos, the photographer effectively excluded Japanese spectators from the event.

We have been discussing how photographers captured America’s authoritative presence in images that alluded to the Occupier’s pervasive presence in Japan through symbols of the Occupation, such as “Off Limits” signs, as well as in images that suggested a sense of apartness between Occupier and Occupied. As well, photographers projected the power of the American military by recording uniformed personnel engaged in activities to demilitarize and democratize Japan, and by documenting military parades and other instances that evoked American military prowess.

One key event of the Occupation period that appeared in news pictorials was the Tokyo War Crimes Trials. Officially known as the International Military Tribunal for the Far East

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<sup>56</sup> In a different image held at the West Virginia University, a man participates in the rodeo riding a white horse. According to the archivist, the horse was identified as “Togo’s horse,” and could possibly be the horse of Tōjō Hideki who owned a white horse. See “West Virginia History On View,” accessed November 28, 2020. <https://onview.lib.wvu.edu/catalog/038881>.

(IMTFE),<sup>57</sup> the trials prosecuted Japan's wartime leaders for war crimes.<sup>58</sup> Even though an international tribunal conducted the trials, the three news pictorials examined here (*Sekai Gahō*, *Asahi Guraifu*, and *Shūkan San Nyūsu*) cast the U.S. in a leading role. In one issue of *Asahi Guraifu*, for example, the caption underneath a shot of Tōjō Hideki standing next to an MP reported that at 3:55 PM on November 2, 1948, the tribunal sentenced 25 Class-A war criminals. General Douglas MacArthur (identified in the caption as *ma gensui*) confirmed the ruling, and the commander of the Eighth Army was ordered to enforce the sentence.<sup>59</sup>

Photographs of the trials most explicitly conveyed American authority by showing American MPs standing guard over Japanese defendants. This is evident in a photo from *Shūkan San Nyūsu* that captured Tōjō standing in front of one MP and two other uniform-clad men.<sup>60</sup> One of the latter reaches out towards Tōjō, his right hand grasped firmly around the former Prime Minister's upper arm.<sup>61</sup> In this scene, the photographer shows the U.S. restraining Japan, literally and figuratively. Another example comes from the camera of Kimura Ihei, published in

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<sup>57</sup> Photos of trials in *Sekai Gahō* came from Sun Foto Jiji Press.

<sup>58</sup> SCAP issued an order for the establishment of the trials in January 1946. Between May of that year and November 1948, twenty-eight men were tried for war crimes by an international tribunal. In addition to ordinary war crimes (i.e., crimes committed during a war), Tōjō Hideki and the other twenty-seven men on trial were charged with "crimes against peace," a new classification of crimes that involved the premeditated intent to wage "a war of aggression." Elsewhere across Asia and the Pacific, roughly 5,700 men were tried and over 900 executed in Allied courts. For more on the trials, see Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan*, Richard Minear, *Victor's Justice: The Tokyo War Crimes Trial* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle, 1984), Takemae, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, and Dower, *Embracing Defeat*.

<sup>59</sup> "1948 Big Ten" (1948 nen biggu ten), *Asahi Guraifu*, December 22, 1948, 5.

<sup>60</sup> Hessell Tiltman, "Tōjō to be judged" (*Sabaka reru Tōjō*) *Shūkan San Nyūsu*, January 12, 1948.

<sup>61</sup> *Asahi Guraifu* likewise included MPs in their visual coverage of the trials, including a four-page spread published in 1948 with photographs of twenty-five men on trial. Arranged in a grid pattern, each photograph profiles one defendant. Wearing headphones as they await their verdict, and standing prominently in front of MPs, their names of the accused have been printed to the left of each photo, as well as the sentence meted out: seven-year imprisonment, twenty-year imprisonment, lifetime imprisonment, or death by hanging. These images, arranged together, underscore Japan's image as a defeated nation. "Twenty-five defendants receive sentence" (Nijū go hikoku-kei no senkoku o uku), *Asahi Guraifu* December 1, 1948.

a May 1948 issue of *Shūkan San Nyūsu*.<sup>62</sup> In this issue, the editors chose the “historical” War Crimes Trials (*rekishi-teki saiban*) as the topic of a series titled “Japan’s Current Landscape” (*Gendai nihon fūkei*).<sup>63</sup> Kimura’s photo of two MPs standing behind four war criminals, including Tōjō Hideki, fills nearly the entire page. The defendants’ position within the frame reinforces the hierarchical relationship between the two groups: the MPs in the background stand tall over the seated men on trial below them. The MPs embody the rigid discipline of the American military: staring straight ahead, the two men stand at attention, clothed in military uniforms with MP armbands wrapped prominently around their biceps. The former Japanese leaders on trial, in contrast, appear bored or indifferent to the trial proceedings. One sits slumped over in his chair, appearing to have fallen asleep, and the defendant immediately behind him sits hunched forward with his head resting in the palm of his hands. Tōjō, seated on the right, is

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<sup>62</sup> The general-interest pictorial *Shūkan San Nyūsu* was another prominent news pictorial from this period, founded by Natori Yōnosuke in 1947 and published by Sun News Photos. Like the editors *Sekai Gahō*, Natori modeled his publication on *Life* magazine. The publication served as an important training ground for photographers, among them Nagano Shigeichi and Tōmatsu Shōmei, who would later build successful careers as photojournalists or street photographers. As well, more established professional photographers joined Natori’s project, including Kimura Ihei, Miki Jun, Inamura Takamasa, and critic Ina Nobuo. However, even this all-star ensemble was not enough to save *Shūkan San Nyūsu* from postwar inflation; the pictorial ceased publication in 1950 after releasing its forty-first issue.

Aside from sporadic coverage of the Tokyo War Crimes Trials, *Shūkan San Nyūsu* rarely printed photos of Occupation forces. Instead, the weekly magazine prioritized Western culture, including women’s fashion, sports, cinema, and even diagrams of the interior of American single-family homes. In addition to reporting on American culture, *Shūkan San Nyūsu* included translated essays by foreign journalists, among them Hessell Tiltman (1897-1976) and Shelly Mydans, who was married to the photojournalist Carl Mydans. For more on *Shūkan San Nyūsu*, see Itō, *Nihon shashin hattatsu shi*; Torihara, *Nihonn shashin shi*; Shirayama Mari, “Major Photography Magazines,” trans. Stan Anderson and John Junkerman, in *The History of Japanese Photography*, ed. Anne Tucker (New Haven: Yale University Press in association with the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 2003), 382.

<sup>63</sup> As part of censorship and the control of information in mass media, the CI&E was established with the aim to “impress war guilt on the nation,” and the topic began to appear in the press as early as October 1945. See Braw, *The Atomic Bomb Suppressed*, 40-44. SCAP censors looked with careful attention at Japanese coverage of the trials. For one issue of *Sekai Gahō*, the examiner translated two quotes that he targeted for deletion; however, because the censor blocked out the text, it is not possible to see the original quotes in Japanese. The first translated quote stated that one of the men to stand trial, identified as General Yamashita, “was not the direct perpetrator of the atrocities and that he was not aware that these criminal acts were being carried out.” The second quote reveals that some American lawyers defended Yamashita and went so far as to praise him as a military commander. By calling into question Yamashita’s guilt, the author of the article clearly identified him as a scapegoat targeted by the American military to stand trial. SCAP’s censors, however, prohibited this and similar sentiments from reaching final publication.

photographed in profile with head slightly bowed. Here, Japan's militarism is rendered old and exhausted, while America's military is young and fit.

Other photographs of GIs likewise evoked the power of the American military. One July 1946 cover of *Sekai Gahō* featured two men in military dress surveying a map of the bombed areas of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (fig. 5.5). What is notable about this photograph is that the Japanese media were normally prohibited from making visual or textual reference to the atomic bombings of either city.<sup>64</sup> Domon Ken, for example, was unable to publish his images of Hiroshima during the Occupation.<sup>65</sup> And, as discussed in Chapter II, SCAP detained and interrogated photographer Matsushige Yoshito after a newspaper printed his photos of atomic bomb damage.<sup>66</sup> Yet here, two Occupation personnel are shown surveying the results of the nuclear blasts on the cover of *Sekai Gahō*.<sup>67</sup>

GIs marching in military parades was another common motif that reinforced American military superiority. The April 5, 1946 cover of *Asahi Guraifu*, which shows a group of uniformed GIs marching with a U.S. flag, is one of the only covers the magazine printed in the first postwar decade that did not feature a female model or Japanese children (fig. 5.6). The photographer framed the image such that the GIs' bodies and the billowing American flag stretch from the lower left to the upper right corner of the frame, infusing the composition with a

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<sup>64</sup> One exception to this was mention of the bombings in literary works. Hirofumi explains that these passed censorship because coverage of the bombings could support SCAP policies. Hirofumi offers Nagai Kafu's *Nagasaki no Kane* as an example. The book refrained from depicting the atomic bombings as an act of cruelty, instead suggesting "their justification as bringing an end to the World War." See Hirofumi "Nuclear Images and National Self-Portraits," 7.

<sup>65</sup> He published his images of the bombed city in a photobook titled *Hiroshima* in 1958.

<sup>66</sup> Matsushige, "Five Photographs of August 6," 391–395.

<sup>67</sup> The symbolic image of atomic mushroom clouds was not always prohibited from publication, as long as they illustrated the destructive potential of American military technology and had no immediate connection to Hiroshima or Nagasaki. *Sekai Gahō* printed two separate spreads on American atomic bomb testing, in October and December 1946. The images in both spreads, provided by the Associated Press, use pictures of mushroom clouds to convey American scientific knowledge and military technology.

dynamism that expresses the energy and vitality of the marching troops. American military personnel stand at attention in the background, wearing crisp, dark military uniforms capped with combat helmets. Conspicuously visible in the background is the Imperial Palace, positioned between the marching GIs in the foreground and the American flag at the top of the frame. The framing of the Imperial Palace in this way creates a symbolically charged image that unmistakably evokes the power of the American military and the authority of the Occupation.



Figure 5.5. *Sekai Gahō*. July 1946.





Figure 5.6. *Asahi Guraфу*. April 5, 1946.

In news pictorials as well, military parades were one of the more common images of the Occupation. One picture of a July 4<sup>th</sup> parade from the December 1, 1946 issue of *Sekai Gahō* shows the American forces' "grand street march" in Hibiya, an area just south of the Imperial Palace. In the picture, spectators standing on both sides of the street look on as tanks roll down the pavement three abreast in an impressive display of war matériel. This photograph was included in a recurring segment titled "The Face of Japan" (*Nihon no kao*), which, reflecting the pervasive American presence in Japan, featured spreads on the Occupation specifically and Western culture more broadly. The December 1<sup>st</sup> issue mentioned above, for example, included other images that depicted Occupation troops as well as tanks. Two photos show GIs reading

books at libraries established for Allied personnel, and a third captures an officer of the British Air Force sketching a street scene in Tokyo. In another issue, the “Face of Japan” spread included pictures of the wives of Occupation personnel and a newlywed couple riding in a carriage. By including such photographs in their “Face of Japan” spreads, *Sekai Gahō* highlighted the ubiquitous presence of the Occupation in Tokyo and other cities.

When they were not showing GIs marching in parades, news pictorials depicted them engaged in daily activities, such as shopping for souvenirs at shops and street stalls, getting haircuts, or in moments of relaxation while off duty. One spread from the January 5, 1946 issue of *Asahi Guraifu* follows a GI named Ralph throughout his daily routine (fig. 5.7).<sup>68</sup> The camera captures him as he wakes up in his billet, eats in the mess hall, performs work duties, and enjoys leisure time with friends playing baseball and musical instruments. Four of the photographs across the three-page spread show Ralph eating, receiving cigarette rations, and stocking the shelves by his bunk with canned food. For the Japanese, who continued to struggle through the *kyodatsu* conditions of early postwar society, Ralph’s comfortable life, while far from luxurious, was surely viewed with envy.

In contrast to the seeming abundance that Occupation personnel enjoyed, images of everyday life for Japanese depicted deprivation and suffering. To give one example, the photographs accompanying the article “What kind of Illness is Malnutrition?” (Eiyōshitchō-byō to wa don’na byōki ka), printed in a June 1946 issue of *Sekai Gahō*, show with haunting detail the emaciated bodies of Japanese children, adults, and the elderly. In each photo, the subject is naked or clothed only in undergarments, forcing the viewer to confront the bloated stomachs and wasted limbs of the bodies on display. Such scenes contrasted sharply with the photos that we

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<sup>68</sup> “Ralph from Morning to Night: 1st Cavalry Division of the Occupying Forces” (Rarufu-kun no asa kara yoru made ~ Asaka no shinchūgun dai kihei shidai).

have been discussing—of well-fed GIs in clean, crisp uniforms, living in orderly barracks and shopping in PX stores brimming with goods.



Figure 5.7. *Asahi Guraifu*, “Ralph from Morning to Night.”

For most Japanese, the lives of GIs in Japan was identified more broadly with an American lifestyle that conveyed the idea of material wealth and projected a fresh and bright image from the earliest years of the Occupation.<sup>69</sup> In his study of letters sent to General Douglas MacArthur during the Occupation, Sodei Rinjirō notes that the Japanese looked to the United States as a “wellspring of culture” and a “cure” that would help Japan in its journey of postwar recovery.<sup>70</sup> The numerous images in photography magazines and news pictorials that displayed American culture most often presented it as alluringly glamorous. In this way, America inhabited a “seducing” presence in the images of Japanese photographers.

<sup>69</sup> “Yōfukuika,” in *Sengoshi Daijiten*, ed. Sasaki Takeshi (Tokyo: Sanseidō, 1991), 906.

<sup>70</sup> Sodei, *Dear General MacArthur*, 263.

### America's "Seducing" Presence

What made American culture so desirable to postwar Japanese was the material wealth and bright new image that it conveyed to people whose own country was still recovering from a devastating war. Food was especially scarce. Ukita Tomoko (the mother mentioned above who could not find soap for her family) detested mealtimes, stating "There was so little to offer the children" and they "scrambled for whatever was available." Ukita was just one of the countless mothers who endured gnawing hunger to ensure that their children could eat.<sup>71</sup> At the end of 1945, ten people died of starvation per day,<sup>72</sup> and the average height and weight of school children continued to decrease until 1948 due to chronic food shortages.<sup>73</sup> Against this backdrop, as the proverbial "land of plenty," America was especially alluring to the Japanese.<sup>74</sup>

The Japanese could keep abreast of the latest American trends and styles—ranging from fashion to food to film and interior design—through the mass-publication magazines that the CI&E libraries stocked. Among the magazines included in the library's collections were the *Saturday Evening Post*, the *New Yorker*, *Reader's Digest*, *Journal of Home Economics*, *Foreign Commerce Weekly*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and *Ladies Home Journal*, to name but a few.<sup>75</sup> One avid reader of *Life* reported that she loved seeing American lifestyles recorded in the pictures. In particular, the housewife expressed interest in

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<sup>71</sup> Ukita, "Saving Them from Starvation," 88.

<sup>72</sup> U.S. Office of Strategic Services Research and Analysis Branch, *Wartime Distribution of Food in Japan* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Office of Strategic Services Research and Analysis Branch, 1945), 1.

<sup>73</sup> Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan*, 226.

<sup>74</sup> Igarashi Yoshikuni, *Bodies of Memory: Narratives of War in Postwar Japanese Culture, 1945-1970* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 9. In 1946, Japan's industrial production was merely 30.7 percent of where it had been in the mid 1930s, and the GNP in 1946 was only 69 percent of what it had been then. See Hane Mikiso, *Modern Japan: A Historical Survey* second edition (Boulder: Westfield Press, 1992), 362, and Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan*, 338.

<sup>75</sup> Numerous magazines featuring American culture were published in Japanese as well, such as *Amerikan Mo-do* (*American Mode*), *Amerika Bunka* (*The American Culture*), and *Amerika Hyakka* (*Things American*), just to name a few.

electrical appliances, prepackaged name-brand foods, and “housewives dressed in Dior’s New Look-style dresses and looking happy in the kitchen, parlor, or garden.”<sup>76</sup>

Sociologist Yoshimi Shunya has described these cultural influences as the Americanization of the “ears,” “eyes,” and the “whole way of life” of postwar Japanese. Yoshimi argues that women were the leading promoters of American culture—in their active advocacy of a “bright home life” built on solid domestic values and gleaming electrical appliances (fig. 5.8).<sup>77</sup> Tanigawa Kenji, who focuses his analysis on fashion, contends that the Americanization of Japanese culture early in the postwar era was most readily visible in women’s fashion trends.<sup>78</sup> Photography magazines and news pictorials documented the rapid adoption of Western fashion styles. Among the many photos we might cite are: Yamada Shūhei’s snapshot of a young girl on a sidewalk dressed in a long skirt, bobby socks, and saddle oxfords, engrossed in a magazine illustrated with women in Western designer fashions;<sup>79</sup> Yoshida Senzō’s “Dress Making School,” which depicts young designers adorning models in their Western-style creations;<sup>80</sup> *Asahi Guraifu*’s March 3, 1948 cover photo, featuring two young women in long skirts, blouses, and knit cardigans reading *Fashion Parade* magazine; and “Intense Interest” (Diōru shō yori) by Ōtsuka Gen, which captured an audience of Japanese women riveted by fashion models in Christian Dior garments walking down the runway at a fashion show.<sup>81</sup> In each of these photos,

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<sup>76</sup> Quoted in Ochi Hiromi, “What Did She Read?,” 360.

<sup>77</sup> Yoshimi, “Visualizing Postwar Tokyo.”

<sup>78</sup> Tanigawa Kenji, “Amerika he no dōkei” (A Yearning for America), in *Senryōki zasshi shiryō taikē III: Taishū bunka hen*, 3.

<sup>79</sup> Yamada Shūhei, “Waiting for a Friend” (Tomo o matsu), *Foto Āto*, January 1952.

<sup>80</sup> Yoshida Senzō, “Dress Making School” (Yōfuku gakkō), *Asahi Kamera*, September 1952.

<sup>81</sup> Ōtsuka Gen, “Intense Interest” (Diōru shō yori, literally “From the Dior Show”), *Asahi Kamera*, March 1954.

we see images of Japanese women in contemporary Western fashion that exhibited the appearance of new, foreign cultural influences.



Figure 5.8. *Shūkan San Nyūsu*. August 31, 1948.

The first Japanese women to don Western fashions in large numbers during the Occupation period<sup>82</sup> were *pan pan* and “taxi-dancers” who worked in dance halls—both of whom had access to goods from PX stores via their GI clientele.<sup>83</sup> But it was not long before Western, primarily American, fashions became more widely popular. For many Japanese, the end of the war marked a turning point for clothing trends, as Japanese began to trade traditional

<sup>82</sup> The adoption of Western fashion occurred under different contexts in the pre and postwar period. Compared to the 1920s and 1930s, when the adoption of Western styles remained largely in the purview of elite society, the postwar embrace of Western-style garments was much more widespread among multiple social classes.

<sup>83</sup> Yoshimi, “Visualizing Postwar Tokyo.”

garments like kimono and *monpe* for “modern” Western apparel.<sup>84</sup> Western-clothing design schools sprang up virtually overnight across cities, and many Japanese refashioned old kimono into Western-style blouses and skirts.<sup>85</sup> One photo from *Kamera* shows a typical woman at her sewing machine creating a Western-style garment. She leans close to the device and pushes fabric through the presser foot. Her posture is calm and composed, but her downward gaze suggests an intense concentration on her work.<sup>86</sup> The viewer might imagine the finished garment upon looking at the next page. Here, a different woman cheerfully models a Western-style jacket. The photographer has zoomed in on the subject so that her body fills the frame, letting the eye take note of the intricate details: white zigzag piping that pops against the dark fabric and a double row of shiny buttons.<sup>87</sup>

By the early 1950s, commentators were speaking of a “boom” in American-style clothing.<sup>88</sup> Virtually every issue of every popular photography magazine ran instructional articles on how to photograph Japanese models in the latest Western styles, and illustrated news periodicals provided short columns and feature spreads that introduced readers to the trendiest styles of American and European designers. The buzzword from the late 1940s was the “New Look:” long skirts, cinched waists, and rounded shoulders. The November 12, 1947 issue of *Shūkan San Nyūsu* noted that the chic American women who had adopted the New Look style faced heated opposition from a fashion world not yet ready to cover women’s legs with longer skirts. Nevertheless, the New Look soon won over its detractors and became the most popular

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<sup>84</sup> “Senryogun rukku kara surakkusu he,” in *Senryoshita no nihon (Japan Under the Occupation)*, vol. 9 of *Showa nihon shi*, 47-48.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Oda Hiroshi, “Untitled” (Mudai), *Kamera*, December 1946.

<sup>87</sup> Shimotusa Seinatsu, “Younger Sister,” (Imōto), *Kamera*, December 1946.

<sup>88</sup> Koizumi Kazoku, *Yōsai no jidai: Nihonjin no ifuku kakumei* (Tokyo: Nōbunkyō, 2004).

style in Euro-American fashion circles throughout the 1950s.<sup>89</sup> A spread in the August 11, 1948 issue of *Asahi Guraifu*, titled “Changing from Short to Long Skirt” (Tanku yoku naga-mo wo hirugaesu),<sup>90</sup> reveals that the new fashion had quickly taken hold among Japanese women as well, who are all pictured in the feature wearing calf-length skirts.

*Shūkan San Nyūsu* spotlighted New Look fashions again in its October 20, 1948 issue. A spread titled “Japanese Fashion ‘Premier’: The New Look from Autumn to Winter by American Women” (Honpō ‘shoen’ no fasshon: Amerika fujin ni yoru aki kara fuyu no nyūrukku) reported on a fashion show held the previous September at Ginza’s Mitsukoshi Department Store.<sup>91</sup> Organized by the Allied Nations’ Catholic Women’s Club,<sup>92</sup> the event showcased American women modeling the latest New Look fashions to a room full of Japanese men and women. Photographs from the event captured a Japanese audience captivated by the show, their collective gaze riveted on the models walking down the makeshift runway. One photograph shows a woman holding up binoculars to inspect the details of the garments on display. In another photo, a woman leans over to whisper to her friends. The photo’s caption relates the woman’s reaction to one model’s clothing: “Wait, what a nice fabric that is!” (*Chotto are nan to iu no ii kiji ne*), she exclaims, echoing the excitement buzzing through the audience. In another photograph, women lean with interest towards the runway. The accompanying caption projects their central

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<sup>89</sup> News photographer Sasamoto Tsuneko had her photographs of Western models in New Look styles published in a July 1950 issue of *Foto Āto*. Titled “From the New Look Photo Exhibit” (Nyūrukku shashin-ten yori), the photographs were originally exhibited in April of that same year. While the photos in the magazine spread featured only American models, the exhibit featured over 100 models from across the globe, including China, the Philippines, and England. Displayed at a gallery in Nihonbashi, the exhibition space was decorated with flower arrangements by a group of Americans who were learning ikebana.

<sup>90</sup> “Long skirt” in romaji appears over the kanji for long skirt.

<sup>91</sup> Fashion shows were a frequent event during the Occupation, but not always sponsored by American groups. *Asahi Guraifu* printed a spread titled “A Fad that has forgotten the fad” (Ryūkō o wasureta ryūkō) in the January 15, 1947 issue. Held at the Western Clothing Research Institute in Kansai (*Yōsō kenkyūjo*), the fashion show featured Japanese models and designers showcasing Western clothing to an audience packed with Japanese women.

<sup>92</sup> Proceeds collected from the show were donated to war orphans (*sensō koji*) and “vagrant youth” (*fuuroji*).



concern: “When will we be able to wear such clothes?” (*Atashitachi ga kirareruno ha itsu koro deshouka*). Although many women in the audience were already clothed in Western-style fashions, the spread expressly conveyed their intense interest in American clothing trends.

Mitsukoshi’s New Look fashion show provides one example of how America became an object of desire during the Occupation.<sup>93</sup> We must add, however, that few Japanese women at the time could afford to buy the fashionable Western-style clothing that they yearned for. Even in 1948, housewives continued to complain of having to stand in food lines with “dusty, dry, messy hair” clothed in “torn *monpe*, and dirty, half-rotten blouses . . . like animal-people made of mud.”<sup>94</sup> And yet the image of Japanese women that dominated visual media, especially photography magazines and news pictorials, was one of style, sophistication, and wealth. In some instances, editors unabashedly centered the readers’ attention on the most luxurious clothing imaginable. In their 1947 New Years’ edition, for a spread titled “Walking Price Tag” (*Aruku shoufuda*) *Asahi Guraifu* printed eight images of stylishly-dressed women strolling down urban streets. The editors superimposed price tags over each item of clothing. One woman wears a fur coat valued at 70,000 yen, a purse at 3,200 yen, gloves at 4,500 yen, and shoes at 4,000 yen. In another image, a woman struts down the street in staggeringly expensive clothing: a 65,000 yen coat, 8,000 yen earrings, 5,000 yen handbag, 7,000 yen ring, 7,200 yen gloves, 1,400 yen stockings, and 8,000 yen shoes. Even the least pricey ensemble pictured in the spread featured was anything but cheap: jacket, shoes, purse, and necklace combined were valued at 20,300

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<sup>93</sup> Yoshimi has examined how images of women in the home promoted American domesticity and consumer appliances. See Yoshimi, “Visualizing Postwar Tokyo.”

<sup>94</sup> Quoted in Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 101. Original Source, SSS, pp. 43-44. *Showa Seso Shi—Dokumento, Sengo-hen*, edited and published by Heibonsha (Tokyo, 1976).

yen.<sup>95</sup> By featuring luxurious—and lavishly expensive—clothing, the spread projected an image of wealth and cosmopolitanism that rivaled the seemingly affluent lifestyles of American women and Occupation personnel. But the American fashions also reflected the hopes and dreams of women living in Japan's *kyodatsu* society who yearned for a better future, especially those who likened their disheveled appearance to “animal-people made of mud.”

It is important to note that kimono and other Japanese clothing styles could be made to appear just as luxurious as Western garments. “Walking Price Tag,” in fact, included two women dressed in kimono whose ensembles were marked with price tags of equal value to the Western ensembles featured in the same spread. Indeed, while a profusion of images in photography magazines and news pictorials captured women sporting the latest fashions from abroad, many photos of women still featured traditional Japanese clothing styles. After all, the Japanese did not abandon kimono and other indigenous clothing styles when faced with the influx of foreign fashion trends during the Occupation.

Notably, photographers took a different approach to photographing Japanese- and Western-style garments, as illustrated by two articles in a special issue of *Kamera* dedicated to photographing women. In one article, the author advised readers on photographing women in Japanese fashion: the kimono should be of simple color and pattern to make the woman's face and figure appear more beautiful, and the hairstyle should be short or gathered up to expose the nape of the neck.<sup>96</sup> Most of the photographs accompanying the article show women indoors with

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<sup>95</sup> The same year this spread was published, Judge Yamaguchi Yoshitada died of malnutrition after attempting to live strictly on government rations without supplementing his diet with food purchased from the black market. Dower details the experience of Okano Akiko, a middle-class housewife from Osaka. In 1950, her husband made 300 yen a month as a low-level clerk. See Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 101.

<sup>96</sup> Fukuda, “Photographing Women in Kimono” (Kimono no josei wo utsusu), 1952, 34-37.

a *shoji* screen backdrop or in a garden setting—a technique used by Japanese photographers to underscore the Japanese-ness of the clothing.

In the second article, the author highlighted the difference between Japanese and Western clothing by asserting that individuality was an inherent element of Western fashion. He claimed that even if the garments suited one model, she could not wear them if another model had donned the same ensemble.<sup>97</sup> One of the models in the article poses with English-language fashion magazines. In other instances, photographers captured women wearing Western-style garments in modern urban settings, usually near gleaming automobiles that symbolized motion, speed, and Western consumer culture. These props and settings worked in tandem with Western fashion to signify Japan's embrace of a modernity that reflected Euro-American cultural influences.

Magazine editors complicated simplistic binaries by sequencing photos of women in both Western and Japanese fashions, seen in one spread from the March 1947 issue of *Kamera*. The left page depicts a woman with a fashionable Western hairstyle wearing a dark dress with a delicate lace collar. The photographer cropped the frame closely around the woman's form, but a multi-story building looming in the background betrays an urban setting. On the right page, a woman poses in front of a heavy wooden gate clothed in a floral kimono, *geta*, and more traditional Japanese hairstyle. Here, the editors have depicted the co-existence of Japanese and Western clothing styles. These two images did not clash with one another, but rather cast both

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<sup>97</sup> Nagashima, "Photographing Women Dressed in Western Style: Style, Clothes, etc." (Yōsō josei no satsuei: Sutaizu to fukusō sonota), 1952, 32-34. To provide another example of the link some Japanese made between Western clothing and individuality, Katō Tomoko's essay "Clothing of a Rebuilt Japan" (Saiken Nihon no fukusō, 1946) exhorted women to express their individuality and style by transforming old garments and kimono into more fashionable blouses and skirts. The illustrations that accompanied his article all showcase Western designs, indicating in stark terms that the author intended Japanese women to express their individuality through Western clothing. Katō Tomoko, "Saiken Nihon no fukusō," *Shoku to seikatsu*, 1 (1946). Reprinted in: Yamamoto, Taketoshi, Nagai Yoshikazu, Matsuda, Saori, ed. *Senryō-ki seikatsu sesō-shi shiryō II: Fūzoku to ryūkō* (Tokyo: Shin'yōsha, 2015).

women in a positive light. The placement of these photos side-by-side reflects that both styles were equally prized by the magazine's readers.

Juxtapositions between women in American and Japanese fashions abounded in photography magazines. The editors of *Kōga Gekkan* placed Tanaka Isao's photo of a woman in a kimono and *geta*, standing at river's edge, with one of a woman in a blazer and black slacks posing in downtown Hiroshima.<sup>98</sup> *ARS Shashin Nenkan* followed Akiyama Shotarō's image of a woman in a houndstooth jacket, pencil skirt, and gloves<sup>99</sup> with Domon Ken's snapshot of a woman clad in a *kappogi* (a white apron used to protect kimono) lighting a brazier.<sup>100</sup> And in the August 1951 issue of *Foto Āto*, the editors sequenced Matsushima Susumu's photos of bathing-suit-clad women with Yamada Hiroji's images of a woman posing in *yukata* on tatami flooring. To further underscore the difference between the Western- and Japanese styles on display, the editors wrote the title of Matsushima's images in English and the one for Yamada's in Japanese.<sup>101</sup>

At times, women combined objects of Western or Japanese origin into a single outfit, as demonstrated by a model pictured in the December 4, 1947 issue of *Shūkan San Nyūsu* wearing an expensive fur coat and slingback heels while holding a Japanese-style fan (fig. 5.9). At other times, photographers captured women wearing distinctly Western- or Japanese-style fashions in the same frame, such as Tanuma Takeyoshi's snapshot of participants in Asakusa's Sanja Matsuri.<sup>102</sup> The photo depicts two young women dressed in kimono and striped *haori* coats, and

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<sup>98</sup> *Kōga Gekkan*, January 1949.

<sup>99</sup> "Fashion Model" (Fasshon), *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, 1954.

<sup>100</sup> "Housework Woman" (Naishoku suru obasan), *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, 1954.

<sup>101</sup> "Three Angles," and "Yukata no onna" *Foto Āto*, August, 1951.

<sup>102</sup> *Asahi Kamera*, September 1955.

two additional women in knit cardigans and swing skirts. Describing his work as “a mirror that reflects society,” Tanuma often focused on documenting the “new” and the “old” in Japan, and the snapshot he took in Asakusa exemplifies how both existed side-by-side. This and similar photos show us that the desire for Western fashions and other cultural objects did not replace Japanese practices entirely. Rather, the combination of Western and Japanese material culture within a single frame, and the juxtaposition of fashion styles from both cultures across multiple images, illustrates the adoption and adaptation of Western influences into Japanese cultural practices.<sup>103</sup>



Figure 5.9. *Shūkan San Nyūsu*. December 4, 1947.

<sup>103</sup> Darling-Wolf argues the *Japan Times* resisted an American “cultural invasion” by depicting international political, sports, or cultural events that “assert[ed] Japan’s position as ‘part of the world.’” In addition, the *Japan Times* negotiated an American cultural invasion in a process Darling-Wolf describes as “one of hybridization rather than imposition.” To give an example, Darling-Wolf describes photograph of European dolls sold in a Ginza department store for *Hinamatsuri* in March. The Doll’s Day Festival traditionally uses dolls that represent the Emperor and Empress, in addition to other members of the imperial court. See Darling-Wolf, “Post-war Japan in Photographs,” 414.

Outside of print media, the Japanese also saw American lifestyles displayed in Hollywood films, which were wildly popular among Japanese audiences in the early postwar era. Several cinemas survived the destructive bombing raids of 1945 unscathed, and other temporary theaters were constructed in haste or installed in department store basements to meet popular demand. Japanese spectators would begin standing in line from the early morning to see foreign films with Japanese subtitles. The more popular film titles were sold out weeks in advance.<sup>104</sup> The Marunouchi Subaru-za theater, which opened in Tokyo's Yūrakuchō neighborhood on December 31, 1946, only had one screen and 270 seats. Even so, the theater was immensely popular; according to one source, the foreign films screened there often drew upwards of 100,000 people over their run.<sup>105</sup> *Kōga Gekkan* printed a photo of the Subaru-za in their December 1947 issue that included just enough of the marquee to reveal the current feature: *Random Harvest* (1942) starring Greer Garson and Richard Coleman.<sup>106</sup> In another instance, amateur Yamamoto Hiratatsu photographed a large crowd of people huddled beneath umbrellas outside the theater, waiting to see *Notorious!* (1946), a film by Alfred Hitchcock starring Cary Grant, Ingrid Bergman, and Claude Rains.<sup>107</sup>

The popularity of foreign film itself was evidenced by numerous articles on cinema and film stills published in photography magazines and news pictorials. *Kamera* frequently published reports on Hollywood and European cinema in a column simply titled "Film" (Eiga), which

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<sup>104</sup> McLelland, *Love, Sex, and Democracy during the Allied Occupation of Japan*, 103. As McLelland notes, the Allied forces attending film screenings in the Ernie Pyle Theater in Hibiya, Tokyo, a venue exclusive to the Occupation's use. See 202, n60.

<sup>105</sup> Vox Populi, "Final curtain to fall Oct. 20 on historic Tokyo movie theater," *Asahi Shimbun*, October 18, 2019. <https://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/13059676>.

<sup>106</sup> Higuchi Tadao, "Yurakucho," *Kōga Gekkan*, December 1947.

<sup>107</sup> Yamamoto Hirayatsu, "A Rainy Day" (*Ame no hi*), *Asahi Kamera*, December 1950.

included movies such as *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* (1947), *A Letter to Three Wives* (1949), and *Sunset Boulevard* (1950).<sup>108</sup> It is clear that Japanese also felt that they had some catching up to do. In its November 12, 1947 issue, *Shūkan San Nyūsu* printed an overview of Warner Bros. films released in 1944, and in the next issue featured MGM's 1940 feature hit *Boomtown*: two among many Hollywood films unavailable to Japanese audiences during the war. *Asahi Guraifu* similarly printed numerous features on foreign cinema, including both past and current releases. In the April 5, 1946 issue, the weekly pictorial ran a two-page spread on the 1943 Warner Bros. film *Watch on the Rhine*; then in the March 5, 1947 issue, it ran a spread titled "Spring Film Releases" (Yōshun no fūkiri eiga) that introduced its readers to *Kings Row* (1942), *Moontide* (1942), and *Rhapsody in Blue* (1945).

SCAP was keenly aware of Hollywood's ability to use film to promote a democratic lifestyle.<sup>109</sup> The success of this endeavor was explicitly evidenced in letters mailed to General Douglas MacArthur. In one such letter, Okumura Kazunori wrote that the Japanese could learn "the meaning of liberty by viewing movies like *Boys Town* and *Going My Way*."<sup>110</sup> Yamada Ryōnosuke penned a letter expressing his belief that "viewing American movies is most effective for reeducating Japanese youth," because a "pro-American fever" could "win out through movies." Yamada noted that American films were already popular among Japanese youth, who were drawn to the American culture displayed in Western cinema and were infatuated with the lives of American film stars.<sup>111</sup> A Japanese acquaintance of Lucy Herndon Crockett likewise believed that American cinema had begun influencing Japanese citizens' behavior and way of

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<sup>108</sup> These three titles appeared in the July 1950, January 1951, and November 1951 issues, respectively.

<sup>109</sup> McLelland, *Love, Sex, and Democracy during the Allied Occupation of Japan*, 103.

<sup>110</sup> Sodei, *Dear General MacArthur*, 214.

<sup>111</sup> Sodei, *Dear General MacArthur*, 209-210.

thinking.<sup>112</sup> Crockett herself thought that the Japanese were drawn to American cinema because the actors all appeared “happy, well dressed, well fed, courageous, romantic, and supremely self-confident.” For this reason, Crockett avowed that the films served as something of a “bible on democracy.”<sup>113</sup>

While SCAP used Hollywood film to achieve its objective of propagating “cultural enlightenment,” for the Japanese, most tellingly, glamorous film stars offered an alluring vision of American lifestyles. In 1949, *Shashin Techō* published a portrait of American actress, model, and writer Myrna Dell (1924-2011) leaning back against a stage.<sup>114</sup> Her hair is swept behind her shoulders in a stylish coiffure, and she wears an expensive, billowing evening gown that accentuates her slim waist. Dell stands in front of an ancient Greek or Roman sculpture, a decorative element that highlights the image of luxury and class that the actress projects. *Kamera* printed a similar series of photos in their February 1947 issue.<sup>115</sup> Three pictures show three different Hollywood actresses wearing floor-length gowns and New Look calf-length skirts. In the accompanying text, the author notes that “in America where materials are plentiful” (*shizai no hōfuna Amerika de ha*), the cameraman would have used a large-format 8 X 10 camera to capture the women’s ensemble from head to toe. By drawing attention to the expensive cameras easily accessible to American photographers, the author further emphasized notions of affluence already projected by the actresses.

Hollywood films provided more than idealized depictions of affluent American lifestyles; they also projected a new kind of woman to Japanese audiences—specifically modern women

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<sup>112</sup> Crockett, *Popcorn on the Ginza*, 205.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 204.

<sup>114</sup> “The Woman of May—Myrna Dell (RKO Radio)” (Gogatsu no onna—Myrna Dell (RKO Radio)), *Shashin Techō* July 1949, 4.

<sup>115</sup> “Hollywood Portrait” (Hariuddo potorēto), *Kamera*, February 1947.



divorced from “any sense of maternal-ness or family purpose.”<sup>116</sup> The influence of such modern women is evident in photographers’ pictures of Japanese actresses, such as Meguro Sachiko (discussed in Chapter IV) and her independent lifestyle. Elsewhere, portraits of young actresses were popular subjects for Japanese photographers. *Kamera* and *Foto Āto* printed portraits of Hara Setsuko (1920-2015),<sup>117</sup> known for her work with Ozu Yasujirō, while *Asahi Kamera* published photos of Arima Ineko,<sup>118</sup> Yamada Eiko,<sup>119</sup> Awashima Chikage,<sup>120</sup> and Shimazaki Yukiko, to name but a few.<sup>121</sup> In each of these portraits, the actresses appear alone and dressed in the latest Western styles: chic blouses, luxurious cloaks, knit sweaters, and trendy accessories. Their lips are painted a deep red, and their hairstyles are fashioned in short, shoulder-length perms. They are every inch styled in the image of the modern (American) woman.

When it came to Western Hollywood actresses, such role models were visible not only on movie screens and in magazines but also on billboards and posters. These soon became a focus for photographers. One image that made prominent use of a Hollywood poster as a backdrop appeared in a series printed in the April 1950 issue of *Kamera*.<sup>122</sup> The spread reports on six professional photographers who each produced a portrait of the same female model. The photographers who participated were some of the most famous in Japan’s photo circles: Kimura Ihei, Yoshida Jun, Hayashi Tadahiko, Matsushima Susumu, Hayata Yūji, and Domon Ken.

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<sup>116</sup> Catherine Bae, “Girl Meets Boy Meets Girl: Heterosocial Relations, Wholesome Youth, and Democracy in Postwar Japan,” *Asian Studies Review* 32, no. 3 (2008): 359.

<sup>117</sup> Akiyama Shotarō, *Kamera*, March 1951, and Hayada Takeji, “In Sapporo” (Sapporo ni te), *Foto Ārt*, June 1951.

<sup>118</sup> Inamura Takamasa, “Miss Ineko Arima” February 1951.

<sup>119</sup> Yoshioka Senzō, “Eiko Yamada, A Movie Starlet (Gokigenikaga!), January 1951.

<sup>120</sup> Fukuda Katsuji, “Miss Chikage Awashima,” September 1950.

<sup>121</sup> Inamura Takamasa, “Orchid” (Ran no hana), April 1951.

<sup>122</sup> “Six People Photograph One Model in a Beauty Shooting Contest” (*Hitori no moderu o roku-nin de utsusu bijin satsuei konkūru*).

Hayata's photo appeared first in the spread. Wearing a houndstooth tweed coat, dark gloves, and carrying a small handbag, the woman struck a stylish pose in front of a large movie poster plastered on the side of a building. The film advertises *That Forsyte Woman* (1949), starring Errol Flynn, Greer Garson, Walter Pidgeon, and Robert Young. In the poster, Walter Pidgeon embraces Greer Garson, whose strapless gown projects an aura of glamour. Garson leans back in Pidgeon's arms, putting her head close to Errol Flynn and Robert Young on the left side of the poster. Pidgeon looks down at Garson, but his gaze is also directed towards the Japanese model standing between Garson and Flynn. Because the poster fills nearly the entire frame—and the model is standing flush against the wall—it almost seems as if the model herself is part of the poster. She appears, in other words, to be a part of the American Hollywood film on display behind her.

Fashion and Hollywood, of course, were not the only American cultural influences that Japan felt in the postwar period. Photographers captured a wide array of American material culture that became popular among Japanese audiences, ranging from spectator events, such as American football, ice capades performances, theater, and ballet, to food customs and life cycle rituals. *Sekai Gahō*, for example, printed a two-page spread of a GI's wedding in the August 1947 issue that featured a full-length portrait of the bride in her wedding gown, a picture of the happy couple posing together, and a photo of the couple cutting a multi-tiered wedding cake.<sup>123</sup> Photography magazines, for their part, documented the growing popularity of Western-style wedding dresses. In the April 1948 issue, *Kamera* published Matsuda Masahi's portrait of film

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<sup>123</sup> As Walter Edwards details, symbolism of Western weddings became incorporated into the commercialization of weddings in postwar Japan. During the 1950s and 60s in particular, "commercial specialists" managed wedding halls and manipulated Western wedding symbols to create increasingly standardized wedding formats in Japan. By participating in such standardized weddings, couples contribute to "a remarkable uniformity in contemporary weddings that contrasts sharply with the diversity of customs of the prewar period." See Walter Edwards, *Modern Japan Through its Weddings: Gender, Person, and Society in Ritual Portrayal* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), 42.

actress Hara Setsuko (1920-2015) in a wedding veil,<sup>124</sup> and in the March 1951 issue printed a photo of legendary actor Mifune Toshiro (1920-1997) posing in a suit with his bride, who wears an elegant Western wedding gown.<sup>125</sup> One more poignant example of magazines' fascination with American popular culture is a photo spread from the June 30, 1954 issue of *Asahi Guraifu* illustrating the American custom of eating ice cream. Photographs in the spread depict Japanese men, women, and children enjoying ice cream cones "Japanese style"—that is, by sitting down rather than walking while eating, as was the custom in the U.S.

Another Western custom that drew the interest of photographers was Christmas. Despite its Christian origins and traditions, the adoption of Christmas as a holiday became popular in Japan when decorations started appearing in cities from the first year of the Occupation. Photographers documented the proliferation of Christmas decorations in urban areas like Tokyo. *Asahi Guraifu*, for example, printed a two-page spread in a December 1946 issue that depicted Christmas tree decorations inside Takashimaya Department Store in Nihombashi, Tokyo. Additional images in the spread included a couple looking at a Christmas "decoration cake" in a café in Shinjuku Station, a man painting Santa Claus on a signboard in Osaka, and young girls practicing in a church choir. As with Western and Japanese clothing styles, editors frequently juxtaposed photos showing Christmas imagery to images that contained objects symbolic of Japanese culture. In their January 1950 issue, *Kamera* printed a calendar that spanned six pages. The first image of the spread was a still life of a *kokeshi* doll (wooden doll) and plum blossoms, and the last image portrayed a woman holding a Santa Claus mask standing against a backdrop filled with Christmas decorations. The juxtaposition of these images again demonstrates how

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<sup>124</sup> "Matsuda Masahi's Portrait Album" (Matsuda Masahi jinbutsu shashin—shū).

<sup>125</sup> "Looking at the Album" (Arubamu haiken).

magazines negotiated Western influences by showing the absorption of Western culture into Japanese cultural practices.<sup>126</sup>

One more example comes from the December 1948 issue of *Kōga Gekkan*. On the left page, the viewer sees a photograph of two Japanese children decorating a Christmas tree.<sup>127</sup> The girl wears a collared jumper and has bows pinned in her hair, and the boy is dressed in dark shorts and a knit cardigan. The scene is one that many Americans might have found in their own homes around the December holidays. The photo on the right page—Horie Fukutaro’s “Night Composition” (Yoru no kōzu)—shows a kitten looking up at a demon (*oni*) mask floating eerily against a black background. In Japan, *oni* masks are commonly associated with *setsubun*, a holiday in February that marks the first day of spring. Because *setsubun* was originally observed on Japan’s old calendrical system, it marks the transition from the old year to the new one and is, therefore, similar to New Years’ Eve.

The two images in this spread are a contrast in light and dark tones. Lighting infuses the image of the Christmas tree, allowing the viewer to pick out details of the tree laden with baubles and shiny tinsel. The children also project a bright image, neatly dressed and beaming at the camera. By contrast, the image on the right is dark and, at first glance, foreboding. But a deeper consideration of the two holidays reveals that these are not merely simple contrasts of light and dark. Cats have long been symbolic of good fortune in Japan, and both Christmas and *setsubun*

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<sup>126</sup> Christmas, for example, remained a popular theme in December publications. In their December 14, 1955 issue, *Asahi Guraifu* printed a feature spread on a man identified as Mr. I, a 43-year-old professional Santa Claus. Working nine hours a day, Mr. I earned 30,000 yen during December by greeting children at the entrance to a Tokyo department store. Two of the pictures show Mr. I dressed as Santa Claus waving to children in the street. Another shows him getting dressed with the help of a department store employee. And a third image shows him smoking in the breakroom with his colleagues: seven Japanese women dressed as Mrs. Claus. In keeping with the Christmas spirit, a column on the left side of the spread advertises nylons as a “splendid Christmas present” (*mezurashii xmas purezento*). The accompanying text suggested a connection between the celebration of Christmas the Occupation when it noted that the previous year, a cheerful GI had patted Mr. I on the shoulder as he passed Santa Claus to enter the department store.

<sup>127</sup> Ozaki Kyōtarō, “Good Friends” (*Naka yoshi*).

invite good fortune as well. Christmas does so by celebrating the birth of Christ as a triumph over sin (i.e., Satan/the devil). *Setsubun* similarly includes rituals to cast out demons: a common practice involves scattering beans around the house or throwing them out open doors while shouting, “Demons out! Good fortune in!” (*Oni wa soto! Fuku wa uchi!*).<sup>128</sup> The spread, then, is not simply one that contrasts holidays or the technique of tonal contrasts. Instead, it draws similarities between the two holidays and simultaneously demonstrates that they were both part of Japan’s cultural landscape.

Christmas, ice cream, Hollywood film, and fashion are but a few examples of the impact that American popular culture exerted on Occupied Japan. But it should be noted that cultural exchange was not unidirectional. For example, *Asahi Kamera* printed a photograph of the American pro baseball player Larry Raines (1930-1978) playing *hanafuda* (a Japanese card game) while lounging in *yukata* at a traditional Japanese inn in Tokyo,<sup>129</sup> and *Asahi Guraifu* documented Johnson Airbase chief engineer John M. MacFarland III’s passion for sumo wrestling.<sup>130</sup> Noting that MacFarland had been granted special permission to participate in the summer Sumo Wrestling Matches at the Ryōgoku Sumo Stadium in May of that year, the news pictorial included photos that show MacFarland competing in a match at the tournament, sitting cross-legged on tatami flooring drinking beer with other Japanese wrestlers, and practicing with his Japanese coach in the sumo ring that he built in the backyard of his house in Japan.

In its September 1955 issue, *Asahi Guraifu* printed a spread on twenty-one-year-old Ruby L. Burt from Easthampton, Massachusetts, who literally immersed herself in Japanese life. As a

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<sup>128</sup> Michael Dylan Foster, *The Book of Yokai: Mysterious Creatures of Japanese Folklore* (Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015), 124-125.

<sup>129</sup> Hayashi Tadahiko, “Pro Baseball Player, Larry Rains” (Reinzu Senshu), *Asahi Kamera*, February 1954.

<sup>130</sup> “Sumo wrestling with blue eyes” (Aoi me o shita o sumou wa), *Asahi Guraifu*, June 17, 1953.

participant in the Farm Youth Exchange Program, Ruby worked as a farmhand for the Suzuki family in Ibaraki Prefecture. The photos show her thoroughly absorbed in Japanese farm life, as she dances in summer *yukata*, eats a *teishoku* meal with chopsticks, and sleeps on a Japanese futon. At night, she reads English-language newspapers to the family's children to help them practice English. Aside from working on the farm, the text revealed, Burt enjoyed wearing a kimono and folk dancing. After leaving the Suzuki farm, the American planned to visit eight additional prefectures before returning home. The photos of Ruby Burt, together with those of Larry Raines playing *hanafuda* and John MacFarland engaged in sumo matches, demonstrate just some of the lively exchange that took place between Japanese and Americans in the early postwar.

Thus far, we have been discussing the multiple “Americas” in photo magazines and news pictorials: America as a liberating presence, as an authoritative presence, and as a seducing presence. The photos that constructed these different “Americas” were published under the watchful eye of SCAP censors. Accordingly, the portrayals aligned with what SCAP deemed acceptable—which, generally speaking, was photos that represented the U.S. in a favorable light. Needless to say, many photographers could—and did—capture more unflattering, and at times outright critical, depictions of the Occupation. But these were ferreted away and did not see the light of day until much later, after the Occupation ended. Okumura Taiko is one photographer who consistently engaged the Occupiers with his camera, photographing them in close confines on the street, in public transit, and even outside their base housing homes. These photos, which remained unpublished well into the postwar era, appeared in three photobooks decades after Japan regained sovereignty. We turn next to Okumura's extraordinary images in *Elegy of a Lost War: Yokohama Photo Document* (*Haisen no aika: Yokohama foto dokyumento*, 1981), *The*

*Reemergence of Yokohama: The Story of the Lost War Photographed by Two People* (Yokohama saigen: futari de usushita haisen sutorii, 1996), and *Living in Postwar Yokohama* (Sengo Yokohama ni ikiru, 2016).

### The Occupation in Okumura Taiko's Images

When Okumura Taiko began to document the human presence in Yokohama, shooting in the style of human-interest street photography was a new experience for the amateur.<sup>131</sup> Before the war, Okumura had been interested in salon pictures of beautiful women. But with the ruins of Yokohama before him, Okumura knew he could no longer devote his camera to art photography. Instead, he felt compelled to photograph Yokohama as it was after defeat and under occupation.<sup>132</sup> What caught Okumura's eye as he walked the city's streets were day laborers, vagrants, pimps, drunk foreigners, *pan pan*, orphans, and "Allied personnel seemingly surveilling ordinary Japanese" (*Nihonjin wo kantoku shite iru yōna shinchūgun heishi*).<sup>133</sup> Hesitant at first to aim his camera at these subjects, Okumura ultimately felt compelled to do so, he wrote, because at the time they appeared only in "dry" news photos that lacked an emotional register. Having faced the same circumstances of defeat, poverty, and occupation as his subjects, Okumura attempted to craft a lyrical quality in his images that would provoke an empathetic response. "I released the shutter," Okumura remembers, "shaken by feelings."<sup>134</sup>

Okumura often submitted his work to photography magazines during this period, but little of that work included his photographs of the Occupation. Two exceptions were a

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<sup>131</sup> Nonami Yutaka, *Haisen no aika*, 19.

<sup>132</sup> Okumura, "Atogaki," in *Haisen no aika*, 191.

<sup>133</sup> The editors of *Living in Postwar Yokohama* mention this as well, stating that Okumura at first believed the Occupying soldiers to be "secretly watching the Japanese," 25.

<sup>134</sup> *Haisen no Aika*, 191. Okumura himself cared deeply for those affected most by the war. In October 1945, he was approached to help found the Yokohama City War Victims Alliance. As part of this work, the Alliance built a boys' home and two clinics for sex workers, in addition to a food hall that had an endless line of hungry patrons.

photograph of a young Japanese man taking care of foreign children and an image of American base housing. The former was published in the July 1950 issue of *Foto Āto* under the title “At a Foreigner’s House” (Gaijin hausu nite). As it appeared in the magazine, neither the title nor the caption gave any indication that the setting was connected to the Occupation. In the photobook *Elegy of a Lost War*, Okumura identifies the figure in the photo as a “houseboy,” and he placed the image alongside others taken on a dependents housing site. The second of Okumura’s published images of the Occupation was a landscape photo of base housing in Yokohama that appeared in the 1950 *ARS Shashin Nenkan*. Although the photo’s subject is obviously base housing, it is identified in the caption, euphemistically, as a “new sight in Yokohama” (*Yokohama shin fūkei*).

Aside from these two instances, the other images in Okumura’s three photobooks provide a different perspective on the Occupying presence than that found in photography magazines and news pictorials. To be sure, Okumura captured similar subjects as those that appeared in photographic media; English-language signage, Christmas decorations, Hollywood film posters, and GIs roaming the city streets populate his images. But whereas photography magazines and news pictorials emphasized American authority or cast the U.S. as a liberating presence, Okumura offered a more critical representation. He achieved this critical portrayal of the Occupation in several ways: by juxtaposing suffering and poverty in Japanese society with American affluence; by capturing instances of Japanese citizens in the service of American GIs; by emphasizing elements of the ridiculous that made the Occupation seem absurd or grotesque; and by photographing bi-racial orphans.

The chapter titled “Base City” (Zenshi kichi) in *Elegy of a Lost War* opens with photographs contrasting the “neocolonial” American presence with Japanese poverty and war



defeat. The viewer first sees photos of newly-built American base housing. Turning the page, the viewer next sees photos of empty plots and ruined buildings. And then on the next page, the viewer sees more examples of base housing, as well as a golf course on land requisitioned for the exclusive use of Occupation personnel.<sup>135</sup> Many of the dependents housing areas, including the famous Washington Heights in Tokyo, were replete with amenities, including golf links, tennis courts, schools, theaters, churches, stores, and well-equipped hospitals. These amenities, in the words of Yoshimi Shunya, “suddenly came like a mirage” in the early postwar and unequivocally demonstrated the lifestyle of the “rich Americans.”<sup>136</sup> Photographer Tōmatsu Shōmei, a child during the Occupation, described the difference in American and Japanese lifestyles in Tokyo:

The shortage of food was especially painful for rapidly growing children. However, supplies were abundant on the other side of the metal fences and barbed wire that surrounded the U.S. base. The U.S. side looked bright, like heaven, while on this side, there was hell as we struggled with starvation and poverty.<sup>137</sup>

Like *Elegy of a Lost War*, the first pages of *The Reemergence of Yokohama* juxtaposed Occupied space and Japanese ruins. Opening the book, the reader first sees a photograph of a Caucasian woman reading an English-language newspaper next to a “No Parking” sign. On the next page is a photo depicting a burned cityscape in ruins. Following this, the editors included a photograph of urban ruins alongside an image taken at the perimeter of base housing. In the former, the viewer sees a site that was common immediately after the war: empty lots filled with

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<sup>135</sup> The Japanese government was required to pay for base and dependents housing and other facilities utilized by the Occupation even though nearly four million Japanese families were still homeless in 1948. The Japanese government also funded the “modernization” of requisitioned housing to meet American standards by updating electricity and plumbing and installing appliances such as stoves and toilets. See Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 115.

<sup>136</sup> Yoshimi Shunya, *Shinbei to hanbei sengonihon no seidjiteki muishiki*, (Tokyo: Iwatami Shoten, 2007), 127.

<sup>137</sup> Tōmatsu Shōmei, “Toward a Chaotic Sea,” trans. Takaya Imamura, in *Setting Sun: Writings By Japanese Photographers*, ed. Ivan Vartanian, et al. (New York: Aperture, 2005), 30. Originally published in *Taiyo no enpitsu* (Tokyo: Mainichi Newspapers, 1975).

rubble, with a few intact buildings punctuating the otherwise scorched landscape. In the latter, titled “American Military Camp at Kominato” (Kominato beigunkyanpu), the image affords a distant view of automobiles and multi-story homes seen through a chain-link fence that stretches across the entire frame. But rather than draw attention to the homes in the background, Okumura focuses the viewer’s gaze on a sign fastened to the fence in the foreground. Printed in English with a Japanese translation, the message was common during the Occupation: “This is a U.S. Forces installation. Unauthorized Entry is prohibited and is punishable under Japanese law.” By placing these two photos side-by-side, the editors contrast the comparative luxury of American base housing facilities to the ruinous state of Japanese cities—while also highlighting the lines of exclusion erected between Japanese society and the Allied forces.

Okumura recorded the lush amenities of base housing complexes in photographs of tennis courts, American children playing in newly constructed parks, and a large church surrounded by row upon row of gleaming automobiles. The caption to one of the photographs reveals that the land on which a Japanese horse racing track once stood had been seized to make way for an American golf course for Occupation use (*Beikoku gorufujō*). In the photo, empty spectator stands looming in the distance hint at the space’s former use. Below this, the editors placed a photo of two billboards in English: one an advertisement for Chevrolet, the other for a golf club and golf shop in Bashamichi, Yokohama. Both have been erected next to a Japanese cemetery overgrown with weeds and clinging plants. Here, Okumura has represented America’s privileged status as the Occupier, connoted through symbols of leisure, appropriated space, and material affluence. Tellingly, he contrasted this privileged status with a symbol of death that represents Japan as the defeated nation.

In many photos, requisitioned buildings served as a backdrop, underscoring the different spheres that Allied personnel and Japanese citizens inhabited. The Flyer Gym, for instance, stretches across the background in a photo of a street advertisement for the Kawashima Clothing Store (Kawashima yōfuku-ten).<sup>138</sup> Okumura snapped the image while standing in front of the Octagon Theater, formerly the Odeon Theater, yet another space appropriated for the Occupier's exclusive use. Another photo shows a group of men and women reading the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* in front of the Matsuya Department Store, a building that the Occupation appropriated to use as a PX.<sup>139</sup> To cite one more example, Okumura photographed two automobiles parked outside the Zebra Club, a bar for non-commissioned officers.<sup>140</sup> According to the caption, the club had a rich menu of steaks and sandwiches, food that would have been unthinkable to the Japanese at the time due to food shortages. In each of these photos, Okumura reveals the physical boundaries that separated the Japanese and Americans and points to the seeming material abundance that the Occupiers enjoyed.

In all three of his photobooks, Okumura documented examples of segregated spaces. A chapter titled “American Soldiers” (Amerika-hei) in *Elegy of a Lost War* opens with a series of photos taken outside the Yokohama Service Club. Some GIs walk through the entrance to the club, while others are captured loitering in groups on the sidewalk. All wear crisp, clean uniforms. On the second floor of the building, a lounge is clearly visible behind a bank of windows. A row of plush seats has been oriented to face the street, allowing the American

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<sup>138</sup> “In front of the Octagon Theater” (Okutagon gekijō mae), 1952.

<sup>139</sup> “Isezaki-chō 1-chōme” (Isezaki-chō ichi-chōme), 1952.

<sup>140</sup> “U.S. Army Tavern Zebra Club” (Beigun sakaba zeburakurabu), 1950. The space was off limits to Japanese except for employees and musicians.

occupants a lofty view onto the sidewalk traffic below—recalling Okumura’s description of American GIs surveilling Japanese citizens.

Interestingly, only a few of Okumura’s photos record direct encounters between Japanese citizens and Allied forces. For the most part, Japanese and Americans seem to inhabit separate lives. One photograph of a street scene outside the Yokohama PX shows Occupation officers in uniform walking towards the camera with their wives and small children in tow. This scene appears on the right side of the frame, while three Japanese men stand by a fence in the middle of the frame, and a lone Japanese man sells balloons on the left. A large sign posted to the wooden fence, visible between the balloon stand and the group of three men, reads, “Yen sales now located in PX snack bar.” Despite the proximity of the three groups pictured here, the apparent lack of engagement between the Americans and the Japanese men highlights the socio-economic lines that separated the lives of the Occupier and the Occupied.

One other street snapshot that shows the lack of engagement between Japanese and Americans is a scene of an elderly Japanese man walking past a group of Occupation service members. Okumura took the photo from chest level, and the frame is tilted slightly to the right, suggesting he snapped the shutter quickly while walking past the people in the image. A bespectacled Japanese man on the right side of the frame walks down the street with a cane, looking straight at the camera. On the left half of the frame, a group of women and men in uniform stand on the sidewalk smiling and laughing. The women have turned their attention to the left, away from the Japanese man walking behind them. The three male GIs face toward the man, but the man does not return their gaze. Indeed, there is no interaction between the Japanese man and the Americans. The compositional techniques that Okumura employed create a further distinction between the people pictured. The Japanese man is off to the side, further away from

Okumura's camera than the Americans in the foreground; and this perspective renders the Japanese man small and insignificant compared to the uniform-clad Allied personnel, whose forms stretch from the bottom to the top of the frame.

Indeed, in many photos, the Occupationaires seem to pointedly ignore the Japanese pictured within the frame. One image depicts a war veteran wearing the typical white robes of a wounded repatriated soldier. Okumura pressed the shutter just as the veteran reached out with an alms box toward two GIs in uniform. The former soldier leans forward as if to get the GIs' attention, putting him slightly off balance on his prosthetic leg. The man looks toward the GIs but casts his gaze downward as the GIs pass by, his view obscured by a military cap pulled low over his eyes. The GIs do not respond, ignoring the man and looking straight ahead. The same repatriated soldier appears in another photograph, taken on a later date. The scene is the same: a wounded war veteran on the right extending his alms box toward passing GIs. Two sailors walk past, each accompanied by Japanese women wearing long winter coats, black heels, and sporting trendy hairstyles. This time the veteran holds his head up, looking at the faces of the two sailors and their Japanese companions. But the passing group ignores the former soldier, instead looking to the ground or straight ahead. By capturing scenes in which Allied personnel ignore those suffering as a direct result of war and defeat, Okumura offers us photos that convey a contemptuous assessment of the Occupation's presence in his city.

It is clear from his photographs that Okumura intentionally accentuated details that juxtaposed the poverty of Japanese citizens to the affluence of Allied servicemen and women. In an image titled "Repatriated Soldier and GI" (Kikan-hei to GI), printed in all three photobooks, a man identified as a repatriated soldier stands on the street looking straight into the camera with an intense, yet wearied, visage. His gaze, locked onto the camera, invites the viewer to examine

details within the image: the man's sharp cheekbones, the bags under his eyes, and a grim, somber expression—all conveying a sense of exhaustion. The GIs in the scene have been slightly blurred by a small depth of field that renders only the Japanese man, standing still in the foreground, in sharp focus. Their robust appearance—and especially that of the portly looking American directly behind the man—accentuate his haggard appearance and shabby clothing.

A small number of Okumura's photographs do show some interaction between Japanese and Americans; but in these instances, the Japanese subjects perform some kind of service. Two images, mentioned above, depict a "houseboy" watching over children cavorting on a playground in a dependents housing area. Another photo depicts a Japanese street artist quickly sketching two sailors who have stopped to have their picture drawn.<sup>141</sup> Several images show Allied servicemen getting their shoes shined, invariably depicting Japanese women or children kneeling demeaningly at the feet of American soldiers. In each image, the Japanese are rendered in a subservient position relative to the Allied personnel.<sup>142</sup>

Okumura further portrayed the Occupation critically by depicting absurd occurrences or seemingly odd-looking subjects. One image of a sailor leaning out of a taxi window appears in all three photobooks. Titled "GI Riding a Taxi" (Takushii ni noru GI), the sailor is laughing as he points to something out of sight to the left of the frame. The man's face is obscured by a pair of outlandish sunglasses with thick, white plastic frames, but his white uniform and cap identify

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<sup>141</sup> *Asahi Guraifu* ran a story on the life of a street sketch artist in the June 25, 1952 issue titled "Street Atelier" (Gaitō no atorie). Plying their trade outside the Tokyo PX in Ginza, the street artists catered to a mainly American clientele. Amateur photographers submitted similar photographs to magazines. *Foto Ato* printed a photo by Kurogo Teuro of a sketch artist rendering the portrait of an American sailor in Tokyo (June 1953). Another amateur photographer submitted a similar scene to *Asahi Kamera*, featured in the October 1953 issue.

<sup>142</sup> In addition, the photobooks include numerous photos of Japanese women in the red light districts being solicited by GIs. Taken by Tokiwa Toyoko, Okumura's wife, these photos date to the late 1950s, and are thus outside the scope of this dissertation. However, Tokiwa's images align with Okumura's derisive representation of the Occupation. Many show scenes of GIs soliciting Japanese women, scenes that are saturated with the threat of violence.

him as an American sailor. This style of eyewear was fashionable for most of the 1940s in the U.S., but rendered through Okumura's lens, they lend the GI a cartoonish appearance. The absurdity of his visage is amplified by the photograph placed alongside it in *Elegy of a Lost War*: the exhausted repatriated soldier in shabby dress mentioned above. In *The Reemergence of Yokohama*, the comical aspect of the same scene is compounded by the image of an obese GI placed on the opposing page.<sup>143</sup> Okumura photographed the large soldier from waist level, using an upward angle that, combined with close cropping, accentuated the man's girth. The laughing sailor and corpulent GI—both symbolic of American wealth and greed—seem to mock the Japanese citizens, who appear drab and impoverished in Okumura's photos.

A final primary subject in Okumura's work is that of orphans. Some of these children were war orphans living at a boy's home in Yokohama. Others were biracial children who had been left at orphanages by their mothers. Okumura took several images of the latter at Seibo Aijien, an orphanage established in 1946 by Franciscan nuns.<sup>144</sup> A noticeable contrast is evident in the photographs of war orphans and biracial children. While Okumura photographed uniformed GIs posing with the war orphans at a boy's home, none appear in any of the photographs of biracial children. Instead, the latter are pictured solely in the presence of Japanese nuns or other female caregivers. This contrast reflects the Occupation's stance towards the children orphaned by war as opposed to those born out of fraternization. Whereas the Occupation provided charity to war orphans to demonstrate American benevolence and goodwill (discussed

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<sup>143</sup> Titled "Fat Soldier" (Futtota heitai), this man also appears in *Elegy of a Lost War* and *Living in Postwar Yokohama*. The editors of the latter photobook note that Okumura took many photographs of this man who was "bursting out of his clothes," 203.

<sup>144</sup> The orphanage was originally established for orphans whose parents died in the war, but by 1948 it housed as many as 126 children born from fraternization between Allied forces and Japanese women. Elizabeth Ryan, letter dated January 28, 1948. Quoted in Yoshida Reiji, "Mixed-race babies in lurch: Fact of Occupation Life: Abandoned kids from GI-Japanese liaisons," *The Japan Times* September 10, 2008. <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2008/09/10/national/mixed-race-babies-in-lurch/>.

in more detail in Chapter VII), SCAP officially refused to acknowledge the steadily increasing number of children born out of fraternization.

In June 1946, SCAP added the topic of fraternization, and the children born from such relationships, to the list of topics subject to censorship. Even American reporters faced backlash for writing about it. In 1948, journalist Darrell Berrigan lamented in the *Saturday Evening Post* that there were no official figures for biracial orphans, and asserted that “there never will be so long as the Allied authorities have anything to say about it.” Berrigan proclaimed that SCAP would never admit that numerous biracial orphans existed because the children threatened to taint its public image. In response to Berrigan’s outspokenness, SCAP officials revoked his press credentials and forced him to leave Japan.<sup>145</sup> When the Occupation ended, however, so did its control over the media. Now unfettered by censorship, Japanese commentators immediately began discussing the *konketsuji mondai*, or the “problem of mixed-blood children.” The fact of their having a non-Japanese father, together with their foreign appearance, condemned these children to the margins of a society that valued blood purity.<sup>146</sup> The children, and, by extension, the American soldiers who fathered them, quickly became a problematic presence in Japan.

#### America’s “Problematic” Presence in Japan

Photographs and news reports began to turn a more critical eye toward America’s continued presence in Japan after 1952. This shift first came with news coverage of the signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty, which returned national sovereignty to Japan. The peace treaty was by and large favorable towards Japan;<sup>147</sup> however, the bilateral security treaty that

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<sup>145</sup> Michael Cullen Green, *Black Yanks in the Pacific: Race in the Making of American Military Empire after World War II* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 90.

<sup>146</sup> Harumi Befu, “Concepts of Japan, Japanese Culture and the Japanese,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Japanese Culture*, ed. Yoshio Sugimoto (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 34.

<sup>147</sup> Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 552.



Japan and the U.S. signed at the same time was not without controversy. Under the treaty, Japan agreed to allow U.S. military bases to remain active throughout Japan; to surrender the sovereignty of Okinawa to the U.S.; and to rely on the U.S. defense umbrella for military security. The treaty faced backlash from the political left and right alike in Japan, which criticized Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru for agreeing to a “subordinate independence.”<sup>148</sup>

Criticism of the treaty spilled over into violence on May 1, 1952, a day known as “Bloody May Day,” when protestors of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty gathered in front of the Imperial Palace. When they refused to leave, police officers opened fire, killing two people and injuring another twenty-two.<sup>149</sup> By the time the bloody clash was over, around 2,300 protestors and police officers had sustained injuries.<sup>150</sup> This event started what would eventually become nearly a decade of anti-base and anti-remilitarization protests.<sup>151</sup> It is within this context that critical depictions of the U.S. began to appear in photo magazines and illustrated news periodicals, evidencing a shift from earlier portrayals of America’s liberating, authoritative, and seducing presence.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan*, 241.

<sup>149</sup> Nick Kapur, *Japan at the Crossroads: Conflict and Compromise after Anpo* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018), 14.

<sup>150</sup> Hasegawa Kenji, “Experiencing the 1952 Bloody May Day Incident,” *Journal of the International Student Center, Yokohama National University* 11 (2004): 98.

<sup>151</sup> Filmmaker Linda Hoaglund has examined how “reportage painters” in the 1950s created artworks that protested what she describes as the continued “post-occupation Occupation by the US military.” According to Hoaglund, these artists who combined realism and surrealism techniques in order to highlight social oppression, poverty, political corruption, and the return of wartime militarists to positions of political power. See Hoaglund, “Protest Art in 1950s Japan.”

<sup>152</sup> According to Yoshimi Shunya, two “Americas” began to appear by the end of the 1950s. One, an object of lifestyle consumption, continued to act as a “seducing” presence. The other was the object of anti-base protest and thus “embedded in violence.” Yoshimi Shunya, trans. David Buist, “‘America’ as Desire and Violence: Americanization in Postwar Japan and Asia during the Cold War,” *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 4, no. 3 (2003): 441. The protests only subsided in 1960 when the security treaty was revised and replaced with a new agreement that provided more parity between the two nations. For example, whereas before the U.S. could deploy forces based in Japan in military engagements without Japan’s prior consent, the new treaty (renamed the Treaty of Mutual

Criticism of America's continued presence in Japan was manifested most visibly through images depicting biracial children and fraternization. Kawada Kikuji's "Boys at a base" (Kichi Tachikawa no kodomotachi) conveys the sense of impurity associated with biracial orphans not only because of their "mixed blood," but also because their fathers were American military personnel.<sup>153</sup> In the photo, a boy tromps around by himself, seemingly without adult supervision. He appears disheveled, wearing a rumpled striped shirt that clashes with plaid trousers and rubber galoshes splattered with rain and mud. The boy's body tilts slightly to one side, and his feet appear somewhat pigeon-toed, thus creating asymmetrical lines that suggest tension and instability. Behind him stretches a circus poster—filled mostly by the bare legs of a female performer.

The boy's unbalanced stance and light brown hair, the location at the Tachikawa base, and the naked legs of the woman in the poster all combine to imply the sexual promiscuity associated with American military bases. This sentiment was apparent to commentators as well. In a special edition of *Kamera* magazine released in 1955, commentators wrote that the boy at Tachikawa Base reflected the Americanizing influence of GIs at military bases—seen obviously as a negative. The boy seemed to be of an "innocent age," the critics wrote, but the bad influence of American GIs "can be seen in his clothing and demeanor . . . the atmosphere of the base has penetrated the child."<sup>154</sup>

The severe social stigma surrounding biracial orphans led many mothers to leave their children in the care of orphanages, leading the government to declare their existence a

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Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan, or Anpo in Japanese) required that the U.S. inform Japan before mobilizing forces.

<sup>153</sup> *ARS Shashin Nenkan*, 1954.

<sup>154</sup> Yoshimi Shunya, "What Does 'America' Mean in Postwar Japan?," 83-87.

considerable social concern. However, in an attempt to incite a “moral panic” over the existence of “mixed-blood” children in Japanese society, commentators and government officials grossly inflated the number of these children and claimed that they were all unwanted by their parents.<sup>155</sup> Thus, as historian Kristin Roebuck has argued, the *konketsuji mondai* was a “manufactured crisis,” produced by racial nationalists responding to fears over the Americanization of Japanese culture and society. In other words, the commentary on biracial orphans was a highly politicized attempt to identify their existence as a social problem tied explicitly to America’s presence in Japan.<sup>156</sup>

Fears about the *konketsuji mondai* proliferated in photography magazines and news pictorials. Media reports conveyed the concerns that many Japanese citizens harbored over the existence of biracial children in their communities. One Japanese citizen wondered what would “happen to the children when they get older,” suggesting that their heritage would make it difficult, if not impossible, to survive in Japanese society.<sup>157</sup> Many Japanese citizens also took a negative view of the biracial orphans’ mothers for “prostituting” themselves to the Occupying American forces, sometimes condemning the women as national traitors who threatened the pure Japanese bloodline.<sup>158</sup> The quote above appeared in a report on the prostitution that flourished on the outskirts of an American military base near Mt. Fuji. The text described the U.S.-occupied

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<sup>155</sup> In reality, most mothers kept their children, and those who left their children in orphanages usually did so as a result of public contempt for the children. At one point, government workers were even sent to households with biracial children to ask whether the parents would relinquish custody. See Kristin Roebuck, “Orphans by Design: ‘Mixed-blood’ Children, Child Welfare, and Racial Nationalism in Postwar Japan,” *Japanese Studies*, 32, no. 2 (2016).

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 193.

<sup>157</sup> “Camera Report: Karamatsu Forest” (Kamera fudoki: Karamatsu no hayashi), January 14, 1953, n.p. *Asahi Guraifu* titled the English translation “What Fujiyama Sees Today.”

<sup>158</sup> Jaehwan, “In the Name of Human Adaptation,” 174.

area as a leisure district for the American forces, whose presence had attracted hundreds of young women to work in the “Geisha houses” that they frequented.

*Asahi Guraifu* followed this report up a few months later with another on prostitution near Mt. Fuji.<sup>159</sup> The English-language text described *pan pan* who catered to GIs on leave from the nearby base. What was once a quiet resort town with traditional souvenir shops, the text lamented, had become a rowdy entertainment hub filled with cabarets for the GIs. Other press coverage on prostitution that catered to American forces followed a similar narrative. In a spread titled “Garrison Problems” (Chūryū-chi mondai, September 24, 1952), *Asahi Guraifu* reported on Yokosuka residents who complained that the whole town had become a red light district (*zenshi akasenkuiki*) for streetwalkers and their American clientele. Even the accompanying English-language translations problematized fraternization: “Seamen and street walkers flood Yokosuka when the U.S. Fleet arrives. It creates a serious social problem, but the fun lovers don’t seem to mind any harsh criticism on the part of the public. Japan faces a serious problem in the post-war era.” As these spreads indicate, news pictorials that reported on fraternization problematized the actions of the sex workers and their American clientele by framing their interaction (and the children they bore) as a broader societal issue.<sup>160</sup>

At times, commentary in photography magazines expressed a weariness regarding the sight of Japanese women cavorting with American men. For *Kamera*’s March 1954 *getsurei*, one amateur submitted a photograph of an American sailor and a Japanese woman seated on a crowded train. The woman leans into the man’s lap and looks up into his face, and he returns her

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<sup>159</sup> April 8, 1953. “Fuji enshuu-chi kawai” (the magazine translated the title into “Fujiyama Frows at Them”).

<sup>160</sup> Prime Minister Ashida Hitoshi’s government submitted the first postwar anti-prostitution bill to the Second Session of the Diet in 1948. Responding to growing sentiment against *pan pan* and base prostitution, the bill targeted female sex workers and would have made the workers as well as their clients subject to up to two years of hard labor and a 10,000 yen fine for the first offense alone. See Kovner, *Occupying Power*, 104-105. Even though the bill was first proposed in 1948, it was not until May of 1956 that the Diet passed the Anti-Prostitution Law.

gaze as he cradles her head in his arms. A Japanese man sits in the foreground, his white robes making him immediately recognizable as a wounded war veteran. The three subjects sit across from one another, their proximity amplified by the close-up perspective and tight cropping of the frame. In their commentary on the contest, judges Kimura Ihei and Domon Ken remarked that “the flirting U.S. soldier and the licentious woman are one appearance of Japan (*masani Nihon no hitotsu no sugatadearu*).” The judges applauded the photographer for capturing an emotionally charged scene that made the judges feel “overwhelmed” (*jōkei ni attō sa rete shimatta*).<sup>161</sup>

Photo spreads that depicted fraternization often portrayed it as a widespread problem affecting not just the red-light districts, but whole communities. In their May 1954 issue, *Kamera* printed amateur Kakekawa Gen’ichirō’s *getsurei* submissions as a photo story on Americans stationed on Chitose Base in Hokkaido (fig. 5.10). Kakekawa recorded numerous instances of Japanese women laughing in the company of American men. In one photo, a man wraps his arms around a woman in front of Café Cute, an establishment that enticed patrons with a sign simply advertising “Girls, Whiskey.” In the accompanying text, Kakekawa complained about the problems that the troops had brought to the area. In addition to prostitution, the troops were responsible for the proliferation of pawnshops and drug trafficking. The amateur seemed to harbor no hope for the future, wondering when the day would come when the town would be purified (*jōka sa reru hi wa itsuka*).<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Itō Tomiharu, “In the car” (*shachū nite*), *Kamera*, March 1954. According to the text, there were 15,000 soldiers from Oklahoma stationed on the base.

<sup>162</sup> Kakekawa Gen’ichirō, “Base Town Chitose” (*Kichi no machi Chitose*), *Kamera*, May 1954.



Figure 5.10. Kakekawa Gen'ichirō. "Base Town Chitose." *Kamera*, May 1954.

Prostitution was just one of the many social problems commentators connected to the Americans who lived on military bases in Japan after the Occupation. During the Occupation, censors had suppressed reports on violence perpetrated by GIs for fear that it would tarnish the image of the Occupation.<sup>163</sup> Once Japan regained sovereignty, however, reports on incidents committed by American GIs and other UN troops stationed in Japan during the Korean War appeared with increasing frequency. One dramatic photo story in the October 7, 1953 edition of *Asahi Guraifu* would have been unthinkable just a few years before. Submitted by one of the magazine's readers, the spread documented a series of violent encounters between American GIs

<sup>163</sup> According to Dower, instances of assault and rape were not reported in the press, and few cases were reported to the police. After the Occupation, magazines and newspapers reported rapes committed by American GIs, as well as instances of Japanese men being assaulted in public. See *Embracing Defeat*, 213.

and the residents of Kobe.<sup>164</sup> Titled “American Sailors Acting Violently” (Amerika suihei dai abare), the two-page spread included seven photos with accompanying text. Each photo was charged with tension. One captures two men fighting, their faces mere inches from each other. The offset framing and blurred motion suggest that the photographer snapped the shutter quickly without taking time to compose the scene—thus accentuating its intensity. Another image shows a sailor being held up by his Companions, blood smeared across his pant legs. Yet a third captures the arrival of MPs who had been summoned to break up the fight and restore order.

Captions in Japanese and English explained what had happened that day in Kobe. The English text describes the event as a “scuffle” between American sailors and Japanese shop clerks and policemen. The incident started when one of the seamen shoplifted a pair of trousers, unaware that store clerks had caught him in the act. Other “disgraceful affairs” beyond this sailor’s infraction occurred on the same day. The text reported that many Japanese blamed the sailors’ reckless behavior on Japanese merchants who sold overpriced souvenirs to hundreds of “gift-hunting seamen.” While prostitutes in Kobe were glad for the sailors’ pocket money, the commentary went on, the general public was more wary of their presence. On this day alone, September 6<sup>th</sup>, there were five reported cases of violence caused, among other things, by overcharging for beer or raising taxi fare to double or triple the regular price.

Multiple elements come together in this spread to portray the U.S. military in an unfavorable light: the portrayal of violence perpetrated by American sailors; reporting on the duplicitous, profiteering way in which bars, shop keepers, and taxi drivers treated the sailors; and graphic images of sailors who had been injured in fights with Japanese men. One of the most prominent photos shows a Japanese man and an American sailor exchanging blows while

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<sup>164</sup> According to the caption, four U.S. sailors stole a pair of trousers, resulting in a street brawl with the Japanese shop clerks and a policeman.

spectators look on in the background. Next to this is another large photo that shows a sailor knocked out on the street being attended to by two of his peers. A Japanese crowd surrounds them, looking down at the sailor on the ground. This image counters earlier depictions of Japan as a defeated and occupied nation. Here, Japan looks down on the Americans, who lie bruised and bloody at their feet.

Notably, many of the reports on crime included updates regarding amended laws that now allowed Japanese courts to prosecute foreign nationals for crimes committed in Japan. The December 2, 1953 issue of *Asahi Guraifu* announced in a block of English text that on October 29, Japan had gained the right to prosecute “offenses against the Japanese laws by members of the U.N. forces and the civilian components.” The photographs show the arrest of a young GI who had fired his non-regulation pistol in a Yokohama café. The same issue included a spread titled “New Setup for Foreign Criminals” (Kyōtei kaitei-go no gaijin tomeoki-shitsu).<sup>165</sup> Five photographs arrayed across two pages show the Liaison Sub-Section, part of the Crime Investigation Section of Yokohama City Police Headquarters, as well as the interior of a police cell used for foreign criminals. The quarters for apprehended individuals were stark: small metal cots and a toilet placed in the corner of the holding cell. Yet a third photograph shows two jeeps parked outside the headquarters. Emblematic of the Occupation’s presence in Japan, jeeps had previously represented the power of the Occupation forces. But those pictured here belonged to the Yokohama City police force, which now had the power and the means to seize foreigners who violated Japanese laws.

The image of Japanese police in possession of formerly American jeeps, and their ability to police foreign military service members stationed in Japan, represented a stunning reversal

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<sup>165</sup> The English title is the translation provided by *Asahi Guraifu*. A more literal translation is “Foreigner Detention Room after the Revision of the Agreement.”



from just a few years prior. Nevertheless, photographers continued to lament the wearisome presence of American and other foreign troops, at times describing the “colonial atmosphere” that their presence created. Nakamura Chūzoū submitted his photo of two uniformed military men to *Kōga Gekkan*’s August 1952 *getsurei*. The amateur took the photograph from a distance, and the perspective looks down upon the two soldiers as they walk down a street in Ginza laden with shopping bags and boxes. The two men look in the direction of store window displays on their right, and Nakamura snapped the photo just as they walked underneath a sign written entirely in English. Although the awning of a storefront obscures half the sign, the viewer can make out the words “Goods” and “Metropolitan.” In his comments, the judge of the contest declared that the sight of these two uniformed men in a Tokyo street conveyed the colonial appearance of the city (*shokuminchiteki yōsō*).<sup>166</sup>

Nakamura was the same amateur who submitted his photo story on “Summer in Ginza” to *Asahi Kamera* in 1953 (see Chapter IV). Here, too, the judges proclaimed that the photos evoked the “heavy colonial atmosphere” (*hokuminchiteki fūbō*) then saturating the neighborhood.<sup>167</sup> In each photo, the photographer conveyed the colonial atmosphere by showing the Japanese in a position of subservience to Americans. One photo shows a couple shopping in a department store—with the woman holding up a shirt for her companion to see while talking to three sales clerks who stand in front of bright display cases laden with expensive goods. Another image depicts a different couple riding in a bicycle taxi. As their driver pedals down the street, a Japanese girl holds out a bouquet of flowers to the couple, who stare straight ahead and ignore the proffered gift.

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<sup>166</sup> Nakamura Chūzoū, “Ginza Street” (Ginza), *Kōga Gekkan*, August 1952.

<sup>167</sup> Nakamura Chūzoū, “Foreigners” (Kotokunibito), in “Natsu no Ginza dokusha no kumi shashin udekurabe,” *Asahi Kamera*, September 1953, 76-81.

One more image captures a Japanese woman bowing to a uniform-clad American servicewoman, her stooped shoulders and bowed head exaggerating the height difference between her and the tall American woman standing before her (fig. 5.11). The caption explains that the woman is begging for something from the American. As captured by the photographer, the scene presents a sharp tonal contrast between the two individuals: the Japanese woman in dark clothing, the American in a light-colored uniform. In the background, another American woman turns her attention to consider this exchange while her companion rummages in her purse for money to pay the street artist sketching her portrait. The caption declares that this sight—the begging woman and the street artist sketching portraits of foreign military personnel—is “street scenery as usual” (*aikawarazu no gaitō fūkei*) in postwar Japan.



Figure 5.11. Nakamura Chuūzoū, From “Foreigners” (Kotokunibito), in “Natsu no Ginza dokusha no kumi shashin udekurabe.” *Asahi Kamera*, September 1953.

### Negotiating Cultural Identity against Multiple “Americas”

Throughout the Occupation and into the 1950s, America was a looming presence in the everyday lives of Japanese. Japanese photographers imprinted their impression of this presence on film, offering portrayals of multiple “Americas” against which they re-imaged Japanese cultural identity. The portrayal of America’s “liberating” and “authoritative” presence found in *Tokyo Fall of 1945*, photography magazines, and news pictorials might seem at first glance to define Japan’s defeated and occupied status in the immediate postwar. However, a closer look at these representations also reveals what postwar Japanese identity *was not*: that is, militaristic and imperialist. By portraying the arrival of the Americans as a liberating force, *Tokyo Fall of 1945* expressed relief at the end of the war and the demise of Japan’s militarist government, as well as a welcoming of renewed democratic freedoms and expressions. Representations of America’s authoritative presence also documented the dismantling of Japan’s wartime leadership. And the images of America’s pervasive presence—seen, among other things, in English-language signs—indicated that the U.S. was now part of Japan’s “new” postwar landscape.

The image of America’s “seducing” presence that emerged from photographers’ works, on the other hand, documented the spread of American cultural influences—but on Japan’s terms. By sequencing photos that portrayed Western and Japanese material culture, and sometimes even by including elements of both within a single frame, editors and photographers projected a process of adoption and adaption that yielded cultural hybridity. Moreover, photographs projected the future of brightness and affluence that photographers envisioned for Japan, seen, for example, in images of Japanese wearing trendy Western fashions.

Photographers problematized America’s lingering presence in Japan after the official end of the Occupation by identifying several social problems connected to their presence: biracial

orphans, fraternization, and crime. However, photographers continued to evoke notions of American authority even as they offered up images that challenged it. One common subject that clearly symbolized the authoritative presence that Americans continued to evince was street artists sketching portraits of foreign military personnel. Fukase Masahisa captured one sketch artist attempting to entice customers on a street in Ginza (fig. 5.12).<sup>168</sup> The man looks every bit the stereotypical artist: he has chin-length hair partially covered by a black beret and wears a dark, baggy trench coat buttoned over a scarf wrapped around his neck. The artist peers through round spectacles at two men walking before him. Both in uniform, one man looks straight ahead and seems to ignore the artist. The *getsurei* judge praised Fukase for skillfully capturing the sketch artist's facial expression and gestures, but criticized the amateur for waiting until the serviceman had walked beyond the artist before pressing the shutter. The judge explained that had Fukase snapped the photo just one moment sooner, he would have caught the feeling of tension (*kinchō-kan*) between the foreign military men and the Japanese artist.

The sight of street artists sketching the portraits of Allied personnel drew the interest of American photographers as well Japanese. Indeed, photography was a tremendously popular activity among the many Americans who lived in Japan during the Occupation. In the next chapter, we turn to the photographs of Allied personnel and photojournalists—images that show Japanese struggling to rebuild their lives in ruined cities, the early signs of economic resurgence, and characteristics of “traditional” Japan that contrasted with a modernity oriented towards American influences.

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<sup>168</sup> “Street Artist” (Machi no gakka), *Asahi Kamera*, October 1953.



Figure 5.12. Fukase Masahisa. “Street Artist” (Machi no gakka). *Asahi Kamera*, October 1953.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE OCCUPIER'S GAZE: AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHERS CAPTURE JAPAN

Born in Johnstown, Pennsylvania in 1921, Joseph (Joe) Roger O'Donnell joined the Marines after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. As is well known, this event propelled the U.S. into what John Dower has described as “war without mercy” in the Pacific. Shaped by racial hatreds that went back decades on both sides, the fighting in the Pacific Theater was exceptionally brutal.<sup>1</sup> Like many of his fellow countrymen who vowed to exact revenge against Japan for its cowardly sneak attack, O'Donnell enlisted in the armed forces “full of anger towards the Japanese.”<sup>2</sup> So, he was initially dismayed to be assigned to the 5<sup>th</sup> Division as a photographer. The only shooting O'Donnell would do during the war was through the lens of a camera.

Following Japan's surrender, O'Donnell was tasked with documenting the aftermath of U.S. bombing raids on urban centers. He spent seven months traveling throughout Japan, sometimes in a jeep with a Nisei interpreter, but most of the time on horseback to navigate the ravaged landscape more easily. His travels took him to Sasebo and Fukuoka, two cities that had been subjected to incendiary bombing raids in 1945, and to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Marine always traveled with two cameras, taking pictures with his official camera for the U.S. government while using his own private camera to take pictures for himself.

Although O'Donnell entered the war burning with hatred towards the Japanese, he was profoundly shaken by the wreckage, hardship, and misery that confronted him. “The people I

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<sup>1</sup> As John Dower explains, the racial hatreds on both sides led to unimaginable atrocities. The Allies emphasized the subhuman nature of the Japanese, portraying them as inherently inferior (apes, vermin, and children), while the Japanese affirmed their purity by casting the West as monsters, devils, and demons. See Dower, *War without Mercy*.

<sup>2</sup> Joe O'Donnell, *Japan 1945: A U.S. Marine's Photographs from Ground Zero*, 1st ed (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2005), xiii.

met, the suffering I witnessed, and the scenes of incredible devastation taken by my camera caused me to question every belief I had previously held about my so-called enemies,” he wrote. “I left Japan with the nightmare images etched on my negatives and in my heart.”<sup>3</sup> So tormented was O’Donnell by the physical and human suffering he witnessed that when he returned to the U.S. after his seven-month tour in Japan, he deposited nearly 300 negatives taken with his private camera in a trunk, where they remained untouched for over 50 years.

It was not until he attended a religious retreat at the Sisters of Loretto Motherhouse in Nerinx, Kentucky that O’Donnell returned to his photographs and memories of that first year after the war. While at the retreat, O’Donnell encountered a life-sized sculpture of a burned man on a cross, created by a resident nun in memory of the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It recalled to the former Marine the destruction he had seen, and since tried to forget. “I felt everything from inconsolable grief to violent outrage,” stated O’Donnell. “So much horror, so much waste, so much inhumanity to innocent people . . .”<sup>4</sup> O’Donnell purchased the sculpture and, upon returning home, unlocked the forgotten trunk and took out the negatives taken with his private camera, hidden away for so many years.

O’Donnell was just one of hundreds of thousands of Americans who lived in Japan during the American-led Allied Occupation. This chapter examines the impressions and views of Japan that emerged from the photographs of three of them: Marine photographer Joe O’Donnell, introduced above, who was tasked with documenting the destruction of bombing raids on urban centers; anthropologist John Bennett, who took photographs while conducting studies of Japanese society; and commercial photographer Horace Bristol, who developed a deep and lasting interest in Japanese culture during the ten years he lived in Japan. In addition to photos by

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<sup>3</sup> O’Donnell, *Japan 1945*, xiii.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

these three photographers, this chapter analyzes images of Japan published in *Life* magazine and the *Pacific Stars and Stripes*.

Historians have documented extensively the political, legal, and diplomatic aspects of the Occupation,<sup>5</sup> and Japanese society and culture have been the focus of a growing body of research on the Allied Occupation.<sup>6</sup> Largely neglected, however, has been a “bottom-up” analysis of Americans experience focused on the everyday lives of GIs and other Occupation personnel and their interactions with Japan and Japanese citizens. These experiences remain an untold story, for the most part, that we will address here. The American photographic record of the Occupation reveals, among other things, the divergent ways in which different Americans viewed Japanese society. As well, a study of this photographic record highlights the complex engagement between Japan and America during this turbulent period. Accordingly, we will ask: How did American photographers represent Japan in their images, and how did these images work to reinforce, or disrupt, American ideas of Japan and its relationship to the U.S.? And how did American representations of Japan differ from those that the Japanese took of themselves?

The three photographers studied here—O’Donnell, Bennett, and Bristol—each captured a different view of Japan under Occupation. O’Donnell recorded the hellish, scorched landscapes of urban centers targeted by American bombs. In contrast to official U.S. images of Hiroshima and Nagasaki that depicted only the destruction of the built environment, O’Donnell’s images highlighted the human devastation that accompanied it. Additionally, his photographs documented his personal encounter with Japanese citizens, including children, city mayors, and

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<sup>5</sup> See Takemae, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, for the most comprehensive overview of American policymaking during the Occupation. Other notable studies include Schaller, *The American Occupation of Japan*, Schonberger, *Aftermath of War*, and Cohen, *Remaking Japan*.

<sup>6</sup> As explained in Chapter I, the turn to an analysis of Occupation-era Japanese society began with John Dower’s *Embracing Defeat*.



former kamikaze pilot instructors. In stark contrast to O'Donnell's photographs, Bennett's photos of Tokyo were replete with images of new construction, showing little evidence of the destruction wrought by the incendiary bombs that had destroyed over half the city. Bristol, meanwhile, left all thoughts of war behind in his photographs, plying viewers instead with images of traditional Japanese culture, ranging from white-robed Shinto priests walking amidst Nikko's many shrines and temples to *koi* (carp) kites flapping lazily in the wind, and on to sumo wrestlers practicing in their stables. By concentrating on such motifs, Bristol ultimately presented an essentialist portrait of Japanese culture that made it seem frozen in time.

Ravaged landscapes. Bustling commercial centers. A rich cultural heritage. The record left by these three photographers reflects, at least in part, the different roles that these photographers played in the Occupation and their different personal relationships with Japan. In addition, their photos reflect the complicated nature of Japan's relationship with the U.S. during this tumultuous time. We begin with O'Donnell, whose photos disrupted notions of American superiority by shifting visual focus from the destructive potential of the U.S. military to the struggles of Japanese citizens as they began to rebuild their lives among the ruins.

#### A Marine in the Ruins

U.S. Marine Joe O'Donnell arrived in Japan on September 2, 1945 with orders to document the impact of the incendiary and atomic bombing raids on Japanese cities. While he sent rolls of film from his Army-issued camera to the U.S. military, as we have mentioned, O'Donnell kept the negatives from his own private camera, eventually publishing them in a book 50 years after he first landed in Japan. The images that O'Donnell took capture unsettling yet compelling moments. A disorienting sense of crisis emerges from images of unimaginable devastation; yet at the same time, the images display the steadfast endurance of the Japanese. In

his photos, O'Donnell demonstrated concern for the human condition, building a narrative centered on suffering and hardship, but one that also portrayed a people rising from the ashes and rebuilding their lives.

Shortly after arriving in Japan, O'Donnell received orders to photograph the destructive results of U.S. air raids on the former naval base of Sasebo. While driving through the devastated city with his Nisei interpreter, O'Donnell spotted a camera shop that had miraculously survived the bombings unscathed. Curious to see what they had in stock and wanting a camera of his own, O'Donnell stopped the jeep and went inside. He was shocked to find the store fully stocked with cameras, lenses, filters, and film, and even more ecstatic to find all the merchandise easily affordable. When he pulled out his wallet to make a purchase, however, the shopkeeper asked if he could pay with cigarettes instead. Astounded at the stack of cigarettes O'Donnell piled on the store counter, the shopkeeper offered the Marine his pick of the most high-end cameras in the store: an American-made Speed Graphic and a German-made Rolleiflex.<sup>7</sup>

As O'Donnell traveled through Japan on orders from the U.S. military, he took photographs with his new, personal camera of devastated urban landscapes, men and women at work, and children at play. At first, Japanese civilians ran away or covered their faces when O'Donnell tried to take their picture. Not to be deterred, however, O'Donnell soon discovered that the Japanese would let him take their picture in exchange for chocolate or cigarettes. There was only one problem: because of strict policing of the black market, it was difficult to walk around openly with such items, especially in amounts that exceeded standard military rations. Luckily for O'Donnell, the accordion of his camera provided the perfect hiding place for the

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<sup>7</sup> Joe O'Donnell and Jennifer Alldredge, *Toranku No Naka No Nihon: Beijūgun Kameraman No Hikōshiki Kiroku* (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1995), 18.

contraband. This simple deception was so successful that he considered buying another camera just to carry around chocolate and cigarettes.<sup>8</sup>

After spending seven months in Japan, O'Donnell returned to America and began a career as a White House photographer. In October 1950, he followed President Truman to Wake Island to meet with General Douglas MacArthur. One day after lunch there, O'Donnell found himself walking along the beach with the President. Working up the courage to ask a question that had been on his mind for the previous five years, O'Donnell asked Truman if he ever regretted dropping the bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. "Hell, yes!" Truman replied. "I've had a lot of misgivings about it, and I inherited a lot more, too!" The moment passed without further discussion, but it left a profound impression on O'Donnell, who would continue to dwell on the horrors he had witnessed in Japan.<sup>9</sup>

After working as a White House photographer for 20 years, O'Donnell retired on a medical disability caused, sadly, by radiation exposure. Not long after his retirement, O'Donnell went on the religious retreat mentioned earlier—at the Sisters of Loretto Motherhouse in Kentucky. When he returned home with the sculpture of the burned man, O'Donnell opened the trunk from Japan that had been locked for nearly 50 years and confronted his nightmarish memories. He enlisted the help of a friend, the children's book author Jennifer Alldredge, and together they organized O'Donnell's photographs. For O'Donnell, the process of reliving his time in Japan was more than a simple act of catharsis. The former Marine believed that it was his mission in life to show the world what he had seen and experienced in Japan—and, in particular,

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<sup>8</sup> O'Donnell, *Toranku no naka no Nihon*, 28.

<sup>9</sup> O'Donnell, *Japan 1945*, 84.

to “remind people of the realities of what happened in Japan the summer of 1945, to tell the story of what lay beneath the mushroom cloud, always left untold.”<sup>10</sup>

O'Donnell first told his story through a small traveling exhibition he brought to museums, churches, and universities throughout the United States, Europe, and Japan. Many considered the traveling exhibition a healing ministry of sorts that paid tribute to those who had died in the bombings, as well as to the *hibakusha*—the burned victims who suffered social stigmatization in Japan.<sup>11</sup> Eventually, O'Donnell published his images in a book entitled *Japan 1945, Images from the Trunk (Toranku no naka no Nihon: Beijūgun kameraman no hikōshiki kiroku)*, released in 1995 in Japan by Shogakkan Press. Ten years later, Vanderbilt University Press republished the book with twenty additional photographs under the title *Japan 1945: A U.S. Marine's Photographs from Ground Zero*.<sup>12</sup>

Far removed from the hatred that led him to enlist for the war in the first place, O'Donnell's images convey, as one viewer observed, a sense of compassion and concern for those who experienced the tremendous destructive power of the atomic and incendiary bombs. In the English-language edition, five chapters take the viewer on O'Donnell's journey across Japan: the first documents his arrival on September 2, 1945, while the subsequent four give witness to the shattered cities of Sasebo, Fukuoka, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki.<sup>13</sup> The pictures O'Donnell took

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<sup>10</sup> O'Donnell, *Toranku no naka no Nihon*, 115.

<sup>11</sup> For a brief explanation of *hibakusha* and a portrayal of women *hibakusha* in American media, see Robert Jacobs, “Reconstructing the Perpetrator's Soul by Reconstructing the Victim's Body: The Portrayal of the ‘Hiroshima Maidens’ by the Mainstream Media in the United States,” *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific* 24 (2010). <http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue24/jacobs.htm>.

<sup>12</sup> The Japanese edition of the book includes English and Japanese captions for the photographs, but all essays are penned in Japanese with no English translations. The edition published by Vanderbilt, in contrast, contains only English-language essays and captions.

<sup>13</sup> While the progression of images in both books is the same, the Japanese-language version is not divided into chapters. Because of this, and because the English-language book contains additional photos, the analysis here draws primarily from the latter.

with his private camera place the human element—the dead as well as the living—within the scorched ruins. This is in marked contrast to photographs that appeared in American news media, as well as classified government studies conducted shortly after the raids, where the human presence was glaringly absent. Classified reports and studies<sup>14</sup> documented in minute detail the built environment—or what had previously been a built environment—but elided the plight of the *people* who had occupied it. While medical reports did include detailed images of the dead and wounded, the photographs offered only cold, sterile close-ups of injuries. Humanity, in these images, had been reduced to nothing more than gruesome medical conditions.<sup>15</sup>

American media projected the military might of the U.S. with two key images of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki: atomic mushroom clouds and aerial panoramas of flattened cityscapes. *Life* magazine, in the August 20, 1945 issue, reproduced photos of mushroom clouds alongside text proclaiming the world to have been “shaken by the new weapon” dropped by American planes. Notably, the article on the bombs in this issue ignored the civilian inhabitants of both cities, describing Hiroshima as “a major Japanese port and military center” and Nagasaki a “shipbuilding port and industrial center.”<sup>16</sup> Additional photos included aerial shots of before-and-after renditions of Hiroshima, a motif that appeared again in other issues. In an essay entitled “U.S. Occupies Japan,” for example, photos of cities flattened by incendiary bombing raids underscored American military prowess, eliding the impact of the

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<sup>14</sup> See “The Effects of the Atomic Bombings on Hiroshima and Nagasaki,” Report No. 2, USSBS Index Section 2, “Effects of the Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima, Japan,” Report No. 92, USSBS Index Section 2, and “Effects of the Atomic Bomb on Nagasaki, Japan,” Report No. 93, USSBS Index Section 2.

<sup>15</sup> See “Medical Report of the Atomic Bombing in Hiroshima,” Army Medical College, First Tokyo Army Hospital via joint medical commission for investigation of effects of atomic bombs. Report No. 3c(25), USSBS Index Section 2.

<sup>16</sup> “War’s Ending,” *Life*, August 20, 1945, 25.

bombings on the people who had lived in these cities.<sup>17</sup> But these photos stopped short of showing the human casualties central to O'Donnell's images.

Images of mushroom clouds aside, the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were heavily censored in American and Japanese media for two key reasons: first, because use of the images could potentially jeopardize future nuclear strategies; and second, because they suggested American guilt in dropping the bombs on largely civilian populations.<sup>18</sup> To be sure, American photographers extensively documented conditions in both cities, but most of these images never made it to print. *Life* photographer Alfred Eisenstaedt photographed women praying in a ruined cemetery, for example, and Bernard Hoffman (1913-1979) recorded people walking among completely flattened landscapes. Hoffman would write later that he took such images, not out of compassion for the Japanese who lived among the ruins, but rather to record the destructive power of the atomic bomb. In a telegram to *Life* picture editor Wilson Hicks (1897-1970), Hoffman wrote that “most of us felt like weeping” upon seeing Hiroshima for the first time, though “not out of sympathy for the Japs, but because we were shocked and revolted by this new and terrible form of destruction.”<sup>19</sup> In one disturbing scene, Hoffman photographed a human skeleton resting amidst the debris. The curve of the spine, propped up by the ribcage jutting out of the ground, leads the eye to the partial remains of a church looming in the distance.<sup>20</sup> *Life* never printed this image, nor did they publish others like it.

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<sup>17</sup> Bernard Hoffman, Carl Mydans, and George Silk, “U.S. Occupies Japan,” *Life*, September 10, 1945.

<sup>18</sup> Shibusawa, *America's Geisha Ally*, 214.

<sup>19</sup> Ben Cosgrove, “Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Photos from the Ruins, 1945,” *History, Life*, <https://www.life.com/history/hiroshima-and-nagasaki-photos-from-the-ruins/>.

<sup>20</sup> For more on the censorship of reports on the atomic bombings, see Janet Farrell Brodie, “Radiation Secrecy and Censorship after Hiroshima and Nagasaki,” *Journal of Social History* 48, no. 4 (2015): 842-864, and Greg Mitchell, “Hiroshima Film Cover-up Exposed. Censored 1945 Footage to Air,” *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 3, no. 8 (2005): <https://apjjf.org/-Greg-Mitchell/1554/article.html>.

J. R. Eyerman (1906-1985) also submitted photos of Hiroshima to *Life* that evidenced widespread ruin and suffering, but those photos did not appear in the photo story that he published in *Life*'s October 8, 1945 issue. Instead, the story was framed as a travel narrative with scenes of bustling train stations, crowded train cars, and rich landscapes viewed from the train window. In the story, children walk the streets with no visible injuries, and demobilized soldiers pose shirtless, their robust bodies projecting an image of health and youthful vigor. Were it not for two photographs of burn victims printed on the last page of the feature, the story would have elided the atomic destruction entirely. And yet, even these seemingly sympathetic images of suffering diminished the humanity of the subjects by casting the bombing as a righteous act of retribution. Underneath the photo of a mother and child with visible burns, the caption reads: "Photographer Eyerman reported their injuries looked like those he had seen when he photographed men burned at Pearl Harbor."<sup>21</sup>

In stark contrast to the images that circulated in American media, O'Donnell highlighted humanity in the images he took of urban destruction, an emphasis made clear by the very first image in his book. A young boy stares out from the front cover of *Japan 1945*, identified by O'Donnell as one of the many war orphans who followed him around as he took pictures. (fig. 6.1).<sup>22</sup> The boy's baby brother is strapped to his back, wrapped in a warm blanket. Scabs on the baby's head reveal that he has sustained injuries from the atomic bomb. After taking in the rest of the older boy's appearance, from his military cap to his sandals, the viewer's eye moves restlessly over the rest of the frame. Dark tonal values and deep contrasts create a haunting, gritty

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<sup>21</sup> "The Tokyo Express. A Life Photographer Takes a Ride to Hiroshima on Japan's Best Train," *Life*, October 8, 1945, 34.

<sup>22</sup> Children were some of the most vulnerable victims of the war. Both Occupation and Japanese officials routinely rounded up children living in parks and train stations and placed them in orphanages, only for most of the children to run away a short time later. The Public Welfare Weekly Report for 1946, for example, records gathering over 100 children and taking them to orphanages on a near-weekly basis. In 1948 there was an estimated 120,000 homeless children, including 30,000 war orphans. *Senryoshita no nihon*, 101.

impression. The photographer literally enfolds the subject within the ruins. The wreckage becomes so dominating that it competes with the boy for prominence. It might even overwhelm the youth were it not for the vertical line created by his erect form. The boy's upright posture and solid stance create a strong visual force that anchors the eye. He is slight and disheveled, surrounded by chaos, yet stands erect in a manner that allows him to rise above the ruins radiating around him.



Figure 6.1. Joe O'Donnell. Photograph. From *Japan 1945: A U.S. Marine's Photographs from Ground Zero*. Used with permission from Vanderbilt Press.

If the cover image of this war orphan takes the viewer straight to the heart of O'Donnell's experience in Japan, the first chapter brings the viewer back to the beginning of his journey. Opening the book, the viewer first moves through four photographs that comprise the chapter



“Landing.” The first two images project a highly religious tone, a motif that crops up repeatedly throughout the rest of the book. Marines gather around a priest in the first image, a figure almost lost in the crowd of men. Turning the page, the viewer next gets a close-up view of the priest. The priest is centrally framed and in sharp focus, looking towards the heavens with his arms outstretched above his head. The afternoon sun sets his white robes ablaze, providing a contrast against the muted grays of the men and the battleship that fill the rest of the frame. Both images are flooded with bright sunlight, lending the scenes a religious undertone.

Turning next to the chapter on Sasebo, the viewer experiences, together with O’Donnell, the first view of razed landscapes. Sasebo attracted the attention of American military strategists due to its importance as one of the four main naval bases in Japan, as well as its proximity to a nearby coalfield. On March 30, 1945, eighty-five B-29 bombers dropped mines into the eastern approach to the Shimonoseki Strait (the channel between Honshū and Kyūshū), preventing reinforcements and supplies from reaching Sasebo and other vital ports.<sup>23</sup> Then, just after midnight on June 29, 1945, the U.S. conducted the first bombing raid on the city. Several military installations were targeted, including an aircraft assembly plant and the Sasebo Aircraft Factory.<sup>24</sup> In an attack that lasted less than 90 minutes, over 1200 Japanese were killed and 42 percent of the city was destroyed.<sup>25</sup> Seven more air raids followed, each adding to the destruction and death toll.

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<sup>23</sup> Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate, *The Army Air Forces in World War II. Volume Five. The Pacific: Matterhorn to Nagasaki, June 1944 to August 1945* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1953), 668.

<sup>24</sup> Damage assessment photo intelligence reports of Far Eastern targets filed by area and contain all available information on the area: Sasebo Report No. 3-a(37), USSBS Index Section 7. Records of the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey; Entry 59, Security-Classified Damage Assessment Reports, 1945.  
<https://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/3984539>.

<sup>25</sup> “Sasebo History: Assorted Data on a Historical City in Southern Japan,” Center for Research: Allied POWS Under the Japanese,  
[http://www.mansell.com/pow\\_resources/camplists/fukuoka/fuku\\_18\\_sasebo/sasebo\\_history/sasebo\\_history.html](http://www.mansell.com/pow_resources/camplists/fukuoka/fuku_18_sasebo/sasebo_history/sasebo_history.html).

To get a panoramic view of the devastated city, O'Donnell climbed to the roof of one of the few remaining structures. In *Japan 1945*, he explains that the taller, ferroconcrete buildings had acted like a giant oven when the bombs hit and fire washed over Sasebo, trapping people inside and burning them alive. Blackened bodies clogged the stairways and halls afterward, and the stench of burned flesh that still lingered in and around the building nearly overpowered O'Donnell as he struggled to climb twelve flights of stairs. When he reached the roof, the photographer had his first unobstructed view of the ruins he was tasked to document. A sequence of three images captures the scene (fig. 6.2). Moving from left to right, the viewer sees two pictures of O'Donnell himself and then a panorama of the ruins of Sasebo. The photographer stands centrally framed in front of canvas military tents in the first image. His stance projects a dominant, cocksure attitude. Helmet askew, O'Donnell leans forward into the picture, with one leg planted firmly on the ground and the other resting comfortably on a mound of dirt. O'Donnell shows that he is ready for action by placing one fisted hand against his hip while firmly gripping his camera with the other. The image encapsulates his role not only as a photographer but also as a young man of the victorious Occupation forces.

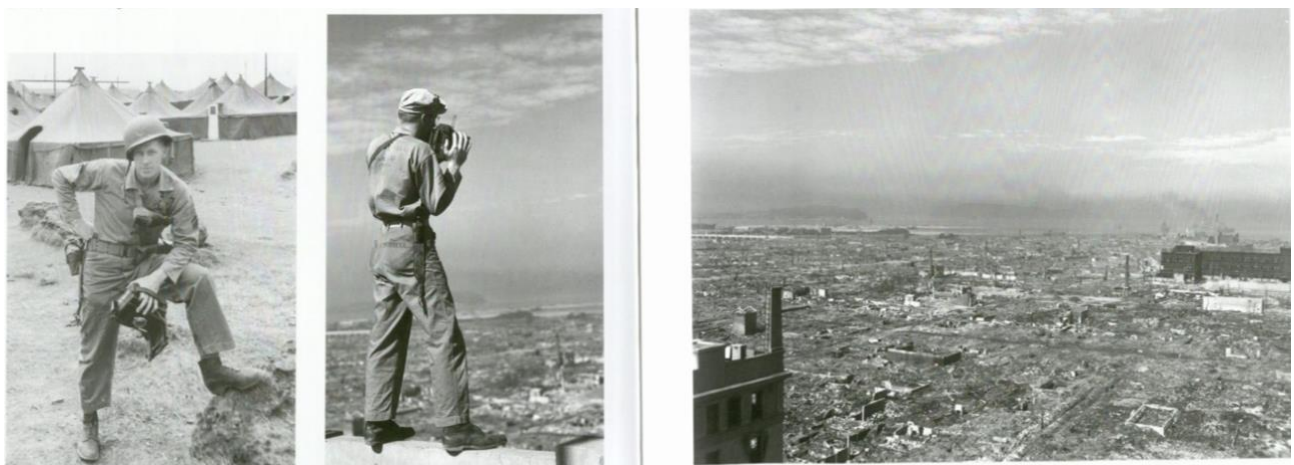


Figure 6.2. Joe O'Donnell. From *Japan 1945*. Used with permission from Vanderbilt Press.

A subtle shift in O'Donnell's body language can be detected in the following picture. Here he stands on a ledge looking out at the landscape beyond. If the first image conveys commanding authority and readiness for action, the second betrays some ambivalence. The Marine now wears a cloth cap instead of a helmet, his shoulders droop, and his camera falls away from his face, as if he needs to see the landscape with his own eyes to believe what he sees. What had captured O'Donnell's attention appears in stark clarity in the next image. The horizon cuts through the center of the frame, separating a hazy sky from the devastated city below. A few structures still stand here and there, but the image captures a chaotic mess of rubble and debris stretching from one side of the frame to another. This sequence of images and the accompanying captions tell a story within a story, revealing O'Donnell's transformation from a man confident in his role as a U.S. Marine to one shaken by the devastation that stretched out before him. For O'Donnell, it is clear that the definitive moment came when he was faced with a razed environment filled with human casualties of war. The experience clearly changed his thinking about the people and the nation he had been ordered to photograph.

Subsequent images in the Sasebo chapter convey the devastation that O'Donnell witnessed as he moved through the grim landscapes. Dark, foreboding clouds hang low over barren streets and charred trees. Families search for new places to live, carrying the few belongings they still have. Women lug baskets full of rations, flanked by leveled buildings and blackened trees. O'Donnell even discovered a grave marked by a wooden cross at one point. Seeking out the story behind the burial mound, the Marine was shocked to learn that a Japanese couple had reverently buried an American pilot who died during the Doolittle Raid.<sup>26</sup> When

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<sup>26</sup> The Doolittle Raid was the first air raid against Japan on April 18, 1942. Due to a picket boat line set up several hundred miles east of Japan by Admiral Yamamoto, the sixteen B-25 bombers had to launch over 650 miles from Japan. Due to the extra distance they had to travel, the pilots were forced to strike Tokyo in the daylight and land in China. Although damage in Tokyo was minimal, the raid had a tremendous psychological impact on Japan. See

O'Donnell asked the couple why they bothered to bury the man, they responded simply that they respected him as one of the dead. This empathetic act moved O'Donnell, marking his steady transformation from a detached military observer into a man who harbored growing compassion towards a former wartime enemy.

The last page in O'Donnell's chapter on Sasebo presents a photograph of three girls walking down a dusty street (fig. 6.3). O'Donnell zoomed out just enough to situate the girls within the destruction evident in the background. Had he used tighter cropping, the viewer would only have seen three girls dressed in kimono and not the devastation surrounding them. A shallow depth of field rivets the viewer's attention on the girls, who hold their kimono sleeves against their noses in a vain attempt to ward off the stench of burning bodies emanating from nearby funeral pyres and makeshift crematoria. The girls' shadows point to the left of the frame, leading the eye to empty lots where houses once stood. From there, the eye continues along one side of the road to take in the details in the background—more empty lots, but new construction as well—before moving up the other side of the road to settle once again on the girls.

O'Donnell's framing and composition of this image evoke tension and unease. The strong vertical lines of electric poles and buildings, and the elongated forms of the three girls, clash with the diagonal lines of the road and slanting shadows. Together with the slight tilt to the frame, this puts the viewer off balance. The three girls themselves create tension as well; their elegant kimono with rich floral patterns clash with the dismal surroundings. In this photograph, O'Donnell skillfully combines form and content to convey the death and destruction that pervaded Japanese society in the early postwar.

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Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun: The American War with Japan* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), 154-155.



Figure 6.3. Joe O'Donnell. From *Japan 1945*. Used with permission from Vanderbilt Press.

O'Donnell moved on from Sasebo to record the devastated city of Fukuoka. Here, American bombers had targeted several sites: Fukuoka Harbor, a critical hub for ships traveling between Japan and Korea; the Najima Steam Power Plant, which supplied power to the Omuta and Nagasaki-Sasebo regions as well as to factories in Fukuoka; the Fukuoka Air Station, a naval air training station and a key link to the air defense of the city; and various industrial sites such as the Showa Iron Works, the Saitozaki Petroleum Center, and the Nippon Rubber Company.<sup>27</sup> On June 19, 1945, over 200 B-29 Bombers dropped over 1500 tons of incendiary bombs on these and other sites,<sup>28</sup> destroying 21 percent of the city.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> "Air Objective Folder Fukuoka Region," records of the United States Strategic Bombing Survey (Pacific), Japanese Air Target Analyses, 1942-45 (NARA M1653).

<sup>28</sup> "5th Peace Memorial Exhibition 'Fukuoka Air Raid,'" *Fukuoka Now*, <http://www.fukuoka-now.com/en/event/5th-peace-memorial-exhibition-fukuoka-air-raid/>.

<sup>29</sup> Craven and Cate, *The Army Air Forces in World War II*, 674.

The scars of war are not as visually obvious in the series of images of Fukuoka. Yet, O'Donnell provides subtle hints in the photographs, as well as his commentary, that convey the physical and emotional hardships that the locals faced there. Importantly, too, the photographs evidence O'Donnell's deepening curiosity with and connection to the Japanese people and culture. Leafing through the chapter, the viewer sees images of geisha performing traditional dances, children at work clearing roads or playing in neighborhood streets, firemen razing buildings damaged by the bombing, and an elderly man posing stoically in a heavy winter coat. Numerous images record O'Donnell as well, thus marking him as more than just a photographer. O'Donnell's inclusion of images of himself as a photographed subject interacting with Japanese citizens captures another layer in his personal journey from hatred of a former enemy to empathy for a defeated people suffering hardship.

One sequence of images in the Fukuoka chapter shows O'Donnell sharing a meal with fellow Occupation servicemen and a group of Japanese. This is followed by a picture of him and two Americans soaking in a Japanese-style bath, and then one of himself alone robed in a fresh *yukata* and linked arm-in-arm with his friends and hosts. In the first image, O'Donnell and two young American men sit with a group of Japanese men and women. More so than the picture itself, what is striking about this page is the caption, wherein O'Donnell relates a conversation he had had in a different encounter. During a dinner with the mayor of Fukuoka, O'Donnell had asked if the man's wife had prepared the meal and if he could thank her. The Japanese mayor responded that he had had a wife, but American bombs had killed her the month prior. Dumbfounded by his response, O'Donnell apologized immediately, and after the dinner ran to find refuge in his tent. While we never learn more about the dinner—and might wonder whether the mayor was pressured to host the American guests or, conversely, orchestrated an opportunity

for reconciliation—we do know that the occasion left a strong impression on O’Donnell.

Experiences like these quite clearly prompted the shift in how O’Donnell viewed Japan, from hatred for a former enemy to a growing sympathy for the people he met in the ruins.

In contrast to the conversion that O’Donnell experienced, most of the images that appeared in the American media immediately after the war conveyed lingering animosities. One article asserted that the Japanese would surely continue to hate Americans “very deeply for many years because of their sons and fathers killed in battle and the cities laid waste by the new atomic bomb.”<sup>30</sup> In an article in *Life* concerning the initial moments of the American-led Occupation, one photo in particular accentuated the antagonism that the Japanese allegedly harbored toward the Allied forces occupying their nation. The photograph shows Japanese men, women, and children lined up on the side of the street. Many people shield themselves from the harsh summer sun with parasols or rags draped over their heads, and some of the men still wear military uniforms. A tire and part of a vehicle’s hood in the bottom right of the frame suggest that the photographer snapped the photo from a jeep as it drove down the city street. Underneath the image, the caption reads:

Hostile silence greeted Americans at first. Later, strict discipline broke. Says Correspondent White, ‘The initial hostility was gone—it was there, we knew, underneath. The Japanese would accept us and the sulkiness would fade from their eyes in time; but the sulkiness in their hearts we would have to reckon with for years.’<sup>31</sup>

While the American media often alluded to the hostility that the Occupiers sensed beneath the surface, they sometimes went so far as to describe the Japanese populace as mentally ill. Because the Japanese remained “psychologically undefeated,” one author wrote, they would either wage war again soon or else become a “nation of true neurotics and lose all value to the

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<sup>30</sup> Shelly Mydans, “The Japanese Mind in Defeat,” *Life*, September 3, 1945.

<sup>31</sup> “U.S. Occupies Japan,” *Life*, September 10, 1945. Photos by Bernard Hoffman, Carl Mydans, and George Silk.

human race.”<sup>32</sup> Yet another article described the Japanese as “extremely emotional” and “kept by his own ancient social system in a precarious balance between hysteria and complete submission.” Asserting that defeat in the war had produced extreme emotional stress, the author opined that the Japanese might be pushed to the breaking point until they became inured to all “civilized human teachings.”<sup>33</sup> Descriptions such as these, portraying the Japanese people as “lesser men” and “mad men,” perpetuated the wartime stereotypes that had fueled the brutal fighting in the Pacific.<sup>34</sup>

In contrast to the mainstream American media, O’Donnell’s images in *Japan 1945* lacked any hint of lingering wartime animosities or portrayals of Japanese as hostile or mentally ill. In one image, O’Donnell himself converses with a former kamikaze pilot instructor whose nineteen-year-old brother died in a suicide mission only days before Japan’s surrender. O’Donnell and the pilot appear at ease talking with one another. They stand next to the instructor’s plane, which bears the image of a Japanese airplane attacking an American warship. One of the most intimate instances of cross-cultural exchange captured by O’Donnell actually featured inanimate objects: namely, scuffed and muddy shoes lined up neatly in the *genkan* (entryway, where shoes are removed) of a local church. Rugged military boots have been placed side-by-side with Japanese-style shoes and *geta* sandals. “In a house of worship,” O’Donnell wrote in the caption, “the two sides of the war finally come together in peace.”<sup>35</sup> By this time, it would seem, O’Donnell had renounced the bitter hatred he once felt for the Japanese .

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<sup>32</sup> “The Meaning of Victory,” *Life*, August 27, 1945, 34.

<sup>33</sup> “The Japanese Mind in Defeat,” *Life*, September 3, 1945, 26.

<sup>34</sup> However, as John Dower astutely elucidates, such wartime rhetoric was flipped on its head following an end to the war, thereby fostering the development of peaceful relations between the two countries. The US became a parent to the childlike Japanese, and a therapist to the madmen. See Dower, *War without Mercy*, 293-317.

<sup>35</sup> O’Donnell, *Japan 1945*, 29.



Following the Fukuoka chapter, a section on Hiroshima presents the viewer with the first images of nuclear destruction. The atomic bomb that fell on August 6, 1945 is arguably the most notorious bombing campaign of World War Two. The United States Strategic Bombing Survey estimated the death toll at between 70,000 and 80,000, but numbers range as high as 140,000.<sup>36</sup> The heat from the blast was so intense that it melted the skin off human bodies and seared their figures into blackened shadows on the sides of buildings or sidewalks. Those who survived found little relief from their injuries. One sixteen-year-old boy, four miles from the hypocenter at the time of the explosion, remained hospitalized for his burns until March of 1949.<sup>37</sup> When O'Donnell visited a local hospital, another man begged O'Donnell to kill him to end his suffering.<sup>38</sup> Many victims of the atomic blast recovered from their wounds only to face a lifetime of discrimination and social stigmatization.

The first picture in the Hiroshima chapter depicts what appears to be a cannon on a beach. O'Donnell's caption, however, reveals the truth: what looks to be a massive piece of artillery is actually an electric light pole that has been placed on concrete blocks and wooden boxes, obviously meant to trick invading Allied forces. The images that follow include two aerial views of the city, and then finally a photograph of O'Donnell astride his horse. Unlike the photographs included in U.S. bombing surveys, which erase the human presence, O'Donnell's shots from above capture residents walking down streets lined with rubble. In one of the images, a road cuts diagonally through the ruins, running below the charred remains of a church placed slightly off-center within the frame. The hard, geometric lines of the church, together with the diagonal line

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<sup>36</sup> For an explanation of the difficulties assessing casualties in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, see Alex Wellerstein, "Counting the Dead at Hiroshima and Nagasaki," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists: 75 Years and Counting*, <https://thebulletin.org/2020/08/counting-the-dead-at-hiroshima-and-nagasaki/>.

<sup>37</sup> Hideji Ahara, *Hiroshima-Nagasaki: A Pictorial Record of the Atomic Destruction* (Tokyo: Hiroshima-Nagasaki Publishing Committee, 1978), 117.

<sup>38</sup> O'Donnell, *Toranku no nakan no nihon*, 86.

of the road and harsh shadows lurching across the landscape, combine to give the image an emotional register saturated with a chilling aura of unease. This sentiment is only deepened by the mess of debris radiating away from the walls, completely engulfing the lone figure walking down the middle of the road, his shadow trailing behind. O'Donnell's inclusion of this one person in the frame is perhaps enough to shift the viewer's awareness from the destructive power of the U.S. military—a notion usually evoked by such aerial views—to the plight of the Japanese left to deal with their ravaged homeland.

O'Donnell's narrative reaches a crescendo in the final chapter, assaulting the viewer with an unrelenting sequence of images of irradiated wasteland. The U.S. dropped the second atomic bomb on Nagasaki on August 9, 1945, killing between 40,000 and 70,000 people. In O'Donnell's images, aerial views reveal the extent of the damage, while images taken among the ruins place the viewer smack in the middle of the destruction. A few pages into the chapter, the viewer sees the landscape of Nagasaki up close. One photograph is centered on a sign emblazoned with the words "ATOMIC FIELD" posted amidst a landscape of shattered roof tiles, scorched wood, and crumbling concrete. Three Japanese civilians stand in the background, obscured from the waist down by the sprawling detritus. O'Donnell took the photograph from a distance so that the Japanese appear minuscule compared to their surroundings, impressing on the viewer the scale of devastation.

Images of wretchedness and pain confront the viewer throughout the chapter. Wanting to convey in no uncertain terms the unimaginable physical suffering that he witnessed, O'Donnell included grim photographs of agonizing injuries. One snapshot provides a close-up of a boy's back, his burned flesh filled with maggots and oozing sores. Another captures a man sitting in front of a makeshift hospital. The man's burned, disfigured face and pile of ragged clothing

makes it difficult for the eye to find any singular focal point. His face is cast in shadow by a nearly unrecognizable military cap, and filthy rags cover the rest of his body, torn in places to reveal the blistered flesh underneath. Hunched forward, the man's slumped shoulders match his facial expression in emitting a sense of utter defeat, exhaustion, and agony. Close cropping and contrasting tonal values keep the viewer's gaze riveted on the man as the central subject, forcing the viewer to take in the details—from the burns on his face to the dirt underneath his fingernails. This photograph highlights not only the unimaginable pain of burn victims, but the lack of resources available to treat their wounds. In the caption, O'Donnell recalls that he entered the hospital seeking medical treatment for the man, but was told that they had already administered mercurochrome and could do nothing more. The man's only remaining option for relief was the standard home remedy for burns: cucumber slices.<sup>39</sup>

Death and human suffering dominate the chapter on Nagasaki. One particularly heart-wrenching image shows a young boy standing at attention, his younger sibling strapped to his back (fig. 6.4). At first glance, it appears that the toddler is merely sleeping. O'Donnell thought just this when he first spotted the pair, believing that the babe was snuggled safely on the back of his older brother. Soon, however, O'Donnell discovered the truth:

The men in white masks walked over to him [the child] and quietly began to take off the rope that was holding the baby. That is when I saw that the baby was already dead. The men held the body by the hands and feet and placed it on the fire. The boy stood there straight without moving, watching the flames. He was biting his lower lip so hard that it shone with blood. The flame burned low like the sun going down. The boy turned around and walked silently away.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> For others, even those with burns that exposed bone, the only supplies available were tincture-soaked gauze. Ahara, *Hiroshima-Nagasaki*, 102. Of those who survived the initial blast, countless died from their injuries, as well as from radiation poisoning. In the subsequent weeks and months, first funeral pyres, and then graves and memorial sites, sprawled across Nagasaki.

<sup>40</sup> Quoted in James L. Nolan, *Atomic Doctors: An Unflinching Examination of the Moral and Professional Dilemmas Faced by Physicians who took Part in the Manhattan Project* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2020), e-book.



Figure 6.4. Joe O'Donnell. From *Japan 1945*. Used with permission from Vanderbilt Press.

Other pictures depict the Japanese as they continued to live among the ruins of Nagasaki. In one image, a girl stands in her best kimono, a sharp contrast to the scorched landscape extending out behind her. Another photograph brings the viewer inside an elementary school classroom. The desks are neat and straight, the floor clean. The children all sit, erect in their posture—their attention pinned to the teacher at the front of the classroom. The viewer sees a ruined landscape dotted with charred buildings and barren trees rising out of the ground, black and twisted through the open windows. In another photo, O'Donnell snapped a group of repatriated soldiers recently returned to Japan, marching in a line under the supervision of American GIs. The veterans trail behind a horse-drawn cart laden with their possessions, and one

man pedals alongside the cart on a bicycle. The photo shows, in plain terms, a defeated and demoralized army coming home to a city devastated by war.

The chapter ends with a series of images of churches, bringing the reader full circle to the religious imagery that opened the book. However, these dark, haunting photographs are the antithesis of the American priest in his white robes surrounded by U.S. Marines. One image of the Urakami Cathedral shows the church sitting on a hill in the background, an expanse of debris extending between the viewer and the church (fig. 6.5). Ominous clouds push down on the cathedral from above, casting it and the surrounding landscape in somber shadows. Two Japanese citizens stand under the eaves of a shack in the middle of the frame, nearly lost in the ravaged landscape. Religious imagery saturates the first and last photographs in the book. But whereas the first few images are filled with light—perhaps indicative of the belief in the just cause of the Occupation to reform a wartime enemy—the final photographs are so dark that they verge on the apocalyptic, reflecting O'Donnell's own horror at what he witnessed in Japan.



Figure 6.5. Joe O'Donnell. Photograph. From *Japan 1945*. Used with permission from Vanderbilt Press.

O'Donnell's experience in Japan profoundly impacted his relationship to the Japanese people. His observation of the urban destruction and human suffering, as well as his interactions with those who survived, led him to rethink his characterization of a nation that had been portrayed as evil and subhuman. While O'Donnell trained his lens on scenes of ruin, however, other Americans were drawn to scenes of Japan's recovery. Looking beyond the urban wreckage that littered Japan when he arrived there in 1948, John Bennett noted that rebuilding was well underway—and it was this reconstruction of Japan that he documented with his camera.

### An Anthropologist Photographs Recovery

During the first years of the Occupation, SCAP focused on the reform of Japan through demilitarization and democratization. GHQ instituted legal and institutional reforms, expanded women's rights, and redistributed farmland; yet, it failed to take a proactive approach to rehabilitate the economy. To make matters worse, much of the financial burden of the Occupation was placed on the shoulders of Japan, a total sum that represented nearly a third of the nation's annual budget.<sup>41</sup> Production languished as a result, inflation ran rampant, and people struggled to find adequate food, clothing, and shelter. Communists and left-wing radicals linked to organized labor became more militant as the economy continued to stagnate.<sup>42</sup> At the same time, officials in GHQ and Washington grew increasingly fearful of the global spread of communism. Realizing that these dismal economic conditions were contributing to the rise of increasingly militant labor groups, and in need of an Asian ally to curb the spread of

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<sup>41</sup> Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 420.

<sup>42</sup> According to Dower, the Occupation's focus on political and social reform and the expense of economic rehabilitation led to widespread interest in radical left-wing agendas among the working-class population, intellectuals, and the mass media. *Embracing Defeat*, 255.

communism, SCAP decided to “reverse course” and alter the initial policies of demilitarization and democratization in order to prioritize economic stabilization.<sup>43</sup>

Anthropologist John Bennett arrived in Japan just as the so-called “reverse course” was beginning to take effect. Motivated by a self-described “need to learn something about a country and a culture of which I had no previous detailed knowledge,” Bennett took photographs of daily life and landscapes while he lived in Tokyo from late 1948 to March 1951.<sup>44</sup> He described this moment as a transitional period for Japan, one during which the nation relied on the U.S. for support even as it began to rebuild. In many ways, Bennett’s photographs mirror this period of transition. He took images of ox-drawn carts hauling human excrement from city to farmland, for example, intermixing them with photos of busy commercial centers and revived downtown department stores.

Bennett’s writings and photographs make clear that he viewed the guiding, helping hand of the Occupation as integral to Japan’s economic recovery, a view no doubt influenced by SCAP’s sudden focus on the economy. As Bennett saw it, SCAP’s democratization and economic recovery policies provided the backbone of support that would allow Japan to get back on its feet. Bennett acknowledged the miserable living conditions of Tokyo’s inhabitants in his writing, commenting that young people seemed anxious and depressed due to the precarious

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<sup>43</sup> Domestically, central planners took greater control of economic production. In late 1948, Washington announced a plan to stabilize the economy. Shortly afterward, Washington sent Joseph Dodge as head of a mission aimed at restoring Japan’s economy. Guided by the idea of stabilization, economic recovery, and self-sufficiency, Dodge worked to curb inflation and domestic consumption while promoting an export sector. Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 540-541.

<sup>44</sup> John Bennett, “Introductory Statement,” *Doing Photography and Social Research in the Allied Occupation of Japan, 1948-1951: A Personal and Professional Memoir*, [https://wayback.archive-it.org/8650/20171002211600/https://library.osu.edu/projects/bennett-in-japan/1a\\_intro.html](https://wayback.archive-it.org/8650/20171002211600/https://library.osu.edu/projects/bennett-in-japan/1a_intro.html).

economy and widespread unemployment.<sup>45</sup> However, his images downplayed the evidence of hardship in favor of a visual narrative of progress and reconstruction that touted the “extraordinary success” of the Occupation.<sup>46</sup>

John Bennett graduated with a degree in anthropology from Beloit College in 1937, and two years later entered the graduate program at the University of Chicago. He tried to enlist in the armed forces when the war began, but was placed on a deferment list due to his status as a graduate student and because he had a young family. Intent upon contributing to the war effort, and spurred by a personal mission to destroy fascism in the U.S., Bennett joined the Office of War Information in 1942. As a “Chicago Spy for Roosevelt,” his job involved conducting interviews to ascertain the general population’s attitudes toward the war and, more specifically, America’s participation in the European and Pacific Theaters.

Toward the end of his doctoral studies, Bennett took a teaching post in the Department of Sociology at Ohio State University. After Japan’s surrender, planners of the Occupation reached out to the anthropologist, offering him a job based on the skills he had acquired while working for the Office of War Information. Despite his lack of knowledge about Japan, Bennett readily accepted and prepared for his new assignment by studying the island nation’s language, sociology, and history. He left for Japan in the fall of 1948, and was joined shortly afterward by his wife and two small children.<sup>47</sup>

During the Occupation, Bennett worked in the Public Opinion and Sociological Research (PO&SR) Division, a research branch of the Civil Information and Education Section (CI&E)

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<sup>45</sup> Bennett, “Contemplative Moods of Street Sellers,” in “Tokyo: Views of the City,” [https://wayback.archive-it.org/8650/20171002211708/https://library.osu.edu/projects/bennett-in-japan/2\\_1\\_photos.html](https://wayback.archive-it.org/8650/20171002211708/https://library.osu.edu/projects/bennett-in-japan/2_1_photos.html).

<sup>46</sup> Bennett, “Biographical Introduction,” [https://wayback.archive-it.org/8650/20171002211603/https://library.osu.edu/projects/bennett-in-japan/1c\\_intro.html](https://wayback.archive-it.org/8650/20171002211603/https://library.osu.edu/projects/bennett-in-japan/1c_intro.html).

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.



that conducted specialized research for Occupation and Japanese governmental agencies.<sup>48</sup> The studies aimed to enact social reform and evaluate the role and progress of existing Occupation policies. According to Bennett, gathering data on public opinion was especially important to the Americans, who felt “that social change should be liked as well as endured.”<sup>49</sup> The Occupation also ordered studies of Japanese society, recognizing that many Americans, like Bennett, viewed Japan as mysterious and complicated. Accordingly, the PO&SR researched topics that ranged from prostitution to the social status of women, marriage, and financial reforms; and they undertook more complex sociological research on fishery rights, the organization and history of neighborhood associations, and the socioeconomic structure of forestry communities, to name a few topics. Bennett took an incredible number of photographs while conducting studies for the Occupation, although he did not wield his camera in any official capacity related to his work. Instead, he applied his interest in photography to his personal and professional conviction that Japan had reached a pivotal moment in its history that demanded documentation.<sup>50</sup>

Bennett’s photographs, as well as his diary and correspondence with family and professional colleagues, are now held by the Special Collections Library at Ohio State University. With the help of assistants at Washington University (St. Louis), Bennett organized over 300 photographs into three portfolios: “Urban Images,” “Cultural Images,” and “Rural Research Images.” Bennett admitted to a certain degree of reluctance to photographing people while in Japan, lest he present himself as an “Occupationaire taking advantage of the Occupied

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<sup>48</sup> At any given time, the PO&SR was staffed by 4-5 Americans and about 50 Japanese. The majority of the PO&SR Japanese staff were distinguished scholars in their respective fields of study, and many had studied or worked in foreign academic institutions. Their American supervisors, however, were all young men, many still in graduate school. According to Bennett, the gap in experience between young American supervisors and their more experienced Japanese employees was a typical dynamic in most Occupation agencies.

<sup>49</sup> Bennett, “The Public Opinion and Sociological Research Division,” [https://library.osu.edu/projects/bennett-in-japan/3a\\_docs.html](https://library.osu.edu/projects/bennett-in-japan/3a_docs.html).

<sup>50</sup> Bennett, “Introductory Statement.”

population.” So, not surprisingly, his albums contain few portraits or images that suggest a direct encounter between cameraman and subject.<sup>51</sup>

Even so, Bennett recorded numerous moments of Japanese people living their everyday lives. In one photo, he captured a proprietor and his family gathered around the entrance to their shop on its grand opening day. The men are dressed in either *montsuki hakama* (men’s formal attire) or Western-style suits, the women and young girls in formal, richly adorned kimono, and the young boys in school uniforms. Large flower displays on either side of the shop entrance lend the image a vibrant, celebratory feel. Other images show housewives lined up for rice rations, construction workers building new houses, and street vendors hawking their wares while shoppers browse items for sale. Bennett recorded fishermen and farmers, filmmakers, female sex workers, and children at play. And his photographs recorded people visiting temples on New Year’s Day and village communities celebrating *o-bon* festivals (Festival of the Dead). Among these photos, several illustrate Bennett’s claim that this was a transitional moment for Japan. While images of street peddlers and war veterans hearkened back to the struggles that the Japanese had endured after the war ended, numerous photos taken later of newly built commercial centers and homes projected the beginnings of postwar recovery. Still, the lion’s share of Bennett’s photographs privileged a narrative of progress focused on Japan’s economic resurgence—an undertaking that had been facilitated, in his view, by the Occupation.

One photograph entitled “Rebuilding: Outlying Districts” epitomizes Bennett’s neglect of the dismal conditions of daily life during the Occupation. In the photo, the viewer looks down a small dirt road that bisects the foreground vertically. On the right, a wooden house has been erected on a stone foundation, with a bamboo fence enclosing the outdoor space around the back. A woman is visible inside the fence, perhaps engaged in some daily chore. A tangled mass of

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

weeds and grass stretches along the road on the other side of the frame. Only a small portion of this is visible, not enough to reveal to the viewer what lies just beyond the edge of the frame. Was this an open field, not yet cultivated? Was it farmland? Did a house once stand here, destroyed during wartime bombing campaigns? The viewer simply does not know because Bennett crops most of it out. What the viewer does see is an urban vista. The dirt road leads the viewer's eye past the weeds and wooden building that frame the picture, towards the expanse of Tokyo in the background. A sea of buildings stretches out towards the horizon, a dense mass of wood and concrete that offers no relief for the eye—or evidence of destruction. While Bennett stated that this photo illustrated “the extent of Tokyo’s destruction caused by” American airstrikes, evidence of such damage remains largely absent here and in other similar photographs.<sup>52</sup> Instead, Bennett depicted Tokyo visually as a vibrant and thriving city.

In his journal entries, paradoxically, Bennett described Tokyo as drab and worn, its buildings “dilapidated.”<sup>53</sup> Other members of the Occupation made similar comments. When asked if he saw any signs of recovery in Tokyo in 1948, linguist Key K. Kobayashi recalled that his impression remained one of “tremendous devastation.” The only significant change during his tenure in Japan, he wrote, was that the debris had been cleared away and some new buildings had been erected.<sup>54</sup> And recall that the linguist Eleanor Jordan declared Tokyo in terrible shape when she arrived in 1949 to conduct research for her dissertation.<sup>55</sup> Yet the photos that Bennett took of Tokyo show us a bustling city, giving little hint of the destruction wrought by American

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<sup>52</sup> Bennett, caption for “Rebuilding: Outlying Districts,” in “Tokyo: Views of the City.”

<sup>53</sup> Bennett, “Prologue,” in “Tokyo: Views of the City.”

<sup>54</sup> Key Kobayashi, interview by Marlene Mayo, University of Maryland, Oral History Project on the Allied Occupation of Japan, October 18, 1978. <https://prangecollection.files.wordpress.com/2016/10/kobayashikey1.pdf>.

<sup>55</sup> Eleanor Jordan, interview with Marlene Mayo, University of Maryland, Oral History Project on the Allied Occupation of Japan, April 24, 1981, <https://prangecollection.files.wordpress.com/2016/10/jordeneleanor.pdf>.

bombs. In some instances, Bennett photographed downtown buildings from street level so that they tower over the viewer. At other times, he documented Tokyo from a higher vantage point so that an expanse of buildings fill the frame. Whether taken from above or below, the images celebrated the built environment, creating the impression of imposing structures and giving little indication of wartime damage.

Yet, Bennett's images of Tokyo do more than camouflage evidence of wartime destruction; they portray the city as a modern metropolis bustling with commercial activity that is at times linked distinctly to American influence. Describing the capital city as the "great center" of "Western prestige," he wrote to his wife in 1949 that "the first thing one notices is the very frequent English signs on stores. In the downtown areas and shopping districts in outlying areas these provide a curious, familiar feeling that this isn't Japan after all, but some distorted, dreamlike version of an ordinary American city."<sup>56</sup>

Bennett, like many others, recognized the Tokyo PX in Ginza as a presiding symbol of the presence of the Occupation.<sup>57</sup> In one photograph in Bennett's collection, its brick façade fills nearly the entire frame (fig. 6.6). Several elements in the photo lend the composition a dynamic quality, including vertical lines created by the architectural details of the building and the large Tokyo PX signboard. The repeating shapes of the department store windows create a strong

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<sup>56</sup> Bennett, "Beginnings of Americanization," April 12, 1949, in "Some Early Letters Home," [https://library.osu.edu/projects/bennett-in-japan/1d\\_intro.html](https://library.osu.edu/projects/bennett-in-japan/1d_intro.html). Bennett's focus on English-language signage was echoed by Americans and Japanese alike. A spread in one issue of *Life* magazine proclaimed that it "behooves the Japanese shopkeepers to brush up" on their English due to the "English-speaking conquerors in their midst." In their attempts to cater to American customers, the author noted, shopkeepers began to include English as well as Japanese on their signboards. The author further commented that despite "laudable attempts" at writing their shop signs in English, the proprietors made continuous mistakes in spelling and phrasing. To illustrate his point, the four photographs included in the spread each picture misspelled words or unnatural wording, such as "GI's Lundry" or "Generally Glass." "Tokyo Signs in English," *Life*, May 26, 1947.

<sup>57</sup> The Matsuya Department Store, located in Ginza, housed the Tokyo PX during the Occupation. As Chapter V explained, initially only the American military and other Occupation personnel could shop there, but over time some Japanese—those who, for instance, worked as household servants for Occupation servicemen—were allowed access to the PX on a limited basis.

progressive rhythm from the bottom to the top of the frame. The horizontal lines of the road, traversed by a tram, an automobile, and electrical wires, intersect with the vertical lines to generate further visual interest. The Tokyo PX signboard, which extends upwards six floors, is particularly prominent. Had Bennett chosen a slightly different angle for the shot, he would have cropped the signboard out of the frame. But instead, its imposing presence reminds the viewer of the Occupation's presence and links this to the bustling urban life of Tokyo reborn.



Figure 6.6. John Bennett. "Matsuya Department Store as the Tokyo PX." Used with the permission of John Bennett.

Time and again in Bennett's images, he employed English-language signboards to connote the Occupation's presence and to tie Japan's commercial rebuilding to the U.S. This is especially evident in one image of a small auto repair shop (fig. 6.7). Noticing that the shop was located in a traditional storehouse (*kura*), Bennett guessed that the site was originally part of a samurai mansion. However, the antiquated structure is not the first element to grab the viewer's attention. Instead, what is noticeable is the plethora of English writing printed on signboards and

scrawled across a picket fence that stretches from one side of the frame to another. Bennett wrote that many of these small shops had secured contracts to manufacture jeeps and trucks during the Korean War and frequently repaired vehicles that American Occupation personnel used. As such, the shops had become “an important training ground for young men,” Bennett noted, who could later land jobs in the automobile factories rebuilt and modernized during the Occupation. Bennett thus established a direct connection between the Occupation and “the beginnings of the postwar Japanese automobile industry.”<sup>58</sup>



Figure 6.7. John Bennett. “The Beginnings of the Postwar Japanese Automobile Industry!” Used with the permission of John Bennett.

One other example of the American impact on Japan’s recovering economy appears in an image that frames a Caltex gas station<sup>59</sup> with a recently erected *torii* gate (fig. 6.8). The gate is centrally framed and thus should be the focal point of the image. Because it is the same color and

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<sup>58</sup> Bennett, “The Beginnings of the Postwar Japanese Automobile Industry!,” in “Tokyo’s Commercial Resurgence,” [https://wayback.archive-it.org/8650/20171002211740/https://library.osu.edu/projects/bennett-in-japan/2\\_2\\_photos.html](https://wayback.archive-it.org/8650/20171002211740/https://library.osu.edu/projects/bennett-in-japan/2_2_photos.html).

<sup>59</sup> Caltex is the Chevron Corporation’s brand name for petroleum products used in Asian and Pacific markets.

height as the structures in the background, however, it all but disappears into the buildings. In fact, the way in which the three beams of the gate frame the Caltex sign throws a spotlight on the U.S. company, making it the singular focal point of the photograph. In another photo that depicts a bustling commercial street filled with shops and restaurants, Bennett documented the Occupation's attempts to stimulate Japan's struggling economy. Bennett used a fast shutter speed that caught people mid-stride, thus infusing the image with movement and energetic vitality. At the same time, the eye-level perspective keeps the viewer's eye locked on the storefronts that reach to the top of the frame. In the caption, Bennett explains that the lady seated on the left side of the image was selling lottery tickets, a program utilized by the Occupation to stimulate the economy.<sup>60</sup> By eliciting a sense of motion and foregrounding the lottery ticket kiosk in his image of a rebuilt commercial center, Bennett again connected Japan's commercial resurgence to SCAP's economic reform efforts.



Figure 6.8. John Bennett. "Shrines and Gas Stations in Post-Occupation Tokyo." Used with the permission of John Bennett.

<sup>60</sup> Bennett, "Another View of Shibuya," in Tokyo's Commercial Resurgence."

Another important site of economic resurgence that drew Bennett's attention was resort towns. The anthropologist began documenting the new construction of inns, villas, and restaurants after visiting places like Lake Hakone by Mt. Fuji, Atami on the Izu Peninsula, and Matsushima on the northeast coast of Honshū during research trips. These new buildings were erected to serve "holidaying Occupationaires," whose vacationing in resort areas, according to Bennett, was "in fact an important part of the economic revival."<sup>61</sup> In one image, Bennett captured women selling fruit at the side of a coastal road. He explained that they had positioned themselves there to catch vacationing Occupation service members as they entered the resort town.<sup>62</sup> Like his urban images, these photos of resort towns identified the Occupation directly with Japan's economic recovery.

The economic stimulus and recovery that Bennett witnessed in Japan contributed to his view of the Occupation as an "extraordinary success" that owed significantly to General MacArthur and his role as Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers. But an even more important factor, in Bennett's view, was "the compliance and cooperation of the Japanese, who on the whole viewed [the Occupation] as another opportunity to emulate and improve on Western institutions."<sup>63</sup> One such institution was democracy, which Bennett saw spreading throughout Japanese society and impacting the Japanese family in particular. Lauding Japanese fathers for embracing democratic ideals by taking a more proactive role in children's lives, he took numerous photographs that brought this home: fathers enjoying a day out with their families; fathers walking hand-in-hand with tottering toddlers; fathers carrying young children

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<sup>61</sup> Bennett, "Prologue," in "Resorts," [https://wayback.archive-it.org/8650/20171002212056/https://library.osu.edu/projects/bennett-in-japan/2\\_10\\_photos.html](https://wayback.archive-it.org/8650/20171002212056/https://library.osu.edu/projects/bennett-in-japan/2_10_photos.html).

<sup>62</sup> Bennett, "Fruit Sellers," in "Resorts."

<sup>63</sup> Bennett, "A Biographical Introduction."



on their shoulders; and fathers snapping photos for their family albums. The increasing attentiveness of Japanese fathers that Bennett observed is particularly evident in one photo taken at the main gate of the Tamagawa Children's amusement park in western Tokyo. Here, only one mother appears with her child in tow. The rest of the adults in the frame are fathers, carrying children on their shoulders and queuing to purchase admission tickets (fig. 6.9)



Figure 6.9. John Bennett. "Entrance and Ticket Booth at Tamagawa Children's Park." Used with the permission of John Bennett.

In his writings, Bennett asserted that "after the war, many Japanese urban fathers responded to '*demokurashii*' [democracy] and gender equality to cease their erring and wandering ways, and become family men."<sup>64</sup> But he also made an important distinction between

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<sup>64</sup> Bennett, "Entrance and Ticket Booth at Tamagawa Children's Park," in "Children in the Park," [https://wayback.archive-it.org/8650/20171002211801/https://library.osu.edu/projects/bennett-in-japan/2\\_3\\_photos.html](https://wayback.archive-it.org/8650/20171002211801/https://library.osu.edu/projects/bennett-in-japan/2_3_photos.html).

urban and rural communities.<sup>65</sup> While Bennett noted that urban fathers, specifically, had begun to incorporate democratic principles into their lives, he could not say the same for fathers in the countryside.<sup>66</sup> In Bennett's assessment, Occupation reforms intent on democratizing Japan had not yet taken root outside its cities. When he visited remote mountain villages in 1949 and 1950, such as Egari in Iwate Prefecture, he described them as the "most primitive social situation" he had yet seen in Japan.<sup>67</sup> What made the conditions particularly "primitive," in Bennett's estimation, was the low status of women, which he attributed to feudal social structures and a patriarchal society, as well as Japan's "ancient attitudes" towards women.<sup>68</sup> He characterized the women of Egari as shy and embarrassed, and was challenged to capture them with his camera.

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<sup>65</sup> Bennett himself viewed rural communities as exhibiting "historically ancient and traditional forms of existence" where change was ostensibly "unheard of." Bennett, "Prologue" in "Inland Sea: Census and Family Research; Remote Islands," [https://wayback.archive-it.org/8650/20171002212117/https://library.osu.edu/projects/bennett-in-japan/2\\_11\\_photos.html](https://wayback.archive-it.org/8650/20171002212117/https://library.osu.edu/projects/bennett-in-japan/2_11_photos.html) and Bennett, "Journal Extracts: Fieldwork in the Remote Islands," September 13, 1949, "Inland Sea: Census and Family Research; Remote Islands." His diary entries describe an "Old Japan" in terms of appearance, social structures, and the stagnant economic situation of rural areas that contrasted with his depiction of energetic cosmopolitan urban centers. While traveling through southern Shikoku and in northern Japan, Bennett was captivated by several characteristics of the villages that differed from Tokyo and other urban settings, such as a lack of mechanized transport that preserved old patterns of narrow, twisted streets. He further represented these seemingly unchanged communities through images of wooden gatehouses that survived in mountain villages but were rare elsewhere, women chanting as they operated the windlass to pull fishing boats to shore, migratory fishermen whose "traditional occupational groups" had their own peculiar "rituals and folklore," and children in multiple settings and guises: robed in padded cotton clothing (the "standard for rural children"), captivated by *kamishibai* storytellers, dancing naked in the street, and toting paper parasols while walking beside the small garden plot of a ryokan.

<sup>66</sup> Bennett traveled to farming and fishing villages as part of his work for the PO&SR, which was commissioned on a number of occasions to conduct research on rural Japan. In 1949 Bennett traveled to several small islands in the Inland Sea and to Shikoku, the smallest of Japan's major islands near the southern tip of Honshū, with one other American and four Japanese social scientists to conduct demographic and sociological surveys for the 1950 Census of Japan. On another occasion, the Natural Resources Section commissioned the PO&SR to conduct research on the social and economic conditions of rural communities as part of a program that ran from 1949 to 1950. The project studied thirteen villages in early 1947 at the beginning of land reform, and then again in late 1948, to assess socio-cultural changes within an eighteen month period. The project relied on village records, interviews and questionnaires, and field observations. A number of reviews called into question the nature of "transition" in Japanese villages. In one, the author criticized the study for failing to take into account conditions in rural societies prior to early 1947 that might account for change. In other words, the study seemed to suggest that any identifiable change was a result of Occupation influences. See Richard K. Beardsley, review of Arthur S. Raper, et al., *The Japanese Village in Transition* 24, no. 4 (December 1951): 428-430. Doi:10.2307/2753458.

<sup>67</sup> Bennett, Journal Extract: November 1949, in "Forestry, Society and Economy," [https://wayback.archive-it.org/8650/20171002212145/https://library.osu.edu/projects/bennett-in-japan/2\\_12\\_photos.html](https://wayback.archive-it.org/8650/20171002212145/https://library.osu.edu/projects/bennett-in-japan/2_12_photos.html).

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

One woman had to be dragged out from a “dark corner” of a farmhouse, he recalled, and even then refused to speak to the Japanese interviewer.<sup>69</sup> The unequal relationships that Bennett observed between men and women in Egari clearly stood in sharp contrast to the “democratic” fathers that he identified in urban areas like Tokyo.<sup>70</sup>

While Bennett noted that rural Japan remained under strict, traditional social control, he still caught glimpses of the democratizing effects of Occupation policies. In one village on the island of Shikoku, he expressed his surprise at running across an old man who had clearly kept abreast of current events and wanted to discuss the “responsibilities of freedom.” Then, in Kanuma City (Tochigi Prefecture), Bennett captured democracy at work in a photo titled “Democratic Politics in the Mountain Community.” The photo shows a man running for a seat in the National Diet to improve regional forestry and the agricultural economy. He stands at a microphone that has been set up in the middle of a street, with what appears to be his supporters gathered behind him: a woman and two men in suits.

Bennett also claimed to have observed the Occupation’s democratizing effects on the actions of sex workers. The portfolio “Women of the Night” contains photos that Bennett took as part of a study for the PO&SR Division titled “Japanese Attitudes Toward Prostitution.”<sup>71</sup> In the

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<sup>69</sup> Bennett, “Journal Extract: November 1949,” in *Forestry, Society, and Economy*.”

<sup>70</sup> Yet not all rural areas were so seemingly “primitive” in Bennett’s estimation. When he visited fishing villages, Bennett observed that women enjoyed a higher social status than women in mountainous farming villages, leading him to draw a sharp contrast between the lifestyles and social structures in some farming and fishing communities. Bennett postulated that women’s higher social status in fishing villages resulted from the fact that men were frequently away for months at a time at sea, leaving the women to manage the household without restraint. Here, women appeared more frequently in front of Bennett’s camera than they had in mountain villages, shown unloading the daily catch and helping to pull surf boats in from sea.

<sup>71</sup> According to Bennett, the study was founded, at least in part, on moralistic fears harbored by the wives of Occupation personnel. He further notes that Occupation officials constantly discouraged GIs from frequenting areas of prostitution, but to no avail. Toward the end of the Occupation, amid mounting pressure for SCAP to draft a policy encouraging the Japanese to outlaw prostitution, Bennett’s division was ordered to conduct a national survey of national attitudes toward prostitution. “Prologue,” in “Women of the Night,” [https://wayback.archive-it.org/8650/20171002211812/https://library.osu.edu/projects/bennett-in-japan/2\\_4\\_photos.html](https://wayback.archive-it.org/8650/20171002211812/https://library.osu.edu/projects/bennett-in-japan/2_4_photos.html).

study, Bennett distinguished between older professional sex workers who catered to a Japanese clientele and teenage amateur *pan pan* who solicited American GIs. Bennett's distinction between teenage *pan pan* and older professional sex workers is evident in his photographs. His images of the former show poised women dressed in kimono standing by wooden gates of "professional houses" (fig. 6.10). In one image, a woman in a striped kimono poses framed by a wooden gate of a professional brothel in Yoshiwara, the old prostitution district of Tokyo. On the side of the structure, a sign has been posted that reads "Off Limits, VD." His photos of *pan pan*, by contrast, reveal much younger women standing outside bars, dressed in contemporary Western fashion, ranging from trousers, knit vests, and button-down blouses, to calf-length skirts, bobby socks, and strappy heels. With their permed or cropped hair, dark lipstick, and nail polish, *pan pan* demonstrated the American fashion influences spreading throughout Japan (fig. 6.11).



Figure 6.10. John Bennett. "Entryway of a Professional Upper Level House." Used with the permission of John Bennett.



Figure 6.11. John Bennett. “‘Pan Pan’ or Teenage Amateur Prostitutes in a Rapid Transit Station.” Used with the permission of John Bennett.

Whether amateur or professional—and whether they served Japanese or American men—women turned to sex work for a number of reasons in the early postwar years. Chief among them, perhaps, was the rampant poverty from which all Japanese yearned to escape. About 40% of the prostitutes in Pigeon Town, a well-known prostitution area in Tokyo, had come from impoverished farm areas in Tohoku.<sup>72</sup> Many women were impelled to enter the trade out of a need to support themselves or their families in the absence of husbands who had perished in the war or were held prisoner in labor camps for years after the war ended. One sex worker, for example, reported that she had turned to prostitution because her husband was at a camp in

<sup>72</sup> “Saikai sa reta musume no mi-uri!! Tenraku ni naku sensō mibōjin ‘hato no machi’ seitai hōkoku-sho,” *Seikai jīpu* Tokubetsu seiji jōhō daiichigō, September, 1948, jīpu-sha, Tōkyō. (From *Senryō-ki seikatsu sesō-shi shiryō*).

Siberia, and that she needed the money to care for her child.<sup>73</sup> Bennett noted such financial motivations in his photos and writings; one image documented a slum neighborhood filled with inhabitants who “had no significant source of income” and where the women, as a result, had been compelled to participate in the sex trade around nearby transit stations.<sup>74</sup>

Even though the Occupation officially endorsed a legal ban on prostitution, Bennett situated the activities of prostitutes within the same narrative of progress and reconstruction with which he viewed other areas of Japanese society. The anthropologist claimed that teenage *pan pan* “love the work” and “are highly motivated sexually. . . .”<sup>75</sup> While such assertions should be read with considerable skepticism, of course, there is no doubt that many women were motivated by the material benefits of serving American clientele. According to Bennett, Japanese women favored American GIs because they were known to have more money than Allied forces from other nations. Around the Tachikawa airbase, women in early 1946 reportedly earned between 42,000 and 90,000 yen per month. In Kyoto in 1949, *pan pan* earned a monthly average of 14,570 yen, while those in Tokyo netted 26,700-40,000 yen. And in 1950, one woman in Yokohama claimed to earn 15,000-30,000 yen a month. In comparison, a female clerk took home a monthly salary of 2,237 yen.<sup>76</sup> Noting the high rates of netted income, Bennett asserted that the

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<sup>73</sup> “Ishoku gurūpu tanbō zadan-kai dai 3-kai hato no machi no kare no on'na-tachi,” *Shinju*, shōka yomimono-gō, August, 1948, Tōkyō tantei kōronsha, S 1417. Reprinted in *Senryō-ki seikatsu sesō-shi shiryō II: Fūzoku to ryūkō*, edited by Nagai Yoshikazu, Matsuda Saori (Tokyo: Shin-yo-sha, 2015).

<sup>74</sup> “Slum Neighborhood and Residents,” in “Women of the Night.”

<sup>75</sup> Bennett, “Prologue,” in “Women of the Night.”

<sup>76</sup> Masakazu Tanaka, “The Sexual Contact Zone in Occupied Japan: Discourses on Japanese Prostitutes or *Panpan* for U.S. Military Servicemen,” <http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue31/tanaka.htm>.

phenomenon of *pan pan* prostitution was “the direct result of the presence of GIs as sources of income.”<sup>77</sup>

The theme of economic recovery, as we have discussed, permeated the images that Bennett took of Japan between 1948 and 1950. No sooner did he leave, however, than the Korean War broke out.<sup>78</sup> Professional photographer Horace Bristol published his photobook *Tokyo on a Five Day Pass; with Candid Camera* for American GIs serving in the Korean War who were on leave on a “five day pass” in Japan. The book offered a stark contrast to O’Donnell’s photos of the Japanese living in the scorched ruins in 1945 and Bennett’s of rebuilding and economic recovery in the late 1940s.

#### A Photojournalist in Tokyo during the Korean War

In *Tokyo on a Five Day Pass*, Bristol claimed that “each picture is designed to be a part of a whole, telling . . . the story of what can be seen in Tokyo today.” Although Bristol frequently drew a contrast between the “old” and the “new” Japan in the captions, the images, for the most part, focused on traditional Japanese culture, including *yabusame* (horseback archery), Kabuki theater, sumo wrestling, and the shrines and temples of Nikko. Even so, Bristol did include photos of one highly prominent element in early postwar Tokyo: the Allied Occupation. Interspersed among his pictures of Japanese people and culture are images of male Allied military personnel. In these photos, Bristol casts the West as distinctly male, military, and

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<sup>77</sup> Bennett, “Pan Pan” or Teenage Amateur Prostitutes in a Rapid Transit Station,” in “Women of the Night.”

<sup>78</sup> The outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 provided the impetus to bring the reverse course policies of economic stabilization into full effect. The war stimulated Japan’s stagnant economy by securing for the nation lucrative contracts with the U.S. and other nations’ militaries. For this reason, Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru and other Japanese leaders called the war, and the war boom that came with it, “a gift of the gods.” Dower, *Empire and Aftermath*, 316.

“modern,” while his photographs of Japan and the Japanese people cast them as female or childlike, nonviolent, and “traditional.”<sup>79</sup>

Bristol published his *Tokyo on a Five Day Pass* shortly before the signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty that brought Japan fully into America’s Cold War containment policy. While the peace treaty itself was generous to Japan, the bilateral security pact that accompanied it was not, allowing the U.S. to maintain numerous military installations in Japan and retain remarkable rights of extraterritoriality.<sup>80</sup> Despite the economic benefits to Japan,<sup>81</sup> the treaty effectively created an unequal power relationship between the two nations.<sup>82</sup> The photos in Bennett’s photobook reflect the dynamics of this relationship by subordinating Japan within the postwar Pax Americana.

Born in 1908 in California, Horace Bristol is best known for his photographic work for *Life* magazine, but he also worked extensively for *Time*, *Fortune*, and *National Geographic*. Soon after receiving an inheritance from his paternal grandfather, Bristol married Virginia Kabisius, and the newlyweds sailed to Europe on New Year’s Day in 1929. In Germany, Bristol began to study art and architecture and bought a vest-pocket camera to photograph the architecture of interwar Munich, soon upgrading to a 35mm Leica. The following year, Bristol’s

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<sup>79</sup> For an examination of how representations of East and Southeast Asia reinforced the Cold War consensus “with a model of cultural hegemony,” see Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*.

<sup>80</sup> Chief among them was the “Far East clause,” a nebulous term that called for American forces stationed in Japan to safeguard “international peace and security in the Far East.” In other words, the clause allowed the U.S. to use military installations in Japan for deployment of American troops anywhere in Asia without first consulting the Japanese government. Furthermore, termination of the treaty required the consent of the U.S. and could not be initiated by Japan alone. Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 552-553.

<sup>81</sup> Operating from the perspective of the Cold War Domino Theory, the U.S. saw Japan as the key ally to stand against the threat of Communism and thus demanded military bases on Japanese soil. Prime Minister Yoshida agreed to keep bases on the condition that the U.S. provided Japan with military defense. The resulting U.S. Defense Umbrella allowed Japan to take the money they would otherwise spend on the military and instead funnel it into the economy.

<sup>82</sup> Takemae, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, 503-504.



wife Virginia gave birth to their first son, Horace Jr. The young family intended to settle in Bad Tolz, a small village in the Bavarian Alps that they had visited the previous summer. However, the rise of the National Socialist Party caused them to rethink their plans.<sup>83</sup> As the 1929 stock market crash steadily depleted the investments Bristol had made with his inheritance—and with it their monthly living allowance—he and Virginia decided to return to California. In 1931, Bristol enrolled at the Art Center of Los Angeles to study under famed Hollywood portrait photographer Will Connell (1898-1961). Under his tutelage, Bristol became well-versed in the stylized advertising images of Edward Steichen and the industrial landscapes and modernist techniques perfected by Margaret Bourke-White and others.<sup>84</sup>

Bristol moved to San Francisco in 1933, where he befriended Ansel Adams, Edward Weston, Imogen Cunningham, Dorothea Lange, and other members of the “Group f/64”—a cohort of photographers that promoted a modernist aesthetic. Bristol looked forward to living in and photographing a lively cosmopolitan scene, but was disappointed by the grim atmosphere that had settled over the city due to the Great Depression. Still intent on pursuing a career in photography, Bristol found inspiration in Lange’s photographs of migrant farm laborers taken while on assignment for the Farm Security Administration.<sup>85</sup> With a brewing interest in documenting contemporary social issues, Bristol began to photograph the bleak urban landscape of San Francisco, and then in 1938 moved on to document the migrant workers in California

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<sup>83</sup> The National Socialist Party became the second-largest party in Germany after obtaining 107 seats in the Reichstag in September 1930. A few weeks later, on October 13, the Nazi’s committed one of their first violent acts against Germany’s Jewish population when a group of brownshirts vandalized Jewish-owned businesses in Potsdamer Platz.

<sup>84</sup> Ken Conner, Debra Heimerdinger, and Horace Bristol, *Horace Bristol: An American View* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1996), 9-10.

<sup>85</sup> Dorothea Lange is best known for her photograph “Migrant Mother,” which has since become a textbook example of social realism. For more on Lange, see Dorothea Lange, et al., *Dorothea Lange: Politics of Seeing* (Prestel; Oakland Museum of CA; Barbican Centre; Jeu De Paume, 2018).

alongside John Steinbeck. These photographs would later come to be known as The *Grapes of Wrath* collection.<sup>86</sup>

After the United States formally entered World War Two in 1941, Edward Steichen recruited Bristol and four other photographers to the U.S. Naval Aviation Photographic Unit. Known as “Steichen’s chickens,” they were sent abroad first to document the fighting in North Africa, then later the vicious battles in the Pacific, including Iwo Jima and Okinawa.<sup>87</sup> Following Japan’s surrender in 1945, Bristol took a position as the Asian correspondent for *Fortune* and was sent first to Australia, and then to Japan. Arriving in Tokyo in late 1946, he quickly established his own East-West Photo Agency and sold his work to European and American pictorial magazines.<sup>88</sup> At first, Bristol drew on his modernist training to take skillfully composed pictures that emphasize the strong geometric lines of war-damaged structures, but he soon grew tired of scenes of devastation. Because he also looked with derision upon what he considered the corrupting influence of American culture in urban areas,<sup>89</sup> Bristol decided to leave Tokyo behind for a time and explore rural Japan—in a van he had purchased in 1947 from a military surplus center in Sydney, Australia.

After settling back in Tokyo at his East-West Photo Agency, in May 1950 Bristol had the fateful encounter we described in Chapter III with Miki Jun and his Nippon Kogaku lens.

Impressed with the quality of the lens, Bristol immediately replaced all his German lenses with

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<sup>86</sup> Conner, Heimerdinger, Bristol, *Horace Bristol*, 12.

<sup>87</sup> Mark D. Faram, *Faces of War: The Untold Story of Edward Steichen’s WWII Photographers* (New York: Berkeley Caliber, 2009), 45. See also Connor, *Horace Bristol*, 72.

<sup>88</sup> “About,” Horace Bristol, <http://www.horacebristol.com/about/>.

<sup>89</sup> Connor, *Horace Bristol*, 97-98.

Nikkor lenses.<sup>90</sup> According to Bristol, once word spread of the superior quality of Japanese lenses and cameras, “highly exacting professional photographers” clamored to purchase kits of their own.<sup>91</sup> Having tried out Nippon Kogaku’s wares, Bristol decided next to test the camera equipment being produced by Canon Camera, whose products, he soon discovered, “were not only the equal of anything developed in either Germany or Japan for the 35mm camera, but in at least one instance, excelling the best produced anywhere!”<sup>92</sup> Bristol’s book, *Tokyo on a Five Day Pass*, was a direct product of this experimentation. In it, he introduced the recent advancements in Japanese photographic technology to an American audience through photos that depicted kimono-clad women, tattooed men, displays of Japanese dolls, the *Daibutsu* (Big Buddha) in Kamakura, white-robed Shinto priests at Nikko, and Noh performers on stage.

Bristol assembled *Tokyo on a Five Day Pass* as a technical manual for GIs on leave “on a five-day pass” from their military duties in the Korean War. Like Bristol’s other books on Japanese, Korean, and South Pacific cultures, *Tokyo on a Five Day Pass* was sold through commissaries on Allied military bases across Japan.<sup>93</sup> Not surprisingly, a clear subtext evident in the book is the Occupation’s hegemonic position vis-à-vis Japan. The book opens with a portrait of General Matthew Ridgway and closes with a snapshot of GHQ in downtown Tokyo, effectively framing the photobook with the Occupation. Three additional photos of the

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<sup>90</sup> Bennett also photographed with a Nikon S camera body and Nikkor F2 lens, having bought the camera directly from the factory. He photographed with film purchased from the PX stores, but favored Japanese studios to develop his prints. Even after returning to the U.S., Bennett continued to send his negatives to a private studio in Tokyo for development. “Introductory Statement.”

<sup>91</sup> To give an indication of the increase in its production, in April 1950 the Nippon Kogaku company exported 15 cameras and 5 lenses to the U.S. and 57 cameras and 24 lenses to Central Purchasing Offices (CPO) at Post Exchange stores on American bases in Japan and throughout Asia. In January 1951, they exported 100 cameras and 180 lenses to the U.S. and 138 cameras and 222 lenses to CPOs. See “Appendix I,” in Michael Wescott Loder, *The Nikon Camera in America, 1946-1953* (London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2008), 159-171.

<sup>92</sup> Horace Bristol, *Tokyo on a Five Day Pass; with Candid Camera* (Tokyo: East-West Photo Agency, 1951), n.p.

<sup>93</sup> For example, see *Korea: A photographic report on a country . . . whose fate is being decided today . . . and some of the people who will decide it* (1948) and *Bali: In Pictures* (1949).

Occupation include a portrait of an Australian Lieutenant General in uniform; an American GI standing in the street having his portrait drawn by a sketch artist and shoes shined by a Japanese youth; and an American sailor pointing his camera at a kimono-clad Japanese woman. In these images, Japan is cast in a position of subservience (the sketch artist and shoe shiner), or as female and traditional (the woman in kimono). By photographing Japan as distinctly subservient, feminine,<sup>94</sup> and traditional—and by interweaving images of male Allied personnel throughout the book as “what can be seen in Tokyo today” Bristol permeated the book with allusions to the hegemonic position of the United States in its Cold War relationship with Japan.

The allusion to American hegemony becomes apparent in the first two-page spread. On the right appears Ridgway, and on the left Emperor Hirohito and Empress Kōjun.<sup>95</sup> The asymmetry of Bristol’s image of the emperor and empress conveys a sense of instability. In the photo, the Emperor looks to the left of the frame, appearing stiff and uncomfortable in a dark suit. The button at the waist of his coat causes the material around his chest to poof out awkwardly as he raises his arm in greeting to what is probably a crowd below. The Empress stands on the far right, bowed slightly to acknowledge the assembled crowd. Her back has been gracelessly cropped by the edge of the frame. Bristol employed the rule of thirds to craft the composition, which typically produces a visually stimulating image. However, the effect here is imbalance and a sense of unease, reinforced by the unsteady stances of the two individuals.

In contrast, Bristol’s photo of Ridgway is a solemn portrait that evokes firmness and vigor through Ridgway’s strong, upright posture and the central framing. Bristol photographed

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<sup>94</sup> For more on representations of Japan as distinctly feminine, see Shibusawa, *America’s Geisha Ally*. For more on the narratives of masculinity and femininity, see Yoshikuni, *Bodies of Memory*.

<sup>95</sup> President Truman removed MacArthur from his command on April 11, 1951 for insubordination, and replaced him with General Matthew Ridgway. Ridgway, who had a distinguished military career as a commander of airborne units during World War II, had been in command of the Eighth Army in Korea from December 1950 to April 1951. Takemae, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, 139.

the general in three-quarters profile, careful to include the details of his dress uniform: rank, ribbon bar, aiguillette cords, and the GHQ badge on his sleeve. He stands in front of the American and the recently-adopted UN flags, tying him symbolically to America's new postwar global dominance as well as to the aspiration of international cooperation. While Ridgway appears dignified, authoritative, and powerful, the Emperor and Empress seem off balance, almost weak. By juxtaposing these two images at the start of the book, Bristol has clearly and powerfully evoked the unequal power relations between the U.S. and Japan.

The subtext of unequal power conveyed by the juxtaposition of these two photos is reinforced over the following two pages. On the left is a portrait of a Japanese carpenter who wears a *hachimaki* (headscarf) and whose teeth are all capped with metallic crowns. The camera has zoomed in on the man's face so that it becomes the entire focal point of the image. His averted gaze and facial features convey a reticent, nervous expression, a discomfort that is palpable to the viewer. The carpenter looks across the page, directing the viewer's gaze to a portrait of Australian Army Lieutenant General H. C. H. Robertson (1884-1960). The officer leans back in his chair, with mouth slightly agape, appearing as though Bristol had caught him in mid-sentence. The placement of the photos, as well as the dress and facial expressions of the two men, clearly places Robertson in the superior position. He rises above the carpenter, looking down at him while the Japanese man looks up to meet his gaze from across the page. Where the carpenter is dressed in the clothes of a laborer, Robertson appears in his dress uniform. The Japanese man looks uncomfortable and timid, the Allied officer casually in command.

In another photo, Bristol alluded to unequal power relations by associating Japan with notions of tradition and femininity, and America with masculinity and the U.S. military. On the left side of the frame, we see a Japanese woman dressed in a kimono with a floral pattern and

holding a bamboo parasol over her shoulder. On the right is an American sailor, who stares across at the Japanese woman as he takes her picture. A cursory glance at the man and woman reveals nothing more than a playful scene. Bristol himself wrote that the photograph was meant to “provide a little humor” while demonstrating the correct use of lens filters under bright sunlight conditions. But the photo warrants a closer look.

While the image illustrates fraternization between American men and Japanese women, it can also be read as an allegory for postwar power relations between the U.S. and Japan. Like much of the discourse from this period—and like Bristol’s other photos—it depicts America as masculine and Japan as feminine. Furthermore, the act of photographing itself places the sailor—and by extension the U.S.—in a position of authority over the Japanese woman. As Susan Sontag has argued, a photograph is “a potent means of acquiring [the photographed subject]” and thus “gives control over the thing photographed.”<sup>96</sup> Because the American sailor possesses the means to capture the Japanese woman, who noticeably lacks a camera and cannot reciprocate the action, the sailor is thus rendered in a position of dominance. The photo, then, projects Japan’s subordination under the postwar Pax Americana, amplifying the message of the other photos we have discussed.

While Bristol’s images emphasized Japan’s subordination to the U.S. during the Occupation, the American news media also emphasized the strategic importance of Japan as a Cold War ally. This is readily visualized in a map published in *Life* magazine of military air and sea lanes in the Pacific Ocean, which placed Japan within America’s geopolitical sphere.<sup>97</sup> One air route moves upward from the Pacific Northwest towards Alaska, and then West along the Bering Sea to Japan. Another trajectory heads south from the coast of California before splitting

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<sup>96</sup> Sontag, *On Photography*, 155-157.

<sup>97</sup> “Big Pipeline Arms Troops for Big Push,” *Life* September 4, 1950, 18-19.

into two lanes at the Hawai'ian Islands. From here, one lane continues to Wake Island and the other to Guam—both later converging on their final destination of Japan. The effect is to draw a giant circle around the Pacific Ocean with Japan and the U.S. connected in a continuous loop of military traffic.

In another issue of *Life*, an article entitled “Bulwark in the Far East” underscored Japan’s importance as a Cold War ally.<sup>98</sup> But even as the article cast Japan as an ally, the text and images at the same time tacitly subordinated Japan to the U.S. by—like Bristol—representing Japan as traditional and portraying the U.S. in martial terms. The first two-page spread presents three photographs that illustrate Japan’s importance in the fight against communism. The first is a political map highlighting Japan’s geographical proximity to the Korean Peninsula and the Soviet Union. The second photo depicts the “new-style emperor” Hirohito. In it, a speaker from the Diet bows before the emperor, who wears a suit and stands upon an elevated stage. Although the Emperor was the national symbol of the new Japanese state, the perspectival relationship balances the power relations between the two men. The form of the foregrounded Diet speaker stretches along the entire length of the frame, thus appearing larger than that of Hirohito, whose position in the background makes him seem minuscule by comparison. Among other things, the photo thus highlights the Emperor’s recent demotion from god to man and the importance of popularly-elected officials in Japan’s new postwar democracy.

If the first two photos allude to Japan’s geographical and political significance to the U.S., the third reveals Japan’s importance as a base for American military planes. On the following page, a photograph of jets flying over a traditional Shinto *torii* gate projects America’s postwar military relationship with Japan. Indeed, the caption blatantly underscores the contrast

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<sup>98</sup> “Bulwark in the Far East,” *Life*, August 28, 1950, 84-90.

between “ancient” Japan and “modern” America: the gate is a symbol of traditional Japanese culture and the fighter jets representative of modern (i.e., American) technology.

Photographs that purport to illustrate the difference between “traditional Japan” and “modern” American influences appear on subsequent pages. Farmers gather tea leaves from bushes against a backdrop of sprawling rice fields, and rows of parasols lay drying on the ground after receiving a varnish of persimmon juice. In another photo, young girls dressed in kimono play a game of *hanetsuki* (similar to badminton), an activity labeled in the caption as an “old custom.” By way of contrast, the final photograph shows two women enjoying the “new custom” of dating introduced to Japan by American GIs. Thus, the editors of *Life* in these pages cast Japan as traditional on the one hand, yet adopting “new customs” from the U.S. on the other.

The final two-page spread builds on the theme of American authority in Japan by emphasizing the role of the U.S. in transforming it into a modern, peaceful nation. The text describes elements of the Occupation and American culture that were at first “incongruous . . . in an Oriental land of kimonos and parasols”—such things as milkshakes, GI musicians performing in the Nippon Philharmonic, and the Ernie Pyle Theater (once the Takarazuka Theater). But beyond these seemingly superficial changes, Japan showed signs of deeper changes that owed to SCAP’s presence on the island nation. When the Occupation first began, the author explained, the focus had been on the “audacious American attempt” to instill democracy. But at the outset of the Korean War, Japan’s utility as a military base became clear. The photographs used to illustrate the effects of these deeper changes were all tied to the American military: pilots and their planes at an airbase, a vehicle repair center, welders building cargo vessels at a shipyard, and children arrayed in a circle beneath an American flag posted on a military base. Japan’s



strategic importance as a “Bulwark of the Far East” is represented here in the form of America’s military presence in Japan.

Of course, the American military and Japan’s importance as a Cold War ally was not the only subject that drew the attention of the American media and photojournalists like Bristol. In his endeavor to tell ‘the story of what can be seen in Tokyo today,’ Bristol photographed a variety of subjects for *Tokyo on a Five Day Pass*: *koi* kites fluttering in celebration of Boys’ Day, Noh masks, rural houses blanketed in mounds of snow, ox-drawn carts, crashing waves on the coast near Yokosuka, Shinto priests, kimono-clad women performing the tea ceremony, and Kabuki performances. As these examples suggest, the book presents readers, for the most part, with an image of seemingly timeless, unchanged traditions and lifestyles. To be sure, Bristol did include images intended to showcase the “new Japan,” but their inclusion was sparing and used primarily to demonstrate photographic techniques and effects.

One scene of the “new Japan” that caught Bristol’s eye was the urban street at night, and he included two such photos in his book. One depicts a narrow alleyway in Tokyo’s Shimbashi district. Two neon signs in the upper right portion of the frame announce the urban setting; but most of the light in the image emanates from paper lanterns and shop windows, or from their light reflecting off the rain-slicked pavement. Although the image purports to represent the “new Japan,” Bristol actually brings the focus back to “old Japan.” In the second image, Bristol has focused his lens on the GHQ building in downtown Tokyo. In the bottom half of the frame, the Imperial Moat reflects the light shining out from windows in the building—the main source of light in the frame. The central focus of “new Japan” in this image is a building occupied by the U.S.

Bristol at times highlighted Western cultural influences by deliberately accentuating the differences between two Japanese cultures, old and new. One two-page spread presents snapshots from Kabuki theater and a burlesque show. In the caption, Bristol writes that the “contrast between old and new Japan is effectively presented in these two examples,” one of “ancient *Kabuki*” and the other a “modern style” striptease. Fittingly, Bristol relied on two-page spreads to juxtapose his impressions of traditional Japan to its modern, Western-influenced incarnation. In another spread, the viewer sees two pictures of a young boy named Tomoyuki. On the left, the boy stands in front of a bamboo fence dressed in *yukata* and a wide-brimmed hat adorned with a flower (*hanagasa*)—a strip of white face paint smeared down the bridge of his nose. On the right, he stands in front of a concrete wall, wearing a plain T-shirt and a baseball cap. Bristol intended these portraits to demonstrate how a change in costume could completely change the model’s appearance. And, in case the viewer was deceived into thinking that the photos of Tomoyuki were two different children, Bristol specified in the commentary that it was, in fact, the same boy. “Background and costume make all the difference in atmosphere and mood,” he wrote. “Here are two portraits of *Tomoyuki-san*—East and West.”

Bristol employed the same methods of comparison in two portraits of an unnamed woman. In one photo, a female model dressed in kimono poses for a portrait, her face framed by a bamboo parasol decorated with maple leaves. The same woman poses in an image on the right as well, now wearing a Western-style blouse and a pearl necklace and earrings. In his description of the images, Bristol notes that “the background, and just a suggestion of Japanese *kimono*, serves to change appearance [sic] of the photographic subject, for portraits on this and following [sic] page are of the same person!” For Bristol, then, a simple change in clothing from Japanese to Western-style dress was enough to render a person completely unrecognizable. Like the many

Japanese editors and photographers who juxtaposed Western and Japanese material culture, Bristol shows in *Tokyo on a Five Day Pass* how the Japanese adopted and adapted foreign influences to express a new cultural hybridity.

Another way in which Bristol evoked the contrast between the “traditional” and the “modern” was to use photographic techniques that contrasted stillness to motion. One sequence of images moves from sumo wrestlers to martial artists, and finally to bicyclists. Unlike the earlier portraits that focused on changes in appearance, here Bristol calls attention to the difference between “old and new Japan” by making the sumo and judo wrestlers appear static. Bristol took his photo of the sumo wrestlers right before their match began, at the moment when the two wrestlers had crouched and faced off against each other. The next image of judo practitioners looks down on the practice floor from above. The repetition of pairs of judo wrestlers locked in combat is visually stunning. However, Bristol used a fast shutter speed to freeze the movements of the martial artists, rather than employing a slow shutter speed that would have introduced motion blur and thus communicated motion and speed.

While the two images of more traditional Japanese sports lack animation, the next photograph of a bicycle race emphasizes the movement of the athletes. Strong lines cut across the frame, formed by a row of spectators at the top, the racetrack in the middle that forms an expanse of negative space, and the bicyclists moving across the track at the bottom. The way the lines move horizontally across the frame adds to the sense of movement. Likewise, the progression of the bicyclists from right to left animates the image by moving the eye across the track. Bristol tried to use a fast shutter speed, but even 1/500<sup>th</sup> of a second was not fast enough to freeze the movement of the bicyclists. The impression of motion is further amplified by the lack of movement in the two preceding images. The snapshot of the bicycle race expresses modernity

through mobility and motion, while the two images of sumo wrestlers and judo practitioners render Japanese traditions as static and unchanged.

When Bristol drew distinct contrasts between what he viewed as “old” and “new” Japan, he often described a contrast between the “East” and the “West.” Bristol was not the only photographer to construct East-West binaries, of course. The American media more generally constantly compared Japan / the “East” with the “West.”<sup>99</sup> Contributors to the *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, for example, frequently positioned the Ginza shopping district in an East-West binary. One spread presented a bird’s eye view of the famous Tokyo district, describing it in the text as a meeting of the “mysterious medieval customs and habits of the ancient Japanese empires” with the “surface glitter and polish of the Western world.” The author describes it as a place of kimonos and business suits, of *geta* and leather shoes—a place, in short, where “East meets West.”<sup>100</sup>

In another essay on Ginza in the *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, Donald Keene (1922-2019), an esteemed scholar and translator of Japanese literature, attempted to convey the array of sights, sounds, and smells that assaulted the senses there. The assortment of elements, he claimed, made it more of a “circus” than an urban district: Japanese music blared out of loudspeakers, GIs crowded around an American soda bar, and “Arab-like” street vendors sold Japanese knickknacks that ranged from postcards to Mt. Fuji ashtrays and on to toy planes. Some stalls hawked American dolls or faux leather oxfords. For the Japanese, food vendors offered tempura and azuki-bean sweets during the day, and sake at night. Japanese children stared openly, and

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<sup>99</sup> As Mettler argues, American consumers adopted Japanese culture such as *ikebana* (flower arranging), *bonsai*, Zen Buddhism, *sho-in* architecture, and samurai film because it reinforced their image of Japan as a friendly-yet-subordinate nation vis-à-vis the U.S. during the Occupation and Cold War eras. See Mettler, *How to Reach Japan by Subway*.

<sup>100</sup> Charles Swiggart, “The Ginza,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, April 13, 1947, 4-5. Yet despite the familiar elements identified by the Western observer, Ginza still represented an assault to Western senses through malodorous fish, “chanting Oriental music” drifting out of restaurants and stores, and shoemakers pounding away at their craft.

longingly, at the soldiers who snacked at the corner soda bar open only to Allied personnel and their dependents.

For this author, both Japanese and Americans played an integral role in creating the “circus” of Ginza. The Japanese provided the atmosphere, the author proclaimed, with an exotic mix of kimonos, *geta*, bamboo parasols, unfamiliar produce, and antiques. The Americans, in turn, were the stars of a three-ring circus for Japanese spectators. The PX itself was the “main stage” of the Ginza circus: Japanese spectators watched from the sidelines as the “interminable procession” of Americans passed in and out of the store’s front entrance, laden with various items from food to cigarettes to Kleenex and magazines.<sup>101</sup>

Several elements in the above essay are worth noting. First, although Ginza is described as a place where “East meets West,” the author does not mention any direct encounter between Japanese and Americans. The Japanese gazed at the Occupiers who snacked at food stalls and frequented the PX, but they could not patronize such establishments themselves. The Americans, in turn, could only look at teahouses and cafes that had been placed off limits by the Occupation government. Second, as the “main stage” of the Ginza circus, the PX—an Occupation institution that embodied the material wealth of America—was cast as the central hub of the Japanese district. When the author described Japanese items for sale in the street stalls nearby, he did so dismissively. The jewelry was “tawdry,” mechanical toys were easily broken, and postcards were decorated with “garish” pictures. By contrast, the bounty of the PX was synonymous with luxury: Western-style dolls were described as expensive, and handkerchiefs and oxfords were openly coveted by Japanese schoolchildren. At the end of the essay, the author wrote of Japanese women who donned American dresses and hairstyles in “some attempt at an imitation of the Western young lady.” Descriptions of Japanese who gazed longingly at Americans and claims

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<sup>101</sup> Donald Richie, “Circus on the Ginza,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, September 21, 1947, 4.

that they desired to copy American fashion indicated the belief that America's role was to transform Japan in its image.

Urban districts like Ginza provided ample opportunity for cross-cultural encounter and influence between the U.S. and Japan. However, as discussed, Bristol took a negative view of the Americanizing influence of the Occupation, as did many Americans who developed an interest in Japan at this time. In her study of the popularity of Japanese culture among middle-class American consumers in the early postwar period, Meghan Mettler has observed that Western audiences actively sought art that had little connection to contemporary Japan. Instead, they preferred cultural material that they deemed representative of more "traditional" Japan, such as *ikebana* (flower arrangement) or *bonsai* (dwarf tree cultivation).<sup>102</sup> In Bristol's case, photographs of men dressed in samurai armor and horseback-mounted archers shooting at targets, among other motifs, identified Japan with its premodern past. Bristol ultimately favored a narrow view of Japan with these images, telling an ongoing story of tradition and downplaying the tumultuous changes taking place in Tokyo and across Japan in the early postwar years.

Bristol's overwhelming focus on the vestiges of traditional culture is evident in a photo of *bugaku*, a form of dance performed historically only for members of elite court circles. The white mask over the dancer's face instantly attracts the viewer's eye; decorated with geometric patterns, and obscuring any human features, it makes the dancer appear otherworldly. From the mask, the eye moves to the fan grasped between the dancer's fingers, then travels in a straight line down to an upraised left foot. The dancer's stance directs the eye throughout the frame, from one upraised foot to the next planted on the stage, back up to an arm, then to the roof above. The sharp, geometric lines of the roof bring the eye down, first to the trees, then to the lantern, and finally to the metal post in the bottom right corner. The post connects to the stairs in the

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<sup>102</sup> Meghan Mettler, *How to Reach Japan by Subway*, 16.

background, bringing us back to the dancer to begin the trajectory again. Bristol snapped the image at just the right moment to keep the eye visually engaged, demonstrating his expertise with the camera.

The image of *bugaku* dance combines soft and flowing lines with hard geometric shapes. The wide depth of field allows the viewer to take in every detail within the frame, from the leaves of the trees and the shingles on the roof, to the soft folds of the dancer's costume and the designs embroidered in the fabric. The dancer appears graceful and elegant, but the costume shrouds the body, masking any indication of the human form. The dancer remains shrouded in mystique. An American GI looking at this photo might have been completely captivated by what, for him, would have been an exotic scene, one rooted decisively in traditional Japanese culture.

In many ways, Bristol's depiction of Japan, bound and sold as a book on U.S. Army bases, recalls the so-called Yokohama photographic prints prized by Westerners a century before. Even though Japan was modernizing at a remarkably rapid pace under the Meiji government (1868-1912), Western visitors were more interested in images that confirmed their idea of traditional Japan—cherry trees, samurai, artisans making paper parasols—than the political, cultural, and social transformations then occurring in Japan—changes that made Japan appear, on the outside, more like the West in fashion, food, government, and architecture.<sup>103</sup> Like the Western tourists of the Meiji era, American GIs stationed in Japan during the Occupation and the Korean War would have valued Bristol's book as a souvenir that depicted what was to them the strange, exotic, timeless essence of Japan rather than one that documented the Americanizing influence of the Occupation.

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<sup>103</sup> For an example of such photographic prints, see *Once Upon a Time* (New York: Friendly Press, Inc., 1986), originally published in France as *Mukashi, Mukashi 1983-1883* (Paris: Les Editions Arthaud, 1984).

Of course, many GIs took photographs that conveyed this timeless traditional Japan. In one Weekly Review issue, the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* reported on a photography field trip organized by the Eighth Army's Tokyo Camera Club.<sup>104</sup> The photographs show Occupation men and women snapping their cameras at what had by then become stereotypical icons of traditional Japan: Japanese women in kimono, cherry blossoms, pagodas, and red-lacquered arched bridges.<sup>105</sup> In one photo from the outing, two young Japanese women stand in front of a group of Occupationaires armed with cameras. Immediately below this image, another photograph shows the same setting but from a different perspective. Whereas the first photo provides the context of the photo outing, the second shows the finished composition: the two women are positioned slightly off center to the right, against a backdrop of a wooden bridge, pond, and towering willow tree.

These two images highlight how Occupation service members, not unlike Bristol, imagined a traditional Japan through their photographs. By placing a photo of the camera-wielding Occupationaires alongside the finished composition of the Japanese women, the editors drew attention to the staged nature of the latter. The two photos, in effect, show the process of constructing an idealized image of Japan from an American perspective. The caption further calls attention to the constructed nature of the scene by noting that the “kimono-clad maidens” had been “artificially posed” for the members of the camera club. Other photographs submitted to the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* by amateur GI photographers similarly encapsulated an idealized vision of Japan: photographs of castle architecture and *bugaku* dancers,<sup>106</sup> farmers tending rice fields

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<sup>104</sup> “Camera Tour,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, May 30, 1948, 8-9.

<sup>105</sup> Similar icons became tropes in Hollywood depictions of Japan, such as *Sayonara* (1957) and *The Barbarian and the Geisha* (1958). See Shibusawa, *America's Geisha Ally*.

<sup>106</sup> “Far East Command Photo Contest Winners,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, August 22, 1948.



against a backdrop of Mt. Fuji,<sup>107</sup> and a young boy dressed as a samurai for a rice festival in Kure.<sup>108</sup>

Like Bristol, in other words, amateur GI photographers tended to frame the distinction between Japan and America in terms of an East-West binary. One GI, for example, submitted a snapshot to *Pacific Stars and Stripes* of a street scene that captured a “mingling of Oriental and Western dress” worn by Japanese women.<sup>109</sup> In other images, moments of encounter between Japanese and Americans evoked sentiments of international goodwill. One photographer submitted a photo of his son holding the hand of a Japanese girl, their friendship described in the caption as an instance of “East meets West.”<sup>110</sup> In a spread entitled “I Chose this Picture....” Sergeant Herbert F. Nutter wrote that he submitted his photograph of GIs conversing with Japanese women in kimono because it “conveys the sincerity and warmth of friendship and how easily the spirit of the heart can bridge the gap between East and West.”<sup>111</sup> Yet, despite the photographers’ attempts to underscore scenes of harmony and accord, their photographs implied lines of division between Japan and the U.S. by constructing binaries through repeated reference to “East” and “West.”

The East-West binary is one key theme evident in Bristol’s *Tokyo on a Five Day Pass*. Despite his claim to show what could be seen in Tokyo at the time, Bristol took photos rooted in stereotypes of traditional Japan. By casting Japan as traditional and feminine, equating the “West”

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<sup>107</sup> “All Service Photography Contest Winners,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes FEC Special Services Preview*, February 2, 1949.

<sup>108</sup> Ray T. Hornby, “My Favorite Photography,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, August 27, 1947.

<sup>109</sup> William Hurley, “Vagabond Shutterfly,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, January 7, 1950.

<sup>110</sup> “My Favorite Photo,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, August 2, 1947, 4.

<sup>111</sup> *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, January 28, 1950.

with modernity, and representing the Occupation as martial and male, Bristol provides an Orientalist view that subordinates Japan in its Cold War relationship to the U.S.

### Towards the Occupier's Self-Image

Joe O'Donnell, John Bennett, and Horace Bristol left a photographic record for the modern-day viewer that offers us a glimpse, first-hand, of Japan during the Occupation. In photographs ranging from bombed cities and victims of air raids to newly built commercial establishments and downtown department stores, and on to Kabuki performances and sumo matches, the three photographers provide different perspectives on key aspects of Japan's early postwar history: the miserable conditions that defined the initial years after the war, the early stages of its economic recovery, and finally its strategic, yet subordinate, position within the postwar Pax Americana.

O'Donnell documented the struggles that the Japanese faced in trying to rebuild their lives under an Occupation run by the very people who had bombed their homes. His photos in *Japan 1945* also depict his personal transformation, as the animosity he once felt toward Japan dissipated when he observed first-hand the extensive effects of America's incendiary bombing raids. His photographs, then, give witness to the reconciliation that began to occur between the former wartime enemies. Many of the ruinous urban conditions that O'Donnell documented remained when Bennett arrived in Japan in 1948. But rather than photograph damaged urban landscapes, Bennett focused his camera on evidence of economic recovery and reconstruction, linking both directly to Occupation policies. Finally, we come to Bristol, whose book *Tokyo on a Five Day Pass; with Candid Camera* interspersed photos of Allied military personnel among photos of traditional Japanese culture. In doing so, the book connotes Japan's subordinate position under the postwar Pax Americana.

The themes of reconciliation and reconstruction, of the power of the American military and the U.S. as a global leader in the Cold War era, were key themes that emerged from the images that Americans took of Japan. When examining the photos that Americans took of the Occupation's place in Japan, it is clear that these themes emerged once again as American Occupation personnel constructed their own self-image. As we will see in the next chapter, such themes emerged from the U.S. Army's need to rehabilitate its peacetime image, as well as the United States' attempt to position itself as an alternative to communism.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE OCCUPIER'S SELF-IMAGE: PORTRAYING THE U.S. AS AN INTERNATIONAL LEADER IN A COLD WAR WORLD

On March 14, 1948, the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* published a two-page spread that detailed the work of the U.S. Army Signal Corps Photographic Unit (fig. 7.1).<sup>1</sup> The spread included a short column introducing the Signal Corps and its mission in Japan, and a collection of photos following Technician Fifth Grade Robert Dunn as he fulfilled an assignment. As outlined in the spread, the six-step process began with Dunn's receipt of the assignment, which came from the CI&E. Dunn then staged the requested scene and recorded the photograph. Next, he showed the negatives to staff at Signal Corps Headquarters, and then Technician Third Grade W. Bushner developed them. Once the prints had dried, Photo Operations Officer Captain C. F. Vale critiqued the prints. Finally, Signal Corps staff sent the finished print by facsimile to Washington. The final panel detailing the six-step process revealed the developed image: a Japanese mother reading to her two laughing daughters, all clad in padded cotton kimono and warming themselves by a brazier.

Several points in the accompanying text are worth highlighting. First, the author calls attention to the "tremendous task of making a pictorial record of the rehabilitation of a conquered nation, which, only a few years back, had been a world power in its own right." Here, the author immediately places the Occupation in a hegemonic role by pointing to the duty of reforming a defeated Japan and alluding to Japan's defeated status. Second, the Signal Corps positioned itself as integral to this undertaking by outlining its responsibility to craft "an intelligently planned

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<sup>1</sup> "The Story of a Photo," *Far East Stars and Stripes Weekly Review*. Sunday, March 14, 1948. Congress established the U.S. Army Signal Corps in 1863. While primarily responsible for communications and information systems, the Signal Corps also includes a photographic unit. For history of Signal Corps and photography, see Rebecca Robbins Raines, *Getting the Message Through: A Branch History of the U.S. Army Signal Corps* (Honolulu, HI: University Press of the Pacific, 2005), 267-273.

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This photo spread on the Signal Corps highlights SCAP's intent to construct a positive image of the Occupation and its role in reforming and rehabilitating Japan. The deliberate crafting of this narrative is further evidenced by the ongoing censorship that SCAP imposed on the American press. At the start of the Occupation, in order to keep them under the close supervision of SCAP, most European and American correspondents were restricted to the Tokyo-Yokohama area. As well, General MacArthur kept a blacklist of American newspapers that had negatively impacted the Occupation's image, including the *New York Herald*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and the *Chicago Sun*. Correspondents who did not write favorably about the Occupation were denied access to news sources and were threatened with revocation of their press accreditation.<sup>2</sup> Correspondent Mark Gayn (1909-1981) wrote in his diary in early 1946 of a meeting with the *Stars and Stripes* editorial staff who complained of stories censored by SCAP. Among the many forbidden topics were the emperor's role in the war, as well as the continued involvement of wartime government officials and cabinet ministers in Japanese politics. In Gayn's view, the excisions revealed what SCAP thought American audiences "should *not* know about Japan": namely, about any shortcoming inherent in the Occupation's twin aims of demilitarizing and democratizing the defeated nation.<sup>3</sup>

SCAP's intent to rehabilitate Japan through democratization and demilitarization was just one of many themes evident in media representations of the Occupation. With the aim to understand how the Occupiers portrayed themselves, this chapter examines images recorded by the Signal Corps photographers; images published in the *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, *Life* magazine, and other news media; and television productions such as "The Big Picture." I ask two

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<sup>2</sup> Jo Ann Garlington, *Press Censorship in Occupied Japan: Democracy Contradicted* (Thesis MS--University of Oregon, 1995), 71.

<sup>3</sup> Mark Gayn, *Japan Diary* (New York: William Sloane Associates, Inc., 1948), 98. Original emphasis.

key questions: First, what do the photos in these sources reveal about American ideas of the Occupation and its role in Japan? And second, what do photographic representations of the Occupation reveal about the underlying power dynamics between the U.S. and Japan at this pivotal time?

In her study of media representations of Asia produced and consumed by American audiences in the 1940s and 50s, cultural studies scholar Christina Klein asks how such representations reinforced the “Cold War consensus”—that is, the pattern of American foreign policy that aimed to expand U.S. power globally. Focusing on middlebrow literary, cinematic, and theatrical texts, Klein examines how the production, circulation, and reception of these texts created meaning. She concludes that the representations of Asia and the Pacific in these texts reinforced America’s Cold War consensus culture, thereby contributing to the construction of America’s national identity as a global power.<sup>4</sup> This chapter expands on Klein’s analysis by demonstrating that photographic representations of the Occupation in Japan in the U.S. media were similarly informed by America’s nascent postwar identity as a global superpower and its need to position itself as an alternative to communism.

Several themes run through these media representations. In addition to the SCAP role of demilitarizing and democratizing Japan, one of the most prevalent themes was American military prowess, frequently symbolized through photographs of MacArthur, military parades that displayed tanks and other imposing instruments of war in urban streets, and GIs engaged in military tasks. The daily life of GIs and other Occupation personnel constituted another central theme. More specifically, in an attempt to place military service in a positive light, the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* depicted GIs furthering their education in special trade schools and vacationing in the numerous requisitioned resort hotels around Japan. Additional themes included gender

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<sup>4</sup> Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*.

equality, seen in images of female service members fulfilling their military duties, as well as family life, seen in coverage of dependent families who had brought modern American domestic life with them to Occupied Japan. Lastly, American photographers recorded numerous moments of cross-cultural engagement, including Occupation personnel engaged in humanitarian work and GIs offering Japanese citizens “unofficial” lessons in democracy through activities such as baseball games.

The themes of a powerful military, gender and racial equality, American benevolence, and the never-ceasing job of defending democracy were largely informed by America’s new, postwar national identity as a global superpower, especially in the emerging Cold War environment. For example, news coverage of female service members that purported to illustrate gender equality placed the U.S. in the vanguard of democratic nations. Meanwhile, articles on cross-cultural encounters between the Occupiers and the Occupied, especially news coverage of American aid to starving Japanese children, positioned the U.S. as an international leader by emphasizing friendship and international goodwill.

Even as American media outlets strove to emphasize friendly relations between the U.S. and Japan, however, portrayals of the Occupation simultaneously reinforced the unequal power relations between the two nations. Photographs of GIs in uniform and tanks on display at military parades and other celebrations clearly projected the military power of the U.S., while coverage of tourism in Japanese resort areas and the affluent life of dependent families in requisitioned houses evidenced American privilege within a defeated Japan. Taken together, photographs documenting the Occupation’s self-image represented the U.S. and its role in Japan as a military power and Occupier, protector of democracy and gender equality, and facilitator of international



goodwill—representations that were closely connected to America’s twin aims of establishing itself as an unparalleled international leader and alternative to communism.

### The U.S. Army at the end of the War: Remaking the Peacetime Army’s Image

Before examining representations of the Occupation in detail, it is important first to understand the problems that beset the U.S. military, specifically the Army, at the end of World War Two. Once the war was over, the U.S. Army’s prime challenge was not against an enemy on the battlefield, but rather against resentment and animosity harbored by its own soldiers, as well as harsh criticism coming from the American public. In response, the Army embarked on a public relations campaign to improve the image of its peacetime forces and to attract recruits to staff overseas occupations. The resulting image of the armed forces that emerged in recruitment literature and the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* bolstered the image of the U.S. Army and enlisted servicemen by invoking the duty of Americans to defend freedom and democracy across the globe.

At the end of World War Two, President Harry S. Truman pronounced Americans just as “spontaneous and headlong in their eagerness to return to civilian life” as they had been to defeat their enemies in war.<sup>5</sup> Paradoxically, this created a problem for the U.S. military at the end of the war. Over 12 million men and women were enlisted in the armed forces in 1945; and of these, approximately 7.6 million were stationed in overseas theaters.<sup>6</sup> With the war over, most expected to be sent home immediately. Unwilling at first to bear the cost of maintaining a well-trained, well-equipped, and well-led peacetime Army, the U.S. government favored rapid demobilization as well.

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<sup>5</sup> Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs* (2 vols., Garden City, 1955-1956), I, 506. Quoted in R. Alton Lee, “The Army ‘Mutiny’ of 1946,” *The Journal of American History* 53, no. 3 (1966): 555.

<sup>6</sup> “Research Starters: US Military by the Numbers,” <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/students-teachers/student-resources/research-starters/research-starters-us-military-numbers>.

Demobilization began with victory over Europe on V-E Day (May 8, 1945) under Operation Magic Carpet, and it continued until September 1946. The plan was based on a point system formulated by the Department of War in September 1944, whereby service members accumulated points for length of service, combat experience, parenthood, decorations received for service, and overseas duty.<sup>7</sup> After Japan surrendered in August 1945, Truman announced that service members were eligible for discharge when they had accrued 80 points. However, heated calls from the public for their quick release spurred government officials to lower the critical threshold on multiple occasions, until the necessary score was fixed at 50 points on December 19, 1945.<sup>8</sup>

Reducing the critical score to such a low number outstripped transport capacity, leaving many soldiers stranded at their posts long past their discharge dates. The military occupations in Europe and Japan further complicated demobilization efforts. The Pentagon initially estimated that the U.S. would need a postwar army of over 1.2 million service members to staff operations in Europe and the Pacific, but later increased this number to 2.5 million.<sup>9</sup> On January 4, 1946, the war department estimated that the number of troops scheduled to be demobilized over the subsequent six months was greater than the number needed as replacements. Due to concerns that the U.S. would not have enough men to serve in the peacetime army, over one million men

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<sup>7</sup> Childless soldiers griped about the parenthood credit. In a letter to his wife, private Walter Anderson wrote that “I only have 28 points so there isn’t much chance of me getting home. We should of [sic] had about three kids. We will know better next time.” Quoted in Tyler Bamford, “The Points Were All that Mattered: The US Army’s Demobilization After World War II,” National WWII Museum, <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/points-system-us-armys-demobilization>.

<sup>8</sup> As Alton Lee has noted, pressure on Congress officials “came from small but well-organized groups.” In 1945, for example, servicemen’s wives across the U.S. organized around 200 “Bring Back Daddy” clubs in an attempt to speed up demobilization of their husbands. In their appeals to congressmen, the women sent letters of appeal and pictures of their children. Later, the wives began to send congressmen baby shoes. Lee, “The Army ‘Mutiny’ of 1946,” 557-563.

<sup>9</sup> Lee, “The Army ‘Mutiny’ of 1946,” 558.

and women were forced to remain in service for up to an additional three months past their expected discharge dates.<sup>10</sup>

As the demobilization process lagged, demonstrations and revolts broke out in protest. Over 500 soldiers gathered outside Claridge's Hotel in London to appeal to Eleanor Roosevelt, who had traveled to Europe for the UN Organization Conference in 1946. In Germany, 4,000 men marched to a headquarters in Frankfurt to demand to be sent home. Thousands of men converged on a Replacement Depot in Manila on Christmas Day 1945, and 20,000 soldiers demonstrated again in early January 1946 at command headquarters there.<sup>11</sup> Soldiers in Japan expressed their frustrations as well. One sergeant in Osaka sent Truman a telegram demanding that he "Give us our independence or go back to yours."<sup>12</sup> As tensions mounted in 1946, additional protests broke out at military installations in Austria, France, Korea, India, and even in the U.S. itself.

The comments and query section of *Pacific Stars and Stripes* in late 1945 and early 1946 was filled with GI complaints about remaining in active overseas service despite having accumulated enough points for discharge. Corporal Ralph Dombrower accused Public Relations of "hiding behind a shipping shortage to excuse slow demobilization."<sup>13</sup> Another soldier asked when the "fathers of no children" would have their chance to go home, referencing the Parenthood Credit that awarded a staggering twelve points for each dependent child under 18

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 561.

<sup>11</sup> For more on protests, see Lee, "The Army 'Mutiny' of 1946."

<sup>12</sup> Telegrams to the President, Truman Papers, OF 190R. Quoted in Lee, "The Army 'Mutiny' of 1946," 563.

<sup>13</sup> "Comment & Query," *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, December 28, 1945, 3.

years of age.<sup>14</sup> Lieutenant Bob Karolevitz made his grievances known in a poem entitled “Reconversion, 1950,” which detailed the travails of fictional serviceman “Geisha Gus” who had spent so much time in Japan that he had effectively “turned Japanese,” and would thus need to undergo reconversion upon returning home to the U.S. Undoubtedly, many soldiers stationed in Japan would have found it darkly amusing.<sup>15</sup>

‘Geisha Gus’ they called him  
In them days of ‘46  
When all the boys were chasin’  
Little silk-clad, tilt-eyed chicks

Tourist-like he covered  
All the tearrooms, bars and joints  
He never spent much money  
Cuz he had less yen than points

But now in 1950  
They have sent him home at last.  
Five full years of occupation—  
Can he shake that dim, dark past?

Will those oriental habits  
Hang too heavy on his head?  
Will his thoughts go back to Nippon  
When he breaks his daily bread?

Will the smell of poultry markets  
Tend to set his mind at east?  
Will a tractor-driving farmer  
Help to stir up memories?

Will his gum and ‘chocolettos’  
Thrill that pretty blonde next door?  
Will he still enjoy a drink

If he’s not sitting on the floor?

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<sup>14</sup> Names Withheld, “Comment & Query,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, April 1, 1946, 3. Service Credit, in contrast, was set at one point for every month in service, while Combat Credit earned men five points for number of decorations and Bronze Service Stars.

<sup>15</sup> “Comment & Query,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, April 1, 1946, 3.

The six-foot cop along the beat  
Will rate a stare or two  
He's nothing like that sword-slung Nip  
In train-conductor blue.

Yes, 'Geisha Gus' is home again;  
It's been a long excursion,  
But that ain't all—it's gonna be  
A longer reconversion!

When not complaining about seemingly unending military service in Japan, servicemen griped about dilapidated living quarters and inadequate recreational opportunities at the start of the Occupation. Technical Fourth Grade Roy Hullet, who was sent to a Replacement Depot, complained of the poor conditions of his quarters: “the windows have no glass in them. Light sockets have no bulbs, doors have no hinges, and, to make matters worse, we have no stoves. This morning several of us went to breakfast only to be informed by the mess sergeant that we were one minute late. We weren't fed.”<sup>16</sup> Others bemoaned the “Off Limits” signs posted on buildings that effectively barred servicemen from experiencing Japanese culture. Instead of attending Noh drama or viewing famous prints at Japanese museums, the troops found themselves at “a couple of spoon-fed concerts created just for the GI's.”<sup>17</sup> For those men who remained stationed in Japan immediately after World War Two, the poor living conditions and the proscription of engagement with the local culture caused tensions to seethe.

Another problem that beleaguered the U.S. Army in the late 1940s was the unfavorable public opinion of peacetime occupation forces. Chief among the negative press were stories of black marketeering activities, fraternization, venereal disease rates, and officer abuses of enlisted

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<sup>16</sup> T/4 Roy Hullet and ten others, “Comment & Query,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, December 7, 1945, 3.

<sup>17</sup> SGT William S. Friedman, “Comment & Query,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, December 28, 1945, 3.

men.<sup>18</sup> Although reporting on rape was heavily censored in the Japanese and American press, occasional stories on fraternization soured the GIs image.<sup>19</sup> Responding to photographs of GIs kissing Japanese women in an article on life in Tokyo (printed December 3, 1945), one reader of *Life* magazine wrote that the scenes were “perfectly disgusting to me! How can they treat these Japanese girls so kindly if they still remember the way other U.S. soldiers were treated by the Japs? It is maddening!”<sup>20</sup>

Theft and other crimes were a problem as well. In one instance, investigators recovered over \$2,000,000 worth of military property in Japan in less than six months, and this was only a small portion of what had actually been stolen.<sup>21</sup> In the July 21, 1946 issue, the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* reported that two GIs had been charged for assaulting a Japanese policeman, and in early 1946 the newspaper informed readers that another GI had been sentenced, this time for a string of murders committed against Japanese nationals in a “going home” spree.<sup>22</sup> Due to stories of

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<sup>18</sup> According to Brian Linn, the American public viewed officers as nothing more than “aristocratic martinets.” Brian McAllister Linn, *Elvis’s Army: Cold War GIs and the Atomic Bomb* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 14.

<sup>19</sup> Rape was a central problem from the outset of the Occupation, although one that was not widely reported in the press. Albert R. Hussey (1902-1964), known for his contributions to Japan’s new postwar Constitution, spoke of the rise of “institutional rape” perpetrated by American GIs. Terese Svoboda, “U.S. Court-Martial in Occupation Japan: Rape, Race, and Censorship,” *Japan Focus: The Asia-Pacific Journal* 7, no. 21 (2009), <https://apjpf.org/-Terese-Svoboda/3148/article.html>. According to Tanaka Yuki, in Kanagawa prefecture alone around 1,300 rapes were reported between August 30 and September 10, 1945. Tanaka Yuki, *Japan’s Comfort Women* (London: Routledge, 2001).

<sup>20</sup> Letters to the Editor, *Life*, December 24, 1945. Fraternization was a debated topic by GIs writing in to the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* “Comments and Query” section. One GI, whose letter was published in the January 1, 1946 issue, claimed that fraternization promoted peace and that the servicemen were lonely for female companionship. Others denounced fraternization and complained of GIs who cavorted with Japanese women.

<sup>21</sup> Linn, *Elvis’s Army*, 28.

<sup>22</sup> *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, January 14, 1946.

these and other misdeeds, American public opinion came to view peacetime soldiers as nothing more than ‘drunken, profane, shiftless brutes.’”<sup>23</sup>

Bernard Perlin’s (1918-2014) paintings of street scenes in Tokyo, published in a November 1945 edition of *Life*, reflected the negative public perception of enlisted men. A socialist-realist (a type of art that critiques power structures) painter who was attuned to “issues of power and vulnerability,” Perlin imbued his paintings with tension and unease.<sup>24</sup> His work published in *Life*, which portrayed American GIs in Japan, was no exception. Perlin arrived in Tokyo shortly after Japan’s surrender, and was shocked to find its inhabitants engaged in a constant struggle to find food and shelter in a city he described as ugly, barren, and hopeless. Meanwhile, oblivious to the plight of the Japanese, GIs were engrossed in a very different sort of “struggle,” as the *Life* article described it: souvenir hunting for any object to prove that they had been in Japan.<sup>25</sup> “I drove in a jeep with three colonels for 90 miles each way over the worst roads, literally at risk of life and limb, because the colonels wanted to buy souvenirs,” Perlin wrote. “It’s a mania.”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Linn, *Elvis’s Army*, 14.

<sup>24</sup> Erika Doss, “Anti-Semitism, Propaganda and Modernism,” *In Focus: Orthodox Boys 1948 by Bernard Perlin*, Tate Research Publication, 2016, accessed March 18, 2021, <https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/in-focus/orthodox-boys-bernard-perlin/anti-semitism-propaganda-modernism>.

<sup>25</sup> Some memoirs suggest that it was not uncommon for Occupation personnel to turn a blind eye to dismal social conditions in postwar Japan. Sometimes this obliviousness intersected with prejudice for the former wartime enemy, as *Life* photographer Bernard Hoffman’s example in Chapter VI suggested. Lucy Crockett, a Red Cross nurse stationed in Tokyo, recalls that “In postwar Japan things are tough all over. The average Occupationer, jeeping blithely through the bombed areas or past parks dotted on a summer evening with shapeless mounds of rags, rarely gives a thought to the plight of the defeated nation. To me the world beyond our brightly lighted Allied billets, offices and railroad coaches was largely peopled by warped and ugly creatures from some Oriental *Nibelungenlied*.” See Lucy Herndon Crockett, *Popcorn on the Ginza: An Informal Portrait of Postwar Japan* (New York: William Sloane Associates, Inc. 1949), 186.

<sup>26</sup> “Tokyo Street Scenes,” *Life*, November 19, 1945, 73. Francis Hillary Conroy described the Occupation as a “souvenir hunt” as personnel sought out “Japanese gewgaws” such as *geta* sandals, *tabi*, and “kimonos for the girlfriends back home.” Francis Hillary Conroy, interview by Marlene Mayo, University of Maryland, Oral History Project on the Allied Occupation of Japan, April 15, 1982.

In his paintings, Perlin's brushstrokes rendered towering GIs with harsh, scowling expressions. The artist at times amplified their menacing presence with dark tonal contrasts, such as one scene of GIs selling cigarettes on the black market (fig. 7.2). Other paintings captured the Occupation servicemen's seeming indifference to the plight of Japanese civilians. In one painting, a GI "sight-seeing in Tokyo's Ginza" looks up with apparent disinterest at twisted rebar hanging precariously over a pile of broken brick and tile—the remnants of what used to be a corner shop. On the right side of the image, a Japanese woman dressed in *monpe* crosses the street with head bowed and shoulders stooped. Perlin has cast her in shadows so dark she almost blends into the expanse of urban ruin. On the other side of the frame, the GI has his back turned to the woman, seemingly oblivious to her presence.



Figure 7.2. Bernard Perlin. *Life*. November 19, 1945. The Estate of Bernard Perlin.

Several paintings included in Perlin's spread reflected the public perception of peacetime troops as "shiftless brutes." In addition to the aforementioned scene of profiteering GIs, he drew a group of GI "conquerors" staring down a train full of repatriated Japanese soldiers and a crowd of servicemen overwhelming Japanese merchants in their frenzy to purchase souvenirs. In each



of these paintings, the military men seem unsympathetic to Japanese suffering, at times even exuding hostility, as they blithely profit from illegal black market activity. Another painting depicts Marines loitering around the entrance to a police station near the Yokosuka Naval Base. On the far left, a Marine stands in a casual pose in non-regulation dress: his unbuttoned shirt exposes his bare chest, and the cuffs of his pants are rolled up above his ankles. A rifle hangs carelessly by his side, the muzzle pointed dangerously towards his feet. Behind him, another Marine lounges on the steps leading into the police station, slouching against the door jamb and cradling a rifle in the crook of his arm that points precariously towards his comrade on the left. Yet a third Marine stands on the right side of the frame, his shirt unbuttoned halfway down his chest. In the dark tones of the painting, the disheveled appearance of the men, along with their casual stances and disregard for proper firearm safety, cast Occupation troops in a distinctly negative light.

Tension among GIs continued to fester as the demobilization process dragged on. In June 1946, the Army abandoned the point system altogether and began to discharge soldiers after they had fulfilled two years of service.<sup>27</sup> As a result of demobilization, the Army downsized from 8,267,000 to 554,000 personnel in the three years following the end of the war.<sup>28</sup> Even as demobilization efforts continued, however, the U.S. remained determined to maintain a large standing army whose peacetime strength would allow the U.S. to quickly mobilize for military engagement without relying on a draft.<sup>29</sup> To maintain a large, well-trained standing army, the U.S. needed qualified enlisted men who would make military service a career. Yet

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<sup>27</sup> Bamford, “The Points Were All that Mattered: The US Army’s Demobilization After World War II.”

<sup>28</sup> Linn, *Elvis’s Army*, 11.

<sup>29</sup> Prior to the start of the Cold War, the U.S. had maintained a small peacetime army, raising “citizen soldiers” only at times of war. The military relied on rapid expansion to fight, then demobilized in equally rapid fashion at the cessation of hostilities.

demobilization had left the Army with “an unhappy collection of draftees, veterans, and misfits;”<sup>30</sup> and manpower problems only mounted when the Selective Service Act expired on March 31, 1947. General Jacob L. Devers, the Commanding General of the Army Ground Forces, complained in early 1947 that the Army received only 20,000 new recruits a month when it needed at least 30,000.<sup>31</sup>

The U.S. Army was thus faced with three challenges at the end of World War Two: the logistics of demobilization, public condemnation of its peacetime troops, and recruitment of soldiers to staff the occupations in Germany and Japan. In order to build a well-trained peacetime force that would be looked upon favorably by the public, officials realized that the Army would need to revamp its image and make the Army an appealing career choice. General Matthew Ridgway echoed the view of many other officials when he declared it imperative that the Army become “a public-relations-conscious Army.” Major General Harry P. Storke, Chief of Information (CINFO), viewed the Army as “a product,” and like “any good product today must be ‘sold’ . . . or public opinion will not support the product.”<sup>32</sup> The Army thus turned to the Public Information Program in the Office of the Chief of Information (OCI), which utilized television, Hollywood film, and print media to revitalize its image.<sup>33</sup> As well, the Army employed wartime heroes in recruitment literature, appealing to Americans’ sense of patriotism and duty.<sup>34</sup> The resulting public relations campaigns were aimed at two groups: active service

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<sup>30</sup> Linn, *Elvis’s Army*, 11.

<sup>31</sup> William W. Epley, “America’s First Cold War Army, 1945-1950,” *The Institute of Land Warfare, Association of the United States Army* no. 32 (1999), n.p.

<sup>32</sup> Quoted in Linn, *Elvis’s Army*, 231.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 232.

<sup>34</sup> Epley, “America’s First Cold War Army.”

soldiers and their families, on the one hand, and citizens, policymakers, and veterans, on the other.<sup>35</sup>

Recruitment advertisements enticed men to enlist in the army by heralding professional and personal opportunities and benefits: reenlistment bonuses, medical care, occupational training, vacations, and free entertainment.<sup>36</sup> One 1947 poster broadcast the simple message “Continue your Education in the U.S. Army or Air Force” (fig. 7.3).<sup>37</sup> Indeed, for many men, the ability to learn trade skills that could be used in future civilian careers was a prime benefit of service. Captain J. H. MacLead Jr. turned down an opportunity to return to the U.S. in order to stay in Japan and develop a flying school for officers and enlisted men. “In the next few years commercial interest will discover [flight’s] advantages,” he stated, “and knowing how to fly may be the difference in getting a good job and not getting one.” Men could enroll in the course for a mere \$2, a sum vastly lower than the projected \$250 fee for an equivalent course in the U.S. The curriculum included supervised flying time and classroom instruction in aerodynamics, navigation, and meteorology. Those who enrolled in the course were well aware of the advantages of learning to fly. R. A. Bergeron of Bartlett, New Hampshire expressed interest in the course because he thought it would increase his earning capacity upon returning home.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Linn, *Elvis's Army*, 232.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 32-33.

<sup>37</sup> The U.S. Air Force did not become an official branch of the U.S. Armed Forces until September 18, 1947. Prior to that, its designation was the Army Air Force.

<sup>38</sup> Sgt. Milt Garber, “Two Bucks Buys GI Flying Course,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, January 13, 1946.

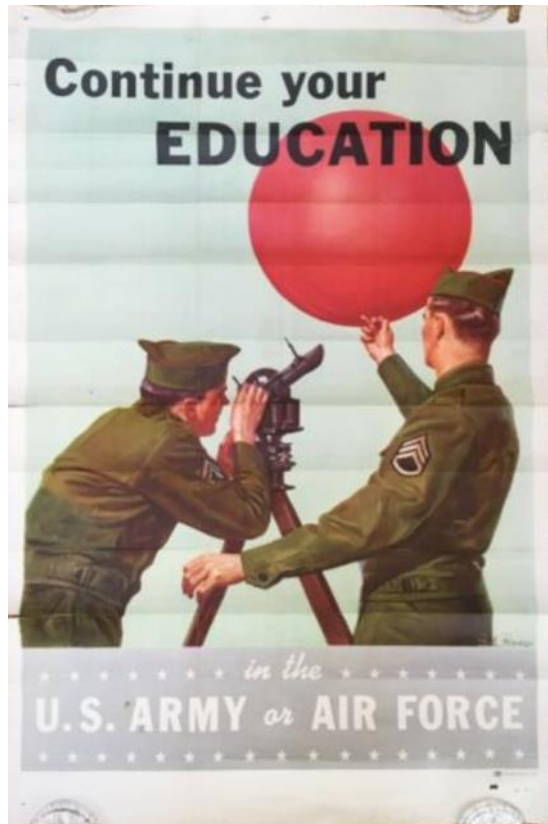


Figure 7.3. Paul Remmey. 1947 U.S. Army & Air Force Military Recruiting Poster.

U.S. Army surveys verified that many men were enlisting in the armed forces specifically to take advantage of educational opportunities and occupational training.<sup>39</sup> The Information and Education (I&E) Trade School, which occupied part of the campus at Keio University in Tokyo, offered service members instruction in several fields, including 30-day courses in machine shop, electrical work, radio operation, welding, and mechanical drawing. An article on the school published in November 1946 outlined plans for additional classes on plumbing, automotive mechanics, and carpentry. Students who entered the school with little or no experience in these subjects completed the course with a trade skill of immense “value to them when they return[ed] to civilian life.” Conscious of the importance of offering trainees decent living conditions, the school also provided comfortable living quarters and entertainment. Students were housed on the

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<sup>39</sup> Linn, *Elvis's Army*, 33.

Keio University campus and enjoyed free access to movies, sports, and a club that served soft drinks.<sup>40</sup>

Offering enlisted men the opportunity to earn high school or college credit was clearly important to the wider American public as well. In one 1947 public opinion poll, only 53 percent of respondents replied in the affirmative to the following question: “If you had a son or brother eighteen, nineteen, or twenty years of age, would you advise him to volunteer for service in the army or navy for a year?” But when asked if they would advise a son or brother to enlist “if the army or navy changed their training program to include regular high school or college courses,” 64 percent of respondents said yes. In the same survey, 79 percent of respondents favored the incorporation of regular schoolwork so that enlistees could earn one year of high school or college credit for each year of service in the Army or Navy.<sup>41</sup> The I&E Trade School at Keio University, aware of soldiers’ desire to earn education credit, administered an Army Education Test to students who completed the various courses. Passing the tests secured soldiers high school or college credit and, in some cases, the test could even be used as a reference for future employers.

One of the most common pitches in recruitment posters was the appeal to patriotic duty in defense of democratic freedoms across the globe. One 1946 poster employed the words of President Truman to inspire support for the armed forces. Truman’s face looks out from the left side of the page, and on the right has been placed his message to the American public—calling them to “understand the status and significance of our new Regular Army” whose duty it is to “help protect the freedoms and maintain the peace we have won at so great a cost.” Similarly, a 1948 Army and Air Force ad proclaimed that it was the soldier’s duty to “help the nations in

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<sup>40</sup> “Education Abroad, GI Style,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, November 24, 1946, 4.

<sup>41</sup> Hadley Cantril, editor, *Public Opinion, 1935-1946* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), 927.

their effort to balance the peace of the world.”<sup>42</sup> A 1949 poster showed an average American soldier engaged in “Operation Peace”—with different images depicting him at war on the battlefield, enjoying leisure time in a dance hall, and developing managerial skills in the office. One illustration captures a soldier of the 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division enjoying recreation. “Lessons in sportsmanship come naturally from our soldiers,” the caption proclaimed, and this helps “unofficially in the Army’s tasks of bringing democracy to occupied lands.” The soldier pictured, who “takes pride in his after-hours role,” is spreading democracy by playing basketball with Japanese children.

The dual aim of enticing men to enlist in the Army and reinforcing the importance of the Army in the eyes of the American public is evident in another advertisement from 1946 (fig. 7.4). The poster declares the Army’s mission to be “greater than any nation has ever before faced,” and the quality of the men who volunteered for service as having “high caliber and greater efficiency than any peacetime army has ever had.” And the hyperbole did not end here. In the next few paragraphs, the text proclaims that the soldiers were “the best educated, best trained and finest physical specimens in any army of any nation in world history.” The illustration at the top of the page idealizes the Army’s overseas duties: in one corner, a soldier reaches out to a Japanese child in a scenic meadow filled with Shinto stone lanterns and pink cherry blossoms. On the other side of the page, soldiers stand at attention with American flags in front of a building with a distinctly Japanese-tile roof. The images thus present two sides to the Army’s mission overseas: to promote peace and democracy by engaging with the local population, on the one hand, and to project the strength of the American military, on the other.

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<sup>42</sup> “Ambassador of Peace,” U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force Recruiting Service, 1948.



Figure 7.4. 1948 U.S. Army & Air Force Military Recruiting Poster.

The effects of rapid demobilization and negative images of the peacetime forces harmed the public's perception of the U.S. armed forces. Because of this, and because of the need to enlist recruits to staff the occupation, officials embarked on an intensive advertising campaign to bolster the image of peacetime service members. Recruitment literature heralded the benefits of serving in the Army and other military branches, such as occupational training that could be applied to later civilian careers. Advertisements and other media also underscored the need for a large, regular Army to defend global peace and democracy, especially against threats of communism. The projection of military authority, as well as the image of soldiers who preserved peace and exemplified international goodwill, soon became common themes in media depictions of the Allied Occupation.

### Projecting the Power of the American Military

Not surprisingly, one of the most prominent themes in representations of the Occupation was the power of the U.S. military. American military might appeared in several guises: GIs stationed outside buildings requisitioned for Occupation use, standing at attention with gleaming rifles; uniformed male and female service members relaxing in popular vacation destinations across Japan reserved for their sole use; tanks rolling down streets in a show of force during military parades; airplanes flying over Japanese cities; and photos of General Douglas MacArthur who, as Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces, symbolized the Occupation as well as the dominant role that the U.S. played as its leader.

The Signal Corps frequently invoked MacArthur's portrait to reinforce depictions of American military might, evidenced in one spread on July 4<sup>th</sup> celebrations in Tokyo.<sup>43</sup> MacArthur's portrait looms from a prominent position in the upper middle section of the page. On either side are images of fathers and sons watching the parade festivities: on the left an American GI in uniform with his young son sitting atop his shoulders, and on the right a Japanese father and son, the latter also sitting on his father's shoulders and waving an American flag. All four subjects have been positioned to look towards MacArthur in the center, suggesting the central importance of his leadership for Japanese and Americans alike.

The Japanese media rarely published MacArthur's image, but he was a popular subject for Signal Corps photographers and appeared regularly in American news periodicals. One of the most widely cited photographs of MacArthur is one that captured his first meeting with Emperor Hirohito. MacArthur's casual stance and military uniform, unbuttoned at the neck, projects a relaxed yet authoritative appearance. In contrast, Hirohito appears stiff and somewhat awkward in overly formal morning coat (fig. 7.5). Scholars have analyzed this image as a symbol of the

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<sup>43</sup> "Star Spangled Fourth, *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, July 6, 1947, 8-9.



disparity in power between Japan and the U.S.; however, as sociologist Yoshimi Shunya has demonstrated, the photograph did not circulate in Japanese media at the time it was taken and only acquired this symbolic connotation among scholars of Japan in the years following the Occupation. Although the photo captured that definitive moment when MacArthur assumed effective leadership of Japan, his historic meeting with Emperor Hirohito was only front-page news elsewhere.<sup>44</sup>



Figure 7.5. U.S. Army Signal Corps. Theodore Akimoto Family Collection.

While the photograph of MacArthur and Hirohito did not appear in the Japanese media, it was widely published in American newspapers and magazines. *The New York Times* printed it alongside an article by Lindesay Parrott entitled “Japanese Try to Minimize Hirohito Call on M’Arthur” (September 25, 1945), and *Life* ran it as a full-page spread in the October 22, 1945

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<sup>44</sup> As Yoshimi explains, the image was not printed for two reasons. First, Japan did not yet recognize the authoritative importance of MacArthur. And second, Japan’s Cabinet Ministry was still censoring the news. After the Occupation, however, the image circulated widely and became a symbol of Japan’s defeat. See *Shinbei to hanbei sengonihon no seidjiteki muishiki*, 65-73.

issue with the heading “Ex-God Descends.” The accompanying caption in *Life* described MacArthur as a “big, ribbonless American soldier” and Hirohito as “the little Japanese emperor.” As explored in further detail below, descriptions of Americans as tall or big, and Japanese as little or short, became a common trope to describe power relations between the two nations. Clearly, the photograph held symbolic significance for American audiences despite its absence from Japanese media.

In the early stages of planning for the Occupation, the Allied Powers had originally intended to divide control of Japan in a manner similar to Occupied Germany. But MacArthur was ultimately given direct control over the main Japanese islands.<sup>45</sup> Fearful of the dominant leadership role that the U.S. had assumed, the Soviet Union in September 1945 proposed to jointly dictate policy through an Allied Council for Japan (ACJ), which would consist of representatives from the U.S., Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and China.<sup>46</sup> In another attempt to diminish U.S. influence, in December 1945, it was decided at the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers to establish the Far Eastern Commission (FEC) to oversee the Allied Council. In the end, however, the Council had little impact on SCAP’s authority. Mark Gayn’s description of one meeting illustrates the Council’s ineffectiveness:

With General MacArthur in the stellar role, the newly created Allied Council for Japan had a strangely unhappy debut this morning. . . . This was one of the infrequent public appearances for General MacArthur, and the cameramen were out in force, focusing their cameras on the small speaker’s stand. . . . Though the speech was in General MacArthur’s traditional flowery language, there was no mistaking his purpose. In his second sentence, he made it plain that the Council has only advisory functions, and it would not ‘divide the heavy administrative responsibility of the Supreme Commander as

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<sup>45</sup> The USSR occupied southern Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands north of Hokkaido. Sovereignty over the four southernmost Kuril islands (Northern Territories) remains an ongoing dispute between Russia and Japan. Takemae, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, xxix.

<sup>46</sup> Memorandum by the Soviet Delegation to the Council of Foreign Ministers. London, September 24, 1945. C.F.M. (45) 49. Accessed February 14, 2021. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v02/d139>.

the sole executive authority.’ After that, he proceeded to castigate those who were critical of his work, and to praise his own record.<sup>47</sup>

There are several points worth noting in Gayn’s observations. First, and most obvious, Gayn remarked on MacArthur’s immediate dismissal of the Council’s attempts to limit his power.<sup>48</sup> Second, Gayn noted MacArthur’s infrequent public appearances—a habit for which MacArthur was well known. And third, he highlighted the performative quality of MacArthur’s public presentation.<sup>49</sup> Even though MacArthur limited his public appearances, John Dower notes that he “easily became a stock figure in the political pageantry of Japan” by playing the role of sovereign and military dictator “with consummate care.” MacArthur accomplished this, in part, by closeting himself in his headquarters, refraining from associating with the public, and granting audiences to only the highest-ranking officials.<sup>50</sup> Indeed, no sooner did MacArthur alight from the plane that brought him to Atsugi airfield on August 30, 1945, wearing aviator sunglasses and brandishing his trademark corncob pipe, than photographs began to position him as a spectacle at the center of Japanese and American attention.

MacArthur’s performative demeanor was on display at GHQ in downtown Tokyo every day throughout his tenure as Supreme Commander. He arrived at GHQ at ten in the morning and left briefly at two o’clock to eat lunch at home. Following a short nap, he returned to work at four in the afternoon and remained at headquarters until eight in the evening.<sup>51</sup> Richard Lauterbach wrote in *Life* that “hundreds” of Japanese stood outside GHQ on a daily basis in

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<sup>47</sup> Gayn, *Japan Diary*, 158.

<sup>48</sup> This notion was asserted in a “The March of Time” episode entitled “Japan and Democracy” (1949), in which the narrator asserted that MacArthur was definitively in charge despite the Allied Council.

<sup>49</sup> Yoshimi, *Shinbei to hanbei sengonihon no seidjiteki muishiki*, 78.

<sup>50</sup> Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 203-204.

<sup>51</sup> Hiratsuka Masao, *Nihon senryō shi: Shashin de wakaru jiten Nihon senryō-shi* (Tokyo: PHP Editor’s Group, 2019), 55.

hopes of glimpsing MacArthur as he strode from the front entrance to his 1941 black Cadillac.<sup>52</sup>

Jackson Bailey, who worked in the Occupation first as a cook and then as a Tech Sergeant, similarly described crowds of Japanese “lined up to watch MacArthur” as he made the trek from car to building.<sup>53</sup>

There is no shortage of photographs that show MacArthur walking out of GHQ. Many of these photos were taken from the spectator’s position, and thus look up at MacArthur with the façade of GHQ in the background. Others were taken from the side of the building entrance, thereby providing a brief glimpse of Japanese civilians and American military personnel lined up along MacArthur’s path. The opening sequence of the short propaganda film “Japan and Democracy” (1949) shows MacArthur exiting GHQ. “With Japan defeated,” the narrator states, “General Douglas MacArthur, as Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, had the heavy responsibility of transforming that nation into a peaceful and stable democracy despite a tense and critical Far Eastern Situation.”<sup>54</sup> The entire scene runs less than one minute, yet is loaded with political subtext. The narrator’s first words establish MacArthur as the leader of the Occupation and allude to Japan’s transformation into a postwar bastion against the spread of communism. The film’s opening sequence underscores the Occupation’s role in this endeavor. The title screen shows a brief clip of Japanese imperial troops marching beneath a Shinto *torii* gate. This is followed by the shot of MacArthur at GHQ, and then several shots of English-language street signs and traffic conductors in Tokyo that display urban reconstruction. By sandwiching the clip of MacArthur between that of the Imperial troops and a rebuilt Tokyo, the

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<sup>52</sup> Richard Lauterbach, “Letters to MacArthur,” *Life*, January 14, 1946.

<sup>53</sup> Jackson Bailey, interview by Marlene Mayo, University of Maryland, Oral History Project on the Allied Occupation of Japan, March 22, 1980. The loitering GIs, however, “figuratively thumb[ed] their noses at MacArthur” due to his ongoing battle with the press. It would seem, then, that not everyone held MacArthur in such high regard.

<sup>54</sup> ARC 1991037 / LI 263.1670 National Archives - Japan and Democracy - National Security Council. Central Intelligence Agency. (09/18/1947 - 12/04/1981), 1949.

film shows Japan's transformation from wartime enemy, to occupied nation, and on to American-inspired ally in peace.

In "Japan and Democracy," scenes of Japanese citizens lining up to catch a glimpse of MacArthur position Japan as part of the U.S. Cold War consensus. At the same time, the MP sentries who stand between the Japanese crowds and Occupation headquarters draw rigid lines between the two nations. In other words, although in close spatial proximity to GHQ, the Japanese are visually separated by uniformed guards from the center of American military and political authority in their own nation. While the film thus positions Japan as an important geopolitical ally of the U.S., at the same time it reminds viewers of Japan's subordinate status as an occupied nation.

Other photographs of MacArthur exiting GHQ similarly project a sense of separation between the Japanese and Americans that can be read as a metaphor for Occupation authority. One photographer captured MacArthur's egress from GHQ from above, depicting him from behind as he walked toward a waiting car (fig. 7.6). As one looks at the image, the eye falls first on MacArthur before climbing up the frame to the dark Cadillac idling in the street, then to a crowd of Americans. The gaze finally comes to rest on a group of Japanese spectators positioned furthest from MacArthur within the frame. An empty strip of pavement sits between each group, separating MacArthur from the crowd of Americans, who are in turn separated from the Japanese. The clear dividing lines between Americans and Japanese connote hierarchy, as does the amount of space each group inhabits within the frame. MacArthur and his car, the two elements that anchor the image, fill roughly half the frame, while the line of American spectators inhabits about a third of the frame, and the Japanese crowd takes up slightly less. The hierarchical relations established by these compositional techniques are further reinforced by

MacArthur's placement in the center of the image, clearly identifiable in this context even though his back faces the camera.



Figure 7.6. U.S. Army Signal Corps. 1945. Theodore Akimoto Family Collection.

In addition to photographs of MacArthur, images of Allied servicemen and women published in news media projected military authority and, by extension, America's emerging identity as a global superpower. In one image, nine MPs equipped with bayoneted rifles stand guard outside a building requisitioned by SCAP (fig. 7.7). According to the caption, such shows of force were initially required in front of Occupation-held buildings because SCAP did not "know the mettle of a defeated populace."<sup>55</sup> Other photographs show MPs operating alongside Japanese police,<sup>56</sup> such as one shot of four MPs standing outside a gate to the Imperial Palace.

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<sup>55</sup> "American Troops Guard the HQ in Tokyo," Densho Digital Repository, <https://ddr.densho.org/ddr-densho-299-110/>.

<sup>56</sup> The most prevalent example of this in Tokyo were MPs who directed traffic alongside Japanese policemen. Such actions were necessary in the absence of street lights as a result of infrastructural damage from strategic bombing campaigns. Notably, the hand gestures of the Japanese policeman usually lagged one step behind those of the American MPs. For the Japanese at the time, the fact that the Japanese police had to shadow the American MP's

Here again, the caption explains that their presence outside the Palace is necessary to obviate any potential civil unrest. The wide-angle exposure of the latter photo allowed the photographer to record numerous details: the white-plastered Palace gate and imposing stone wall in the background, ornate wrought-iron lampposts, and a short wooden gate that barred pedestrian traffic from approaching the Palace compound. The four MPs stand relaxed at the smaller wooden gate as they converse with two Japanese policemen in dark uniforms. A few of the MPs lean against the wooden gate; two have their hands in their pants pockets, and a third stands with his hands on his hips. The Americans tower over the Japanese men, who are short enough in comparison to appear like schoolboys in uniform rather than policemen. The height disparity did not go unnoticed by the caption, which states that the American troops “bolster the forces of the tiny policemen of Japan.”



Figure 7.7. U.S. Army Signal Corps. 1945. Theodore Akimoto Family Collection.

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movements, rather than direct traffic in tandem, symbolized in very visible terms their status of defeat in early postwar society.

The depiction of the Japanese as short and diminutive vis-à-vis Americans obviously symbolized their subordinate position to the U.S. Not surprisingly, such portrayals permeated American media throughout the Occupation. In the early postwar years especially, Japanese people were described as “short” and “stumpy.”<sup>57</sup> One report in *Life* magazine portrayed the Japanese statesmen and military men who were gathered aboard the USS *Missouri* to sign the terms of surrender as “dumpy figures in black morning coats.” The editors accentuated the small stature of the Japanese men by placing their photo next to one of Rear Admiral John F. Shafroth (1887-1967), whose towering 280-pound frame, as the report put it, “symbolizes U.S. military might.” Other photographs in the report likewise highlighted disparities in physical stature. A caption attached to one photo identified the “short Jap” General Kawabe, who stood next to “tall American” General Willoughby.<sup>58</sup> Portraying power relations between Japan and the U.S. in terms of physical stature tracked back to a longstanding Euro-American discourse that depicted Japan as immature and childlike. Looked at in this way, Japan was cast as an underdeveloped nation in need of American guidance to progress towards a “mature society.”<sup>59</sup>

The military capabilities of the U.S. were expressed in no uncertain terms in parades that featured columns of marching soldiers, ranks of mounted cavalry, rows of tanks and jeeps, and gun and aerial displays. An aerial salute of 150 aircraft flew over the 1948 Army Day Review parade in Tokyo,<sup>60</sup> while the 315<sup>th</sup> Composite Wing performed at other locations around Japan,

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<sup>57</sup> See for example “The Jap’s get MacArthur’s Orders,” *Life*, September 3, 1945 and “GIs Play ‘Mikado’ in Tokyo,” *Life*, September 9, 1946.

<sup>58</sup> “The Japanese mind in defeat: General MacArthur’s expert analyst believes that the Japs live on the verge of hysteria,” *Life*, September 3, 1945.

<sup>59</sup> Shibusawa Naoko, *America’s Geisha Ally*, 56-57. This image, furthermore, was one that carried over from wartime stereotypes that portrayed a vulnerable and weak Japan. In the words of John Dower, the Japanese were “lesser men.” See Dower, *War without Mercy*, 94-111.

<sup>60</sup> “5<sup>th</sup> AF Planes Fly over Tokyo army day review,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, April 8, 1948.



including Osaka, Kyoto, Nara, Otsu, Gifu, and Kokura.<sup>61</sup> At least 6,000 American troops marched in the 1949 Army Day Parade in Tokyo, accompanied by over 500 vehicles.<sup>62</sup> And according to the *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, over 60,000 personnel watched the 1948 July 4<sup>th</sup> parade in Yokohama.<sup>63</sup> As these examples suggest, the July 4<sup>th</sup>, Army Day, and other parades were often large-scale events that drew crowds of Allied service members from all over Japan.

As choreographed spectacles, the display of armed forces and war material at parades aroused feelings of awe, triumph, and achievement.<sup>64</sup> One key to the arousal of such feelings was selecting a suitable landscape on which to stage the parades.<sup>65</sup> In Tokyo, military parades were usually held in front of the Imperial Palace, the symbolism of which would have been apparent to American and Japanese spectators alike. In the 1948 Army Day Parade, 4,000 soldiers marched across the Imperial Palace Plaza; and the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* reported that more than 16,000 troops would march in front of General MacArthur at the Imperial Palace Plaza for the 1949 July 4<sup>th</sup> parade, accompanied by an impressive column of 550 vehicles and an aerial display of 300 airplanes. In February 1950, approximately 14,500 troops marched before the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the Imperial Palace, accompanied by a 17-gun salute and an aerial salute of 80 Navy planes.<sup>66</sup> Photos from this event show columns of half-tracks of the 40<sup>th</sup> Anti-Aircraft

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<sup>61</sup> Lee Patterson, "Col. Taylor to lead 4,000 GHQ Troops in Plaza Review," *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, April 5, 1948, 2.

<sup>62</sup> "Eighth Reveals Schedule of Big Army Day Parade," *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, March 28, 1949.

<sup>63</sup> Kay Todd, "Service Club Attendance passes 19 Million Mark," *Pacific Stars and Stripes* FEC Special Services Preview.

<sup>64</sup> Lily Kong and Brenda S. A. Yeoh, "The Construction of National Identity through the Production of Ritual and Spectacle: An Analysis of National Day Parades in Singapore," *Political Geography* 16, no. 3 (1997), 216.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 220.

<sup>66</sup> "Forces Parade for Dignitaries, *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, February 3, 1950, 1.

Artillery Brigade, dismounted cavalry, and Naval units passing in front of the spectator stands. Clearly visible in the background are the buildings of the Imperial Palace compound.<sup>67</sup>

Intent on capturing a human-interest angle, photographers of such parades documented large crowds of Occupation service members and Japanese spectators gathered along streets filled with marching troops, tanks, and parade floats.<sup>68</sup> Parade floats and other events lent these occasions a carnival atmosphere, displaying the power and privilege of the American forces in the process.<sup>69</sup> The 1948 July 4<sup>th</sup> parade included floats prepared by the Fifth Engineer Construction group that “symbolized the many kinds of work Army Engineers do throughout the world.” Other floats on display included a simulated train built by the Third Transportation Military Railway Service, and a representation of the “Freedom Train” constructed by the 229<sup>th</sup> Ordnance Base depot. Marching bands were a common component of parades as well. The 1949 July 4<sup>th</sup> parade featured performances by the 25<sup>th</sup> Army Band based in Osaka and the 15<sup>th</sup> Army Band based in Kobe, along with color guards.<sup>70</sup> The inclusion of parade floats and bands alongside tanks and columns of marching soldiers undoubtedly evoked awe and wonderment on the part of the Japanese at the power of the U.S. military.

Representations of General MacArthur, military parades, and uniformed GIs clearly projected American power in martial terms. But the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* regularly published

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<sup>67</sup> “MacArthur to Review Formations on July 4,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, June 25, 1949, 2.

<sup>68</sup> Dimitri Boria and Yo Taijiri instructed amateur Allied photographers on how to photograph parades. The essay cautioned photographers from taking too many long-range shots of the whole parade. Instead, Boria and Taijiri encouraged the use of the close-up technique to capture the expressions of spectators watching the parade. “A picture of a small child waving an American flag,” the two men wrote, “will make a better story-telling picture than a photograph of the whole parade.” Yo Tajiri and G. Dimitri Boria, “Photography Part 3,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, May 23, 1948. 4.

<sup>69</sup> The 1949 Army Day Parade in Sapporo included a pie eating contest prepared by the Quartermaster bakery. Relying on the “no-hands” rule, the contest would be judged on how much pie soldiers could eat in the shortest possible time. “‘Pie’ Highlights Crawford Slate,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, April 4, 1949, 9.

<sup>70</sup> “Selection of Kobe Troops for July 4 Parade Starts,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, June 8, 1949, 2.

photos of Occupation personnel in other guises, such as vacationers, that showed them as holders of both power and privilege. Enlisted men and officers enjoyed unprecedented travel opportunities during their time in service. Francis Hillary Conroy, who was part of a group of naval officers assigned to the Tokyo Central Telephone Office, stated that “any Allied personnel could just climb on a train and go anywhere he wanted to.” Members of Conroy’s group could take off “practically any afternoon,” and Conroy himself rode trains from northern Japan to Kansai “just to sort of explore.”<sup>71</sup> Emerson Chapin (1920-2003), who served the Occupation in both military and civilian roles, took advantage of the free train rides to travel as far afield as Hokkaido and Shikoku on weekend breaks from his job running a division newspaper in Osaka.<sup>72</sup> And Shiuko Sakai skied in Niigata, sojourned at the Atami and Fujiya Hotels, traveled to Kumamoto and Miyajima, and toured temples in Nikko, Nara, and Kyoto during her six years in Japan working as a civilian employee of the Army.<sup>73</sup>

The *Pacific Stars and Stripes* aided Allied personnel in their vacationing endeavors by printing articles on popular destinations such as Atami, Ōshima, Shikoku, and Kyoto, just to name a few. The newspaper provided information on summer outings and ski resorts, as well as more general guides to vacationing in Japan. From Tokyo, Allied personnel could join a Red Cross tour to Kamakura and Enoshima, or enjoy a cable-car ride to the peak of Mt. Hiei near Kyoto.<sup>74</sup> Troops of the 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment enjoyed the lodgings of Club Patterson, a plush, renovated villa that offered an “awe-inspiring view of the countless scenic attractions” of the

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<sup>71</sup> Francis Hillary Conroy, interview by Marlene Mayo, University of Maryland, Oral History Project on the Allied Occupation of Japan, April 15, 1982.

<sup>72</sup> Emerson Chapin, interview by Marlene Mayo, University of Maryland, Oral History Project on the Allied Occupation of Japan, February 9, 1979.

<sup>73</sup> “Shiuko Sakai Collection,” Densho Digital Repository, <https://ddr.densho.org/ddr-one-2/>.

<sup>74</sup> Cpl. Charles Swiggart. “Vacation in Japan.” November 2, 1947.

Kiso River in Nagoya.<sup>75</sup> The *Pacific Stars and Stripes* even included an occasional “Tourist Tip” column, such as one spotlight on the Shima peninsula that detailed how to get there and what to see and do. For a mere 600 yen, the column remarked, Occupation personnel could take a guided tour of the Mikimoto Pearl Farm, the Wedded Rocks (Meoto Iwa), and the Ise Shrine.<sup>76</sup>

The numerous descriptions and photographs of hotel amenities suggest that vacationing was of primary interest to readers. An article on Akakura portrayed its resort hotel as a premier destination for those looking to lounge in luxury.<sup>77</sup> Rooms offered beautiful views of Mt. Hakama, and the dining hall served lavish spreads prepared by the “top chefs in Japan.” Soldiers could also enjoy evening entertainment in the form of after-dinner dances and live music. In addition to plush “Western comfort,” the Akakura Hotel offered its guests more austere Japanese-style rooms. The Ōshima Kanko hotel, an Eighth Army Special Service hotel, was heralded in one article as a place that fused Japanese and Spanish architectural styles. As such, the hotel offered GIs an opportunity to take a vacation in “the Orient” while enjoying “Western standards of comfort.”<sup>78</sup> Descriptions such as this, which highlighted Western and Japanese-style amenities, proliferated in articles on tourism and travel.

Initially, resort hotels were requisitioned for the exclusive use of Occupation personnel, but the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* quickly began to advertise “On Limits” hotels for Occupationaires who truly wanted to “go native” in Japan. As Meghan Mettler has noted, this desire was not uncommon for “Orientalizing Americans” who considered themselves superior to

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<sup>75</sup> Phil Halverson, “Kiso River: The Rhine of Japan, a Scenic Paradise,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, June 22, 1947, 6-7.

<sup>76</sup> John P. Wooden, *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, July 8, 1950, 2.

<sup>77</sup> “Also at Akakura...” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, February 9, 1947, 8.

<sup>78</sup> “Breakfast in Bed at Oshima EM Paradise,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, April 27, 1947, 4. Another hotel that was noted for offering both Western and Japanese-style rooms for guests was the Atami Hotel on the shore of Sagami Bay on the Izu Peninsula. “‘On the Riviera’ at Atami,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, March 9, 1947, 8.

peoples of non-Western nations. By “going native,” Americans had the opportunity to become “at least superficially acquainted with Japanese lifestyles and culture.”<sup>79</sup> By April 1948, twenty Japanese hotels had been placed “On Limits” for Allied use.<sup>80</sup> Notably, these were segregated facilities—with specific areas reserved solely for Occupation personnel.<sup>81</sup> *Pacific Stars and Stripes* staff writer Jean Vandervoort claimed that such hotels were popular because they offered the “exotic charm of the Orient with the more mundane qualities of camping out.” The experience of getting callouses on one’s knees from crawling around on tatami mats and sitting in uncomfortable positions on the floor was an experience that “should be tried at least once,” Vandervoort claimed.<sup>82</sup>

Such reductionist descriptions of Japanese life as this reflected the stereotypical and superficial notions of Japanese culture that most Americans carried with them. Many stories about GI tourists expressed the Occupiers’ power and privilege over Japan by depicting American men and women lounging in luxurious settings. GIs who stayed at the Atami hotel swam in outdoor pools heated by nearby hot springs or played rounds of golf. One photo captured Private Steve Kondis savoring breakfast in bed served by a Japanese woman in kimono.<sup>83</sup> Another article spotlighted the Aso Hotel, a Swiss-style chalet requisitioned for soldiers on leave from Korea. Photos show GIs reveling in luxurious amenities dubbed the “Special Services’ Shangri-La:” reclining in silk robes while dining on an extensive breakfast spread, gazing with relish upon a platter of roasted pheasant served by a Japanese chef, or

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<sup>79</sup> Mettler, *How to Reach Japan by Subway*, 70.

<sup>80</sup> “‘On limits’ Hotels,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes Weekly Review*, April 18, 1948, 8, 9.

<sup>81</sup> As well, due to continuing food shortages, American guests were required to bring their own food; however, hotel employees were allowed to cook the ingredients supplied by Occupation patrons.

<sup>82</sup> Jean Vandervoort, “In a Small Hotel On Limits,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, October 19, 1947, 9.

<sup>83</sup> “‘On the Riviera’ at Atami,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, March 9, 1947, 8.

sipping coffee by a large fireplace in the hotel's lounge.<sup>84</sup> Needless to say, such images of the Occupiers enjoying the privilege of victory contrasted sharply to life for the Occupied.

Reports on sightseeing further underscored Occupation hegemony by portraying Japan as a vacation destination for Allied personnel. One feature published in early 1947 exemplifies the tendency to represent Japan as a premier tourist destination for the enjoyment of Occupationaires. Throwing a spotlight on "Nippon's Playgrounds," the spread discussed rock climbing activities available to "adventurous GIs" and included photographs of rural sights such as peasant girls posing in pastoral landscapes.<sup>85</sup> Another spread touted the natural wonders of Japan available to American GIs seized by wanderlust, from "snow-capped mountainsides [sic] and snow-bound villages which quicken the pulse of skiers," to "sleepy country valleys" that "bring back thoughts of Grandad's farm."<sup>86</sup> Stereotypical symbols of Japan fill the pages: snow-capped Mt. Fuji, an arched bridge, and the towering Osaka castle with its distinctive plover gables (*chidori hafu*) and massive stone base (fig. 7.8). Also lurking on these pages is the Occupation's presence: a cartoon of a jeep speeds across the page just under the title, and the silhouette of an MP stands guard to the right of the castle. Thus two representations of the American servicemen appear here: that of the watchful Occupier and the avid tourist. Indeed, throughout the *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, articles on tourism appear alongside articles that project America's military authority. When viewed together, the two representations demonstrated that the Occupation was firmly and comfortably in control.

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<sup>84</sup> Linda Mangelsdorf, "Warrior's Rest," *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, December 2, 1950, 4.

<sup>85</sup> S. T. Hayrinen, "What Can We See While Here?," *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, January 12, 1947, 4-5.

<sup>86</sup> "Japan..." *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, December 25, 1945.



Figure 7.8. *Pacific Stars and Stripes*. December 25, 1945.

By the late 1950s, portraying Japan as a tourist destination for service members had become a common thread in media depictions of America's continued military presence in Japan. In 1957, an American documentary television program called "The Big Picture" aired an episode entitled "You in Japan," adapted from an Army orientation film for American servicemen about Japanese culture.<sup>87</sup> "You in Japan" opens with a scene that projects American military power: artillery barrages from the "latest weapons" deployed to defend the American people from worldwide aggression. Following a sequence of images that includes rocket launches, atomic mushroom clouds, and helicopters, the camera cuts to Master Sergeant Stuart Queen, who tells viewers that "one of the greatest advantages of army service is the opportunity to travel to far off lands." Off duty, Queen explains, servicemen can tour far and wide.

<sup>87</sup> "You in Japan," *The Big Picture*, 1957. National Archives and Records Administration. Department of Defense. Department of the Army. Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations. U.S. Army Audiovisual Center. (ca. 1974 - 05/15/1984) ARC Identifier 2569623 / Local Identifier 111-TV-354.

Building up a fantastical image of Japan, the episode follows a group of servicemen who take the audience on a tour of Japan's main island, Honshū. As the group travels from city to city throughout the short episode, the GIs appear more akin to tourists than military occupiers. After Queen's opening remarks, the scene shifts to a ship en route to Yokohama. Servicemen gather for their final orientation before debarkation while their wives and children linger on deck. The narrator states that Japan is a new experience for the men, a place unlike anything they have ever known. Upon arrival, the group of GIs piles into a convertible—or what Queen labels a “magic carpet” that will take them on their journey. As their car trundles along coastal highways, the GIs encounter a variety of sites and landscapes. They see the *Daibutsu* (Big Buddha) in Kamakura, where “camera fans can have a field day,” then visit markets in fishing towns and take rowboats across Lake Yamaguchi at the base of Mt. Fuji. The GIs stroll under cherry trees in Kyoto, the “city of Old Japan,” and they look with interest at factories in the industrial center of Osaka. The men then drive into Hiroshima, described in the film as a city of new roads and new buildings, before turning around to head back north. At the end of their journey, in Yokohama, they alight from their “magic carpet.”

As the film shows GIs touring Japan, it situates the nation decidedly within America's geopolitical sphere of influence. The narrator describes the resurrected city of Hiroshima as a symbol that Japan could now “be counted among the countries of the free world.” When the GIs stroll through Osaka, the narrator proclaims that American forces need to ensure that the city, identified as a great industrial power, “stays out of Communist hands.” And at multiple points throughout the episode, the narrator equates peace and stability in Japan with peace and stability in the U.S. As the film closes, the narrator voices the responsibilities of American forces in Japan: “By keeping Japan strong and safe and free,” he declares, the GIs are “keeping America



strong and safe and free.” One way to accomplish this, of course, was to pursue demilitarization and democratization policies that would facilitate Japan’s postwar reconstruction.

### Reconciliation and Reconstruction

As indicated at the outset of this chapter, a central mission of the Signal Corps photographers was to depict the U.S. as a leader in the reconstruction of Japan as a democratic society. Articles that detailed democratization efforts often conveyed the notion that the U.S. was “modernizing” Japan, following a framework dubbed “modernization theory” that guided U.S. relations with the so-called developing world in the postwar. W. W. Rostow, one of the theory’s primary exponents, explained modernization in his book *The Stages of Economic Growth* (1960). In brief, Rostow postulated that all societies existed on a linear line of progression from “traditional” to “modern” and that they advanced through a set of defined stages along the way. In the hands of American officials, modernization theory was translated into policy prescriptions. American policymakers offered it as a rationale to intervene in other countries to make them more “modern” in the name of U.S. interests. Christina Klein has argued that modernization theory dovetailed with the U.S. Cold War aim of containing communism by relieving “the conditions that made communism an attractive option.”<sup>88</sup> In the belief that “nonwhite nations could ‘grow up’ into modern, liberal, capitalist democracies,” writes Klein, American policymakers anticipated their incorporation into the U.S. sphere of influence in the fight against communism.<sup>89</sup>

Photographs often framed the reconstruction of Japan in symbolic terms that suggested the progression toward an American-style modernity. One photographer expressed this in an artfully composed image of a Shinto *torii* gate. In the photo, the imposing structure fills the

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<sup>88</sup> Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, ebook.

<sup>89</sup> Shibusawa Naoko, *America’s Geisha Ally*, 5-6.

frame and is positioned at a slight angle in the picture plane, giving the composition a dynamic vibe. The caption roots the *torii* decidedly in Japan's distant past by noting that it was perhaps once the site of an "ancient feud." Prominently positioned in the center of the frame is a site of "new civilization" that looms through the "portals of the ancient past." The new civilization, in this instance, is a modern apartment building, recently remodeled as a billet for American servicemen and their families.<sup>90</sup> The caption and image, taken together, make plain the American aspiration to secure Japan's advancement from ancient traditions to a modern nation remade in an American image.

Japan's conversion from a putatively backward, feudal nation into a forward-looking, modern one under the guidance of the Occupation was a popular topic in the *Pacific Stars and Stripes*. One cover of the Weekend Features section in 1946, for example, included two pictures that evoked Japan's metamorphosis. The top image featured a flattened urban landscape, the ruins punctuated only by charred electric poles. People gather in the lower half of the frame, and an inset gives a close-up perspective of shoppers huddled over street vendors whose merchandise has been placed on blankets on the ground. The bottom photo presents a landscape wholly transformed. Here, the camera focuses on a newly-built shopping center with consumers lining up for "modern" outlets built according to American standards. The building and the pedestrians walking up and down the street fill the frame, impressing upon the viewer the scene of a dynamic, bustling marketplace. The text at the bottom of the page situates the U.S. as leading Japan in this transition from ruins to recovery. "Always adept at following prepared patterns,"

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<sup>90</sup> *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, November 10, 1946.

the author wrote, “the Japanese are relying more and more on both American construction and merchandising methods in their reconversion roles.”<sup>91</sup>

In a four-part series entitled “Strengthening Democracy,” published in 1948, the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* reported on attempts to modernize Japan through democratization. The first installment featured SCAP’s Public Health and Welfare (PH&W) Section, whose mission, according to the author, was to help prevent disease and epidemics. However, as the author noted, this mission was complicated by a Japanese healthcare system that was “never very far advanced to begin with.” Describing the Occupation’s PH&W Section as a paragon of modern medical practices, the author vowed that it would rehabilitate and modernize a health center in Tokyo to serve as a model for “modern health and welfare services.”<sup>92</sup> The photographs accompanying the article underscored SCAP’s effort to modernize Japan through healthcare reform. In one, Eleanor Carlson, the director of Nursing Education, teaches Japanese nurses at the First National Hospital, depicting in high definition a moment of America instructing its “junior ally” on the path to modernity.

The fourth installment of the “Strengthening Democracy” series continued to equate democratization and modernization. The author began an essay on the CI&E Libraries by noting that they were housed in “modernistic” buildings, whose American-style interior layout represented a “modern” way to organize knowledge. The CI&E libraries, the author continued, were efficient and served as “models for future improvement” to the Japanese, whose own

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<sup>91</sup> “Slowly the War Scars Fade...” *Pacific Stars and Stripes Features*, June 2, 1946, 1. Photo by Sergeant Julian Ely. It is important to note that the above text relied on what has become a stereotype of the Japanese people: that they copy other cultures. This was an oft-repeated idea in American media, especially as it related to attempts to democratize and modernize the island nation. In a report on the Occupation, for example, one article in *Life* magazine proclaimed that the basis for the Occupation’s success was due to the “character of the Japanese themselves,” because they were “a receptive race which has for centuries made a specialty of absorbing the accomplishments of other people.” Noel F. Busch, “A Report on Japan,” *Life*, December 2, 1946.

<sup>92</sup> Esther Crane, “Strengthening Democracy: Public Health and Welfare,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, August 22, 1948.

libraries relied on “antiquated systems” of organization.<sup>93</sup> An article published the previous year conveyed a similar sentiment by noting that the American-style open stack system “provided more and better opportunities for study” than the system employed in Japanese libraries. Further, the author explicitly linked the modern, rational organization of American libraries to the spread of democracy, stating that their purpose was to “show the Japanese the democratic way of doing things and to demonstrate how libraries in the democracies were organized.”<sup>94</sup>

The notion that systems of knowledge and education in Japan were antiquated and thus in need of American ingenuity was a recurring theme in *Pacific Stars and Stripes*. In one issue from December 1946, the newspaper published a full-page feature on the Tokyo road system. A map of the greater Tokyo area fills half the page, showing a convoluted spiderweb pattern of disorder. The author lamented that the buildings lack a coherent numbering system, and the roads are a “maze,” a “mystery,” and just downright confusing. Even the Japanese are prone to get lost in their own city, readers were told, and a Japanese mail carrier “must be a genius” or a “crystal gazer” to navigate the system of streets and avenues. Luckily, the author continued, the Occupation had stepped in to bestow order on Tokyo by assigning avenues and streets with letters and numbers, and by publishing maps that located dependents’ housing, billets, military installations, and other areas of the city.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Crane, “Strengthening Democracy: Civil Information and Education Section,” November 7, 1948, 9, 12. The article also stressed the popularity of the libraries. Upwards of 100,000 Japanese visited the 17 branch libraries scattered across Japan each month, a number that was indicative “of the Japanese desire to absorb democratic information.” The photographs certainly suggest the popularity of the libraries—everyone ranging from young children to high school students, from housewives in kimono to men in suits crowd around stacks full of books or sit at the many reading desks crammed throughout the libraries. Each photo employs tight cropping so that the subjects fill the frame, making it seem in each image as if the library is crowded with patrons.

<sup>94</sup> “Japanese Study Western Ways,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, May 4, 1947.

<sup>95</sup> “Tokyo Road System,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, December 29, 1946, 4.

A feature article on the Nagoya telephone system similarly proffered a narrative of transformation—from a disorganized Japanese system of communications to a modern, rational American one (fig. 7.9). “The Far East has always been backward in communication facilities,” wrote Stella B. Winnia, but had finally “reached a respectable maturity” in recent years, all thanks to SCAP. In a photo of the Nagoya telephone exchange at the bottom of the page, the chief operators, Staff Sergeant Leon C. Oglesby and Agnes W. Jenkins, join the Japanese chief operator, Yuoziro Hayashi, in surveilling eight female switchboard operators. Despite using equipment “that is far from being modern,” Winnia wrote, the Nagoya switchboard operators kept up with over 3,000 telephone calls a day under the supervision of the Occupation.<sup>96</sup>



Figure 7.9. *Pacific Stars and Stripes*. August 5, 1950.

<sup>96</sup> Stella B. Winnia, “Nagoya Toll,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, August 5, 1950, 7.

At the top of the same page, an illustration purports to show the drastic transformation of communications technology in Japan. On the left, a muscular male messenger runs across the landscape, clothed only in loincloth, sandals, and straw hat. On the right, a slim female operator wearing a knee-length, Western-style dress sits at a switchboard, fielding telephone calls to 46 long-distance destinations in Japan that could be reached from Nagoya. Previously, Winnia explained, the Japanese could only rely on the power of “strong legs and large lungs” to deliver messages by hand across long distances; but now Japan could communicate more efficiently by relying on Western technology and training.

Official efforts to democratize and modernize Japan included instructing Japanese in medical practices, organizing libraries, labeling roads, and supervising telephone operators. As well, however, the everyday visibility of Occupation personnel in the street was in itself an important means of democratic instruction. The Army orientation film “Our Job in Japan” (1946) made clear the GI’s role in spreading democracy. After having been brainwashed by the military, the narrator explains, Japanese citizens had to be given every opportunity to “make sense”—in other words, adopt an American-style democratic lifestyle. The Occupation could not force the Japanese to adopt democracy, the narrator continued, but Allied personnel could demonstrate that democracy was the right way to live. That Occupation personnel were aware of such a calling is evident in an essay on “Middletown, Japan” by Jean Vanderwoort. “The Japanese knew us first as victors,” wrote Vanderwoort. “Now, because of the American community in Japan, they are getting first-hand impressions of what sort of life produced those successful soldiers.” At the end of the essay, Vanderwoort quoted one unnamed individual who described his 24-hour-a-day-job to influence the Japanese: “By our play as well as our work, we are

influencing the Japanese and the impressions they get of the American community as a whole will loom large in determining their final acceptance or rejection of democracy.”<sup>97</sup>

One tangible effect of the Occupation’s round-the-clock influence on Japanese citizens was a rise in the popularity of Western-style clothing. One Signal Corps photographer documented the shift in modes of dress from Japanese to Western style (fig. 7.10). The photo features three women, each posed in different manners of dress. On the far right of the photo is a woman in *monpe* and *geta*, and on the left is a woman in kimono. These traditionally-dressed women look inward at a third, standing in the middle of the frame in a black knee-length skirt and white blazer. According to the caption, almost all women wore *monpe* at the end of the war; but many began to wear kimono on festival days once the war ended and economic conditions began to improve. As soon as the dependents of American personnel began to arrive, however, more and more Japanese discarded their kimono and *monpe* in favor of Western-style clothing. For this photographer, at least, the transition from *monpe* to kimono to Western-style skirts and blouses signaled America’s influence on Japan’s fashion landscape.



Figure 7.10. U.S. Army Signal Corps. 1945-1947. Theodore Akimoto Family Collection.

<sup>97</sup> Jean Vanderwoort, “Middletown, Japan,” *The Pacific Stars and Stripes*, October 5, 1947, 10.

Discourse in the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* frequently commented on the change in Japanese women's outward appearance. Like Japanese photographers, American news media upheld Western fashion as a symbol of modernity. The shedding of kimono, in particular, was heralded as a symbolic conversion to a new postwar life under SCAP-led reforms. One cover of a *Pacific Stars and Stripes* Weekend Feature depicted four women in kimono. The caption described the photo as having captured a mode of dress fast disappearing as the popularity of Western styles swept across Japan. Japanese women eagerly adopted Western dress due to its practicality, the caption continued; and Japanese women, who felt "servile" in "native costume," believed that men would treat them as equals if they donned Western clothing.

By claiming that the Japanese kimono fostered submission and that Western modes of dress were more practical, the author suggested that Japanese women could achieve gender equality if they adopted Western fashion styles. At the same time, however, the author of the caption expressed doubt regarding the ability of all Japanese women to realize this objective. The problem, it seemed, was that Japanese women were too "short-legged" for Western-style clothing. By invoking the common stereotype of short-statured Japanese, the author recalled Japan's subordinate position to the U.S. and implied that they would have to "grow up," literally and figuratively, to achieve American-style democracy.<sup>98</sup>

American media coverage of women trading kimono for Western-style clothing frequently conveyed the subtext that this transition signified liberation from prewar constraints on women. One author proclaimed that the kimono was "neither a practical nor economical garment for postwar Japan," and that "free-styled 'foreign' clothes" were "far more adaptable for working in offices, boarding crowded trains through the windows and hiking around the moat." This statement appeared in a feature on Sugino Yoshiko, a woman who operated a dressmaking

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<sup>98</sup> *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, November 24, 1946.



college that enrolled 3,200 students at the time of publication. Every student crafted their designs based on American styles and patterns, often making new garments from old kimono due to a shortage of materials. In one photo, a student presents to the class a “smart new frock” she created from a prewar kimono. Here, the author blatantly connected the shift in clothing styles to the revitalization of postwar Japan, proclaiming that the “morale-building effect of new clothes plays a vital part in Japan’s reconstruction program.”<sup>99</sup>

News media often depicted the U.S. instructing Japan—especially Japanese women—in the process of modernizing and becoming part of the U.S.-led free world. This is evident in a two-part series in the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* on Kitaide Tazue, a young “fingernail weaver” (*tsuzure*) who had never traveled outside her home prefecture until she went to New York City on a SCAP-sponsored trip to display her craft at an international Textile Exhibition. The first installment provided a portrait of Kitaide before her trip to the U.S. One photo shows a typical fingernail weaver’s loom displayed against a *shoji* screen backdrop. Another captures an intimate moment as a kimono-clad Kitaide inspects a Western-style dress prepared specially for her trip. According to the author, Kitaide was excited to see American culture and compare it to the “backwardness of Japan.” In preparation, she had already learned the use of knives and forks, flush plumbing, chairs, beds, and other Western amenities. At the end of the essay, the author wondered whether the young weaver could return to her job in Japan after having had “a taste of Western comfort and ease,” thereby implicitly drawing a distinction between a “backward” Japan and a more modern America.<sup>100</sup>

The next installment reacquainted readers with Kitaide upon her return to Japan. Two portraits at the top of the page draw a sharp contrast between the young woman before and after

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<sup>99</sup> Sylvia Brendon, “From Kimono to ‘New Look,’” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, March 21, 1948, 12.

<sup>100</sup> Beth Everett, “Cinderella Story,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, June 13, 1948, 7.

her journey. The image on the right offers a closeup of Kitaide dressed in kimono and posing against a *shoji* screen. Face set in solemn expression and shoulders slumped forward, she casts her eyes downward so as not to meet the camera's gaze. In the opposing photograph, however, her expression has been completely transformed. Now dressed in a chic Western-style blouse and sporting a decorative hairpiece, Kitaide holds her head high and smiles widely for her portrait. The essay quotes at length Kitaide's comparison of American and Japanese women. She reported that Americans seemed far happier than Japanese and were "free and at ease." If only the Japanese could adopt the "open and decisive" manner of the Americans, opined Kitaide, "they would be much happier." The two-part feature emphasized in no uncertain terms Kitaide's transformation as a result of contact with the U.S., and thus demonstrated that the Japanese could be modern and happy if only they learned from American instruction.

Articles highlighting positive American influence on the daily lives of Japanese civilians abounded in the *Pacific Stars and Stripes*. In April 1948, the newspaper ran a feature on Mrs. Kuwatani, a school teacher from Fukuoka prefecture. In the article, Kuwatani expressed gratitude for the new educational system devised by the Occupation that had replaced the old wartime curriculum. In particular, Kuwatani welcomed the new civics courses, which fostered democratic principles and allowed teachers more latitude in their instruction of course material. This would never have been tolerated under the wartime government, Kuwatani revealed, as teachers had not been allowed to deviate from the prescribed content of textbooks. Democratic principles also seemed to have taken root in Kuwatani's home life. Against her husband's wish that she remain at home and restrict her activities to those of a housewife, Kuwatani asserted that she was a woman of the modern era and would continue to go to work. As an important figure in

leading the new generation that would successfully reshape Japan, the author suggested, Kuwatani should continue “to disregard her husband’s protests” and continue to teach.<sup>101</sup>

The feature on Kuwatani was one installment in a series on professions in Japan with parallels in the U.S. A clear subtext of the series was the diffusion of democracy into Japanese society under American influence. In one feature, lawyer Komatsu Denichiro claimed that his work was much the same as any lawyer in America, since the law in Japan was concerned with “contemporary affairs . . . [that] have, at the present time, a decidedly Western aspect.”<sup>102</sup> The accompanying photograph shows him discussing a divorce case with a female client, one of many such cases that had lately inundated Komatsu. This was a direct result, he insisted, of the new Constitution and gender reform. In another feature, policeman Ide Isamu welcomed the democratization of the police force resulting from SCAP policies—so much so that he favored the right of Communists to participate in the government since it was the “only fair and democratic way of handling any political development.”<sup>103</sup> Even women’s hairdressers were discussed in terms of democracy. Tanabe Kazuko, who dreamed of opening a grand salon on par with Elizabeth Arden’s in New York City,<sup>104</sup> could surely achieve her dreams one day, asserted the author of “Miladay’s Hairdresser,” due to her open mind and receptivity to new ideas—in other words, through a democratic mindset.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Esther Crane, “Japanese School Teacher,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, April 24, 1948, 6.

<sup>102</sup> Donald Richie, “Japanese Lawyer,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, March 21, 1948, 3.

<sup>103</sup> Hester Lane, “Guardian of the Law,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, February 1, 1948, 3.

<sup>104</sup> Established in 1910 as the Red Door salon in New York City, Elizabeth Arden, Inc. became a subsidiary of Revlon in 2016.

<sup>105</sup> Yo Tajiri, “Milady’s Hairdresser,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, April 18, 1948, 3.

The series on professions in Japan can be read as an attempt to frame Japan as an American ally in response to the emerging Cold War. The editor's note in the first installment explains the series this way:

*Stars and Stripes* presents the first of a periodical series which will attempt to introduce our readers to Japanese counterparts of people they might know at home. Through this series we hope to enable you to learn something of the daily lives of taxi drivers, elevator operators, stenographers, attorneys, students, school teachers, waitresses, grocers, dancers and other individuals from the swarm of humanity with occupations similar to our own.<sup>106</sup>

The first individual to be featured was taxi driver Nagata Yoshitaro, a “hulking Japanese” who entered the profession in order to drive an American automobile. By highlighting Nagata's large stature at the outset, the editors countered the stereotype we have discussed of Japanese as short and diminutive, an image symbolic of the obeisant relationship of Japan to the U.S.<sup>107</sup> The feature on Nagata projected Japan as a friendly ally by likening Nagata to taxi drivers worldwide: in his free time, he ate and slept just like any man and went to the cinema to see his favorite film stars, Greer Garson and Gary Cooper. From lawyers and policemen, to teachers and taxi drivers, the series drew similarities between Japanese and American citizens, thus positioning Japan as a staunch ally of the U.S.

The effort to portray Japan as a Cold War ally is seen in other media as well. The narrator of the propaganda film “Japan and Democracy” (1949) warned that communism was “struggle[ing] for control of the Japanese mind.” The poverty that permeated virtually all levels of Japanese society was the biggest threat, the film went on, because it armed the Communists with weapons such as the promise of jobs and food for impoverished citizens. Looked at from this perspective, the narrator explained, the real challenge in combatting communism was

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<sup>106</sup> Richard H. Larsh, “Tokyo Taxi,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, January 11, 1948, 3.

<sup>107</sup> Although images representing Japan small in stature continued to appear in news media, they did so alongside images that portrayed Japan as an equal ally of the U.S.

economic in nature. According to the film, the key to bolstering Japan's domestic economy in recent years had been its automobile industry. Here the viewer is shown a Toyota factory and how the "new democratic ways," such as union meetings, have improved the lives of Toyota's factory workers.

To illustrate the positive impact of American democracy on factory workers, the film visits the Saito family home, where Mr. Saito lives with his wife, children, and elderly parents. Thanks to his job at the Toyota factory, Mr. Saito's family has enough to eat and can spend leisure time together. Here the viewer might notice several similarities between the Saito family and a stereotypical American family. Mr. Saito's son enjoys playing baseball, which is "as much the national pastime of Japan as it is of the U.S.;" Mrs. Saito, a housewife, is an avid follower of the *Blondie* comic strip, hailed by the narrator as a "symbol of democracy" for its portrayal of American family life; and Mr. Saito himself, after work and on weekends, enjoys fishing with his son. The scene playing out while the narrator speaks would have been familiar to many American audiences: Mr. Saito and his son sit at the edge of a pond in an idyllic setting, casting their lines into the water.

Baseball. Comics. Fishing. A unionized factory job. By providing an intimate view into the daily life of one Japanese family, the film humanizes them in the eyes of an American audience by drawing on shared experiences and interests. After visiting the Saitos, the film ends with a final warning against communism, bringing the film back to the fact of Japan's status as a Cold War ally of the United States. The social experiment in Japan under the Occupation had thus far made tremendous progress under MacArthur, the narrator intoned, but efforts to resist communism must continue. It is vital for the "free nations of the world that Japan become a

working democracy,” the film concluded. Here, in short, the efforts to transform Japan into a peaceful democratic nation were deeply tied to its incorporation into the postwar Pax Americana.

Media that continued to highlight Japan’s poor economy and lack of material abundance, however, ultimately placed Japan in a subordinate position vis-à-vis the U.S., even as it attempted to cast Japan as a key Cold War ally. Recall Nagata the taxi driver, who was pictured in one instance at the steering wheel of his cab. If this were the only photo in the feature, Nagata might indeed look like any cabbie the world over. Yet the following photo dislodges this view. In it, Nagata struggles to build up the steam in his charcoal-powered car, a distinctive, and common, sight in Japan’s early postwar years. Other features in the series drew attention to distinct disparities between American and Japanese lifestyles, often rooted in differing economic conditions. Photographs of housewife Yonekawa Masayo show her in scenes familiar to any American housewife: sweeping, making breakfast, and tending to her small children. But this is where the similarities end. According to the author, the lack of modern electrical appliances readily available to American housewives made Yonekawa more akin to a pioneer woman than a contemporary housewife.<sup>108</sup> By depicting Japanese housewives as lacking in household conveniences that were ostensibly accessible to all Americans, and by showing Japanese cab drivers struggling with charcoal-powered engines, the media ultimately implied that the Japanese enjoyed a far lower standard of living than Americans—and that it was the job of the U.S. to help Japan catch up.

In the *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, the Occupation forces frequently appear as privileged victors who possess knowledge, military might, and material abundance. In one article entitled “Our Job in Japan,” photographs document the prosecution of war criminals and the destruction of war materiel. Occupation service members are seen training in military drills, studying in

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<sup>108</sup> Marygot Davis, “Occupation: Housewife,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, January 18, 1948, 7.

well-appointed libraries, and sitting down with their families to hearty dinners. In contrast, depictions of the Japanese show them as war criminals standing trial, suffering from material deprivation alleviated only through SCAP's charity, and as servants who staffed the homes of dependent families. In short, the images evoke the disparity in power between the Japanese and the Americans by portraying the U.S. as more advanced than Japan economically, intellectually, and militarily. However, the article also implies a trajectory of progress led by the Occupation. The Occupation's "job in Japan" was to move a "conquered people toward an orderly and more prosperous life" by implementing "a broad general plan for the indoctrination of democratic principles."<sup>109</sup> Such efforts were represented in photographs that show Occupation personnel distributing food, inspecting mining methods with the intent to improve industry, and overseeing the safe and orderly repatriation of civilians and military personnel. In these images, SCAP clearly inhabits the decisive role of facilitator in Japan's reconstruction and recovery—a process that would transform Japan into a critical Cold War ally.

#### Imaging the U.S. as an International Leader

As seen thus far, several recurring themes dominated representations of the Occupation in the American media: depictions of SCAP reconstructing Japan through a process of democratization/modernization and reconstruction; the power of the American military and America's status as a global superpower, such as GIs in uniform and tanks; and positive portrayals of the American armed forces, seen most readily in educational opportunities open to troops and soldiers who defended democratic freedoms across the globe. Another prevalent theme in Signal Corps photographs was the representation of moral values ostensibly central to democratic societies: nuclear families, gender equality, and international friendship and goodwill. The visual documentation of such themes ensured that the U.S. would be seen assisting

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<sup>109</sup> "The Job in Japan," *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, April 4, 1948, 5-12.

its allies and that American society would be presented as an appealing alternative to communism for those nations in its sphere of influence. In short, news media positioned the U.S. as a leader of the “free” world.

The presence of dependent families in Japan was necessary to maintain the notion that the modern, nuclear family was a cornerstone of the American way of life. As one American government official stated to a presidential committee, “If we try to build up a military force by breaking up family life, we shall soon have neither an Army strong enough to defend this country nor a country that is worth defending.”<sup>110</sup> Some Occupation officials also hoped that the presence of dependent families would discourage male service members from visiting unlicensed houses of prostitution.<sup>111</sup> Of course, this was not the only reason dependent families joined their husbands and fathers in Japan, but Occupation officials obviously believed that their presence would lessen the high rate of prostitution and lessen the spread of venereal disease.<sup>112</sup> Notably, only the families of servicemen were allowed to stay in Japan as dependents. Servicewomen, in contrast, were not allowed to have their husbands or children live with them.<sup>113</sup>

The arrival of dependents in Japan became a popular subject in the *Pacific Stars and Stripes*. One article reported on the docking of the USS *Charles Carroll* and the Army Transport *Ainsworth*, which carried 22 wives of Navy and Marine Corps personnel and 307 Army dependents, respectively. The photographs show various stages in the journey from the U.S. to

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<sup>110</sup> Quoted in Linn, *Elvis's Army*, 45.

<sup>111</sup> Linn, *Elvis's Army*, 33.

<sup>112</sup> Emerson Chapin witnessed on a daily basis GIs loading onto trucks at Taisho Airfield after work and driving to the red light district in Osaka. A prophylactic station had been erected at the exit, where GIs would stop before leaving the district. The brothels were so popular that at one point the station posted a notice saying that it had run out of supplies, and requesting that the GIs “exercise restraint” until they could be restocked. Emerson Chapin, interview with Marlene Mayo, University of Maryland, College Park Oral History Project on the Allied Occupation of Japan, February 9, 1979.

<sup>113</sup> Linn, *Elvis's Army*, 33.



Japan: briefings for Army wives in Seattle, the final moments of docking, military men looking for their wives and children upon the latter's debarkation, and reunited families boarding trains bound for their new homes.<sup>114</sup> Many news stories celebrated the arrival of dependents by publicizing the reunion of families long separated. The *Pacific Stars and Stripes* published a feature on Staff Sergeant Robert George, who greeted his wife Marie and young daughter Linda at a mountain resort after a three-year separation. Marie George spent her first two weeks in Japan at the Kanbayashi Hotel in Nagano, a hotel for enlisted men that had been converted into temporary lodging for dependents until housing arrangements could be finalized. According to the author, the hotel had a "half western, half Japanese style," which in his opinion helped to initiate arrivals to the "oriental ways" of Japan. The article illustrated the hotel's hybridity with a photograph of the family sitting in Western-style chairs at a Western-style table next to a picture window, sipping tea "in the best oriental style."<sup>115</sup>

Despite official support for dependent families, their presence in Japan was a logistical nightmare. In addition to the cost of hosting a dependent population (borne by the host country and, to a small extent, U.S. taxpayers), the Occupation had to build an infrastructure (post exchanges, schools, recreational facilities, commissaries, etc.) to support the lives of thousands of dependents.<sup>116</sup> Yet none of these issues were brought to the readers' attention in news media. Instead, readers were shown stereotypical nuclear American families: breadwinning fathers who "play golf and bet on the horse races," wives and mothers who make "homes, go shopping, and belong to bridge clubs and PTA's," and children who "attend school and Sunday school,"

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<sup>114</sup> "...So Starts a New Life," *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, June 30, 1946.

<sup>115</sup> Families reunited at Mountain Resort," *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, August 3, 1947.

<sup>116</sup> Linn, *Elvis's Army*, 46.

celebrate birthday parties, and participate in Boy or Girl Scouts.<sup>117</sup> To readers of the *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, at least, it certainly appeared that the families of enlisted men and officers had been able to recreate the “American way of life” in Japan.

The availability of household goods and other wares from the U.S. was of particular interest to many readers. One article highlighted a shopping experience unique to the Occupation of Japan: the PX train, brainchild of Chief of the Army Exchange Service Colonel R.A. Case. Dubbed Operation M-M (“Moving the Mountain to Mohammed”), it catered to families in regions far from the Army’s Exchange Service shopping facilities, which were located in major metropolitan areas like Tokyo and Osaka. Photographs attached to the article underscore the operation’s purpose: namely, to cater to the dependent wives of husbands posted to rural Japan. One photo shows women gathered around a cosmetics counter on the train in Sapporo, and another shows a woman browsing Christmas Cards in Sendai.<sup>118</sup> Thus, even though the women lived in “remote Army outposts,” the article stressed, they could still purchase products imported into Japan from the U.S.

Stocking commissaries with common household wares from the U.S. was not the only logistical problem for SCAP organizers. Housing was another challenging issue. Dependent family lodging ranged widely, from sparse Quonset huts, to newly built structures on gated military complexes, and, for higher-ranking officials, requisitioned (and renovated) housing. Literature on dependent housing emphasized the modern amenities of the homes. *Dependents Housing, Japan and Korea*, published in 1948, provided a comprehensive view of base housing amenities, including aerial views and maps of housing complexes, model floor plans for single-family homes, community buildings such as schools and chapels, home furnishings, and even

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<sup>117</sup> “Reunion in Japan,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, May 2, 1948.

<sup>118</sup> “P.X. Train,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, December 8, 1946.

kitchen utensils. Photographs take the reader on a tour through living rooms, dining rooms, and bedrooms filled with furniture that exemplified the clean lines of a trendy mid-century modernist aesthetic.

For those families moving into requisitioned housing, articles ensured readers that the former Japanese domiciles had been renovated to meet American standards. One author lamented the “vast amount of remodeling” that the “dirty” Japanese homes would need before American families took up residence, and praised the work that had been done to provide renovated homes with hot water, electric outlets, and linoleum floors. The article utilized a photo of Mrs. G. Robert Fleming standing over a stove “in the all-American-style kitchen of her home” to illustrate the efforts to prepare Japanese homes for Occupation use.<sup>119</sup> Corporal Ernie Peeler, who wrote a feature spread on the Miller family, detailed the exact size of bedrooms, electric appliances, and furnished amenities, as well as modern conveniences such as radiators and the “abundance of electric outlets for floor lamps, radio and other appliances.” In the article, Grace Miller, wife of Air Force Staff Sergeant Armon Miller, claimed that she had never enjoyed “such wonderful housing” before arriving in Japan. Photographs provide an intimate view into the life of the Miller family: alongside portraits of the three children, photos show Grace Miller shopping at the neighborhood commissary, teaching at the elementary school, playing in the local pinochle club, and cooking her own dinners (although, Peeler noted, her Japanese maids were learning to cook American-style under her direction).<sup>120</sup> One photograph captured Mr. and

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<sup>119</sup> “New Homes from Old,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, November 16, 1947.

<sup>120</sup> American housewives despaired at the supposed inability of Japanese maids to cook American-style dishes. The *Pacific Stars and Stripes* alerted its readers to a cookbook entitled “The American Way of Housekeeping” for sale at Eighth Army Post Exchanges. Filled with more than 300 recipes contributed by Occupation wives, the project began in 1947 when women’s organizations declared the need for an American cookbook written in Japanese “for the sake of thousands of dependents whose stomachs were beginning to suffer from the results of the labors of inexperienced cooks.” The book included “simple sketches” to insure that the Japanese readers would fully understand tasks such

Mrs. Miller on a date at the Enlisted Men's Club, hailed as a luxurious, relaxing space for servicemen to take their wives out for an evening away from the children.<sup>121</sup> From the requisitioned homes, to the school and shopping facilities, and on to the Enlisted Men's club, the spread constructs the image of a modern, comfortable, privileged lifestyle in Japan made available to American families.

The affluence of the American Occupiers vis-à-vis Japanese citizens reinforced notions of Occupation authority. In her memoir of the Occupation, Lucy Crockett observed, "On all sides beyond the well-insulated grooves of Occupation activity there extends the drab surface picture of hunger, destitution, crime and moral collapse."<sup>122</sup> To photographer Tōmatsu Shōmei, the base housing complexes seemed "bright like heaven,"<sup>123</sup> and Uraguchi Shizuko, editor of *Freedom Women (Jiyū Fujin)*, said of her visit to Washington Heights: "They say that these are simple, quickly constructed houses. But they make us, as Japanese, realize how poor the living conditions in Japan are right now."<sup>124</sup> In media as well, articles on and photographs of dependent families and the amenities that supported their presence left the impression of a "colonial enclave" in Japan.<sup>125</sup>

By the end of 1952, an estimated 10,000 dependent family housing units in 51 separate housing developments had been built across Japan, in addition to requisitioned homes, barracks,

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as setting the table. Hazel Shore, "Home Hints Given in Book for FEC," *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, December 6, 1948, 2.

<sup>121</sup> Corporal Ernie Peeler, "Dream Homes," *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, June 3, 1950.

<sup>122</sup> Crockett, *Popcorn on the Ginza*, 186.

<sup>123</sup> Tōmatsu Shomei, "Toward a Chaotic Sea," trans. Takaya Imamura, in *Setting Sun: Writings By Japanese Photographers*, ed. Ivan Vartanian, et al. (New York: Aperture, 2005), 30. Originally published in *Taiyo no enpitsu* (Tokyo: Mainichi Newspapers, 1975).

<sup>124</sup> Uraguchi Shizuko, "Amerika no mura wo miru," *Jiyū Fujin*, Vol. 3, No., 2, February 1948. <https://www.lib.umd.edu/crossing-the-divide/housing/construction-of-little-america-folder/jiyū-fujin>.

<sup>125</sup> Dower *Embracing Defeat*, 209-211. Takemae, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, 73.

and Quonset huts.<sup>126</sup> Representations of these housing areas in the *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, *Life*, and other visual media projected American imperialism. In *Life* magazine, for example, a photo of children gathered beneath an American flag outside the Washington Heights elementary school was described as one of the many sights that “makes Japan look like U.S. outposts.”<sup>127</sup> Paradoxically, the barbershops, libraries, movie theaters, chapels, gas stations, schools, and houses enjoyed by the Occupiers were designed and built by the Japanese themselves under the supervision of American architects and engineers. As detailed in *Dependents Housing, Japan and Korea*, Japanese architects, designers, engineers, fabricators, and craftsmen were tasked with developing the infrastructure, building the structures, and manufacturing all the necessary appliances and furnishings for average American middle-class suburban homes across Japan. This ranged from Venetian blinds to refrigerators, water heaters to toasters, and the furniture that appointed dependent family homes.<sup>128</sup>

Depictions in American media of modern nuclear families living on base housing were intended to evoke notions of democratic domesticity. But the base housing areas ultimately reinforced American authority for several reasons. First, the Japanese had to pay for all the raw material and construction costs. One GHQ report found that the money spent on raw materials

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<sup>126</sup> Murakami Shihori, Oba Osamu, Sunamoto Fumihiko, Tamada Hiroyuki, Kaku Satoru, and Osaka Jōji, “Senryōka Nihon ni okeru butai haibi to senryōgun kazoku jūtaku no yōsō,” *Nihon kenchiku gakkai keikakukei ronbunshū* 82, no. 739 (2017): 2447.

<sup>127</sup> “Bulwark in the Far East,” *Life*, August 28, 1950, 84-90.

<sup>128</sup> “Life of U.S. Military Families in Tokyo,” University of Maryland Libraries, <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=6eb9077e3025434dab81b0eadbf4ca29>. As scholars have noted, the experience of building and furnishing American homes during the Occupation was one of many elements that contributed to the Americanization of Japanese culture and lifestyle. As Nobuharu Saitō, director of the National Research Institute of Industrial Arts, stated, “By manufacturing furniture for U.S. military family houses, we will learn foreign lifestyles and contribute to the internationalization of Japanese industrial arts.” *Kōgei Nyūsu*, October 1946. Quoted in “Furnishing Home Away From Home: Indigenizing Western Design,” University of Maryland Libraries, <https://www.lib.umd.edu/crossing-the-divide/housing/furnishing-the-house-folder/furnishing-the-house>.

alone contributed significantly to Japan's rampant inflation.<sup>129</sup> Second, as stated, base housing was designed and built by Japanese labor. And third, the Japanese were prohibited from entering the bases unless they were construction workers, handymen, cooks, nannies, or maids—in other words, servants or other laborers who supported the comfortable lifestyles of Americans.

Another democratic value represented in the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* was gender equality, expressed through news coverage of female service members and civilian personnel. At the start of the Occupation, over 400 women worked in Tokyo for GHQ and U.S. Army Forces in the Pacific (AFPAC) as part of the 8225<sup>th</sup> Women's Army Corps (WAC) Battalion. As well, the 8000<sup>th</sup> WAC Battalion comprised 150 women assigned to the Eighth Army in Yokohama. The number of women stationed in Japan increased with the outbreak of the Korean War, from 600 WACs in 1950 to over 2600 by the middle of 1951.<sup>130</sup> In addition to the WAC, women enlisted in the Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service (WAVES) force, the Air Force Nurse Corps and Medical Specialist Corps (established in 1949), and served the Occupation in civilian roles.

Media representations projected notions of gender equality by showcasing independent, working women.<sup>131</sup> Technician Fifth Grade Martha Pugh posed in her Army uniform for a cover feature on the fifth anniversary of the WAC in 1947. The article detailed the important tasks carried out by servicewomen who worked “side by side with Army men.” Women served in intelligence work and military government activities; they were medical technicians and dispatchers in the GHQ motor pool; they managed hotels and billets; and they directed postal

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<sup>129</sup> Cary Karacas, “The Occupied City” in *Cartographic Japan: A History in Maps* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016).

<sup>130</sup> Takemae, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, 127.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 242.

censorship.<sup>132</sup> In other articles, the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* featured American women serving as secretaries, automobile drivers, and nurses, as well as wireless operators, intelligence operatives, engineers, administrators, and logistics specialists. Civilian members of the Occupation were regularly featured as well. Ms. Iris Colvin, an auditor at the Office of General Accounting, was touted as the only licensed XYL (a ham radio term for wife) radio operator in Tokyo. As such, she was in high demand among male amateurs across the globe.<sup>133</sup> Ruth B. Gardner, a secretary in the Economic and Scientific Section's Anti-Cartels Division, practiced judo and was welcomed by the Kodokan Judo College in Tokyo. Gardner claimed to be able to throw a 220-pound man over her shoulder, and photographs showed her demonstrating her strength and speed while wrestling with chief instructor Takahashi Hamakichi.<sup>134</sup>

Published images in *Pacific Stars and Stripes* of women sightseeing solo or working alongside male colleagues accentuated the model of self-sufficient women representative of a democratic society. One good example of this was a feature on Lucille Morton, an Army Civilians secretary to Colonel E. M. Day of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Composite Wing at Kadena Air Base.<sup>135</sup> Morton is pictured in different guises: as a tourist, answering the phone in the workplace, casually conversing with Okinawan children in the street, and playing pinochle with men at the service club. In the last image, Morton is the only woman in the picture aside from the hostess, who pauses from waiting tables to glance at the game. In each of these photos, Morton appears either on her own or in equal status to the men pictured alongside her.

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<sup>132</sup> Janice E. Robb, "WAC Marks Fifth Birthday," *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, May 18, 1947.

<sup>133</sup> "Ms. Iris Colvin—busiest woman in Tokyo," *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, June 22, 1947.

<sup>134</sup> Yo Tajiri, "Lady Judo Champ," *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, August 13, 1949, 4.

<sup>135</sup> "Okinawa Steno," *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, November 7, 1948.

While photographs like these evoked women's equality and independence, others projected a very different image. Two other photos of Morton show her organizing clothing in her closet and looking at her reflection in a vanity mirror. Both suggest a preoccupation with her physical appearance, something noticeably absent from photographs of male service members. Because women had to adhere to contemporary feminine ideals, it was important that female service members looked "young, attractive, and dedicated" even as they exhibited a "sense of adventure and a desire to travel" through their military service.<sup>136</sup> As one veteran put it, "it was ingrained into the early Wac that she was a lady first, soldier second."<sup>137</sup>

Because the roles performed by female service members in Japan implicitly threatened American notions of domesticity,<sup>138</sup> the depiction of women as both self-sufficient and feminine alleviated concerns among the general public about the dissolution of American womanhood.<sup>139</sup> One feature article on WAC contributions to the Occupation illustrated the balance struck between military service and femininity. The camera captured Master Sergeant Prudenza V. Selvaggion drawing maps for her job in the Theater Intelligence Section and Corporal Betty Jane Bricker filing photographs and news clippings at the *Stars and Stripes* library in Tokyo. Two other photographs showed Sergeant Josephine Mangione administering physical therapy to wounded soldiers in the Tokyo Army Hospital and WACs in Yokohama at work in the laboratory of the 155<sup>th</sup> Station Hospital. But one photo was given prominence on the page,

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<sup>136</sup> Linn, *Elvis's Army*, 242.

<sup>137</sup> Marian Nicely, *The Ladies First Army* (Ligonier, PA: Fairfield Street Press, 1989), 3. LTC Mary E. Kelly, Sub: Recruiting and Publicity, WAC Staff Advisers Conference, 18-20 November 1964, Box 56, E 145, RG 319. Quoted in Linn, *Elvis's Army*, 242.

<sup>138</sup> Koikari, *Pedagogy of Democracy*, 77-82.

<sup>139</sup> In her study of Occupation education films, Tsuchiya Yuka notes that films of American women highlight their independence and ability to work, but such women never lose their femininity. Tsuchiya, "Imagined America in Occupied Japan," 203.



printed twice the size of the others and placed in the upper right corner near the title. In it, two women pose on a staircase, one in military uniform and the other in an elegant evening gown. “Miss WAC,” states the caption, “changes from the trim tailored work uniform to flounces and lace dear to all women.”<sup>140</sup> By demonstrating the smooth transition from work to off-duty recreation, the photo suggests that women in the WAC could easily shed their military clothing to embody contemporary feminine ideals.<sup>141</sup>

Calling attention to women’s roles in the armed forces was closely connected to the American aim of establishing the U.S. as a global leader and alternative to communism. Photographs of self-sufficient servicewomen portrayed the value of gender equality as essential to democratic societies, and articles positioned them as indispensable to the project of teaching democracy to Japanese women.<sup>142</sup> In the above-mentioned fifth-anniversary feature on the WAC, the author claimed that WAC officers and enlisted women illustrated “the role of Western women as partners in democracy,” presenting a role model to Japanese women who had only recently been liberated under the new postwar Constitution. This was especially important, the author claimed, in a “nation where women heretofore were denied even personal freedom,” and “held only the most servile positions in either industrial or public life.” A distinct subtext of such

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<sup>140</sup> “The WACs,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, May 12, 1951, 17.

<sup>141</sup> To give yet a third example, the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* reported on a fashion show held on the roof garden of the 8225<sup>th</sup> WAC billet in downtown Tokyo. Visually, the spread is filled with “attractive women” who model a small selection of the fifty garments on display during the show, ranging from play clothes to evening gowns to office, cocktail, and dinner dresses. A culmination of a course in Social Concepts that was required as part of an Army training program, the fashion show aimed to demonstrate the “ideal balanced wardrobe for the Service woman. The course itself was indicative of the difference between women’s and men’s place in the armed forces. Men took classes on aviation, mechanics, and welding, but women completed mandatory coursework on personal grooming and style. “WAC Mannikins,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, July 8, 1950.

<sup>142</sup> For more on the use of American women as role models in teaching Japanese women lessons in democracy, see Koikari, *Pedagogy of Democracy*. Interestingly, Koikari argues that, although the Occupation promoted gender reform, their view of suffrage was not dissimilar to Japanese men who feared women’s enfranchisement would engender the collapse of the family system that was the “backbone of the nation.”

articles was the idea that the Occupation was guiding Japan toward a more modern, democratic society, and that American women, in particular, were pivotal in this endeavor.

A spread on the Eighth Army Women's Affairs programs in the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* purported to show American women leading the way in democratizing Japanese women. The report claimed that the Women's Affairs programs, which were "designed to stimulate understanding of and training for democracy," had accelerated the "awakening of Japanese on a national scale to the rights, powers, and civic responsibilities" granted them by the revised Constitution. The accompanying photographs captured various moments of democratic instruction. One photograph provides a glimpse into a dressmaking training center set up jointly by the Eighth Army and several Japanese women's groups to provide life skills that would enable women to achieve a "better life." Still other photos show Japanese nurses studying at a "modern" hospital school, a women's group discussing how to assist in the democratization of the country, and Japanese women learning how to use projecting equipment provided by the Eighth Army Military Government and the CI&E.<sup>143</sup> By showcasing such a wide range of subjects and settings, the article illustrated how the Occupation had facilitated the spread of democracy into many different domains of Japanese women's lives.

Photos that documented American women teaching democracy to Japanese citizens crafted a narrative of international friendship and cooperation, a narrative that was equally important in positioning the U.S. as a global leader. A report in the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* on the Tokyo International Model Airplane Club included a photograph of American men and women in uniform posing with Japanese members to display their prized possessions. The club, which was co-founded by Kazuo Sami, a news commentator from the Mainichi Press, and Allied service member Roger M. Holt, was focused on the hobby of building model airplanes; but its

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<sup>143</sup> "Women's World," *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, April 16, 1949.

larger purpose was to foster ties of friendship between Japanese citizens and Occupation personnel.<sup>144</sup> Throughout the Occupation, in fact, Signal Corps photographers captured moments of friendship in numerous settings, such as GIs giving cigarettes to Japanese men, female alumni of Vassar College celebrating a reunion in Japan with a sukiyaki party, and Japanese women instructing female Allied personnel in the art of *ikebana* (flower arranging) during a weekly Red Cross club meeting.

The *Pacific Stars and Stripes* frequently utilized children to convey messages of friendship. Corporal Larry Sakamoto reported on a “friendship gesture” extended by the children of Fukui, who had experienced a devastating earthquake in June 1948 that killed over 3,700 people and destroyed over 36,000 homes.<sup>145</sup> “But out of this catastrophe,” Sakamoto wrote, “rose a new tie of friendship between the Japanese and the occupation.” To show their gratitude, the children of Fukui had sent dolls and other souvenirs to the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* office in Tokyo. Included among the parcels was a letter from a child thankful for “the kindness of our American friends” for rebuilding their earthquake-damaged school.<sup>146</sup>

The media used children to express messages of friendship for several different reasons. First, children disarmed the racial hostility that had fueled the exceptionally brutal fighting of the Pacific War.<sup>147</sup> One American author of an article on Japanese war orphans expressed the views of many when he stated that children were innocent victims of war, in contrast to repatriated

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<sup>144</sup> Matteo La Croce, “Japanese and Americans Join Model Air Force,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, August 3, 1947, 7.

<sup>145</sup> “1948 Fukui (Japan) Earthquake Archive: In Memory of Prof. Masayuki Kikuchi (1948-2004),” Incorporated Research Institutions for Seismology, <https://ds.iris.edu/seismo-archives/quakes/1948fukui/>.

<sup>146</sup> Larry Sakamoto, “Tots of Fukui Remember Yank Aid with Presents,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, October 14, 1950, 2.

<sup>147</sup> Shibusawa, *America’s Geisha Ally*, 5, 13.

soldiers or other adults who had knowingly followed the wartime militarists.<sup>148</sup> Second, children connoted Japan's status as a "student" of democracy. Stories of Japanese children were often connected to narratives of democratization wherein Japan was expected to "grow up" into a democratic nation in the image of the U.S. In her position as an advisor to the Girl Scouts in Japan, for example, Harriet S. Calkins asserted that the scouts program would foster among Japanese youth "miniature democracies where all can practice the essentials of decent living."<sup>149</sup>

Lastly, stories of friendship between Japanese and American children implied that such goodwill would continue well into adulthood, thus cementing strong ties between the U.S. and Japan that would last for generations. The *Pacific Stars and Stripes* detailed the collaborative effort of Japanese businessman N. Ishizaka of the Victor Company and Captain Robert Connolly of the Eighth Army to record an album of "Friendship Records." Holding three sides each of Japanese and American children's songs, the album was created so that Japanese children could learn American songs and American children from dependent families in Japan could "carry with them a remembrance of Japan" upon returning home to the U.S.<sup>150</sup> To give another example, one cover of a weekend edition of the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* depicted Japanese girls in ceremonial kimono presenting American girls with gifts of dolls. Underneath the photograph, the caption states that this "ancient Japanese custom" might be "remembered decades from now as symbolic of lasting peace and belabored international understanding."<sup>151</sup> These and similar portrayals of friendship worked to transform Japan's image from wartime enemy to Cold War ally. In the words of Lieutenant General Robert Eichelberger, the goodwill between the U.S. and Japan

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<sup>148</sup> "Allied Charities," *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, December 12, 1948.

<sup>149</sup> Norma Lee David, "On My Honor," *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, February 4, 1950.

<sup>150</sup> "Waxing Friendship," *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, June 24, 1950.

<sup>151</sup> *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, March 2, 1947.

would deter the Soviet Union, now vulnerable to potential “enem[ies] on both flanks,” from starting a war with the U.S. and its allies.<sup>152</sup>

Articles and photographs that documented moments of friendship frequently conveyed American benevolence. In early 1946, the Committees for Japan and Korea of the American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Work Abroad (ACVA) organized the Licensed Agencies for Relief in Asia (LARA) to coordinate volunteer agencies anxious to contribute to relief work. LARA sent relief supplies to be distributed through government welfare channels under the supervision of the Public Health and Welfare (PH&W) Section of SCAP. One report estimated that between November 1946 and January 1948, LARA had contributed roughly \$2,000,000 in supplies, including 5,818 pounds of food, nearly one million pounds of clothing, and 12,960 pounds of shoes.<sup>153</sup> According to one SCAP document, most of the estimated 1,800,000 recipients were under 13 years of age.<sup>154</sup> Numerous photographs show children receiving LARA aid. In one, two children sit on crumbling concrete steps surrounded by debris (fig. 7.11). Two boxes are distinctly labeled:

To: LARA: Yokohama Japan  
From: U.S.A

The dirty, disheveled appearance of the two children is amplified by the broken bits of concrete piled around them. Despite the grim surroundings, the girl flashes a toothy grin at the camera and the boy looks eagerly into the box resting in his lap. The meaning here is clear: even amid ruin, the Japanese could look with hope to the material aid sent by the U.S.

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<sup>152</sup> “War Deterrent Seen in Japan-U.S. Ties,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, May 18, 1950, 4.

<sup>153</sup> For more on emergency relief efforts, see Takemae, *The Allied Occupation in Japan*, 406-409.

<sup>154</sup> Licensed Agencies for Relief in Asia (LARA.). Public Health and Welfare Technical Bulletin. PH&W GHQ SCAP APO 500. January 1948.



Figure 7.11. Photo. *Pacific Stars and Stripes*. August 17, 1947.

One article in the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* played up American aid by highlighting the efforts of the Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE).<sup>155</sup> The author declared that the social conditions in Japan, although far removed from those in the continental U.S., were part of the American story as well. By contributing aid to Japan, readers could build a “tale of American generosity and expression of international friendship.”<sup>156</sup> Photographs show the distribution of a bounty of supplies. In some images, the vast quantities of aid are represented by neatly stacked boxes that fill the frame and dwarf the human subjects. Other photographs show mothers with children in tow lugging bundles of food back home. In still other instances,

<sup>155</sup> Originally Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe, CARE organized its first non-European mission to Japan in 1948.

<sup>156</sup> “CARE . . . around the world (check)” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, August 6, 1949, 7.

photographers made sure to capture Japanese expressions of gratitude, represented in one photograph by a banner placed on the platform of an Obon (Day of the Dead) celebration. In bold letters, the banner declared: “Mid Summer Mass Dance Party in Appreciation of General MacArthur’s Sincere Aide for Japan’s Food Crisis.”

Notably, the recipients of CARE pictured in the article mentioned above were almost exclusively women and children. Meanwhile, the article on the opposing page reported on the 32<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment stationed at Camp Haugen in Hachinohe. The juxtaposition of these two articles and their accompanying photos adds a further layer to the symbolic representations of Japan and the U.S. The photographs of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment show American soldiers wielding heavy artillery and standing at attention in dress uniform alongside a billowing American flag.<sup>157</sup> The photographs illustrating the CARE relief efforts, in contrast, present a feminized and infantilized image of a Japanese nation dependent upon aid from the U.S. Such photos that positioned the U.S. as a leader in administering international aid, of course, contributed to America’s new postwar identity as a global superpower.<sup>158</sup> But, as Shibusawa and others have argued, they were also redolent with American liberal paternalism, representing the U.S. as “mentors and protectors” of a vulnerable Japan.<sup>159</sup>

Many *Pacific Stars and Stripes* articles depicted war orphans receiving American charity. One article proclaimed that it was uncharacteristic for Americans “to live in the midst of undeserved suffering without wanting to help alleviate it.”<sup>160</sup> Reports on orphans and orphanages

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<sup>157</sup> “Paul Hershey, “33 for the 32<sup>nd</sup>,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, August 6, 1949, 6.

<sup>158</sup> Christian Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, ebook.

<sup>159</sup> Shibusawa, *America’s Geisha Ally*, 19. See also Jeffrey M. Hornstein, “Our Job in Japan: Making Sense of the American Creed,” *Left History* 4, no. 2 (1996): <https://doi.org/10.25071/1913-9632.6983>, and Koikari, *Pedagogy of Democracy*.

<sup>160</sup> “Allied Charities,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, December 12, 1948.

often highlighted charitable contributions from Occupation personnel, such as the 64<sup>th</sup> Engineer Topographical Battalion, which contributed almost 1,000,000 yen to the Salesian Orphanage in Kokubunji, Tokyo between 1948 and 1950. The orphanage housed more than 200 boys by 1950, mostly war orphans whom Japanese police had apprehended for minor misdemeanors. One article documented the positive impact of assistance from Allied personnel in the form of renovated buildings and recreational facilities, as well as donated educational supplies and clothing. The Occupiers improved not only the buildings, the author stressed, but the lives of the boys housed there as well, who spent each day “gainfully engaged in work” with the assistance of instruction from members of the 64<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion in their off-duty hours.<sup>161</sup>

The transformation of delinquent youth into model, hard-working citizens thanks to SCAP assistance was a frequent subtext of articles in the *Pacific Stars and Stripes*. The boys’ reformatory at Matsumoto was heralded in one article as a new type of institution that rehabilitated delinquent youths rather than exploiting them as sources of cheap labor—which had been the norm in Japan, according to the author, before the arrival of the Occupation. Under the guidance of the U.S. Army Civil Affairs officers and the Public Welfare division of SCAP, the youth received instruction that ranged from cooking to animal husbandry to sculpture, in addition to American-style occupational therapy. Like the boys at the Salesian Orphanage, the reform school youths engaged in various industrious endeavors, including farming, artisanal craftwork, and raising livestock.<sup>162</sup>

The depiction of friendship and benevolence between Americans and Japanese played up American racial tolerance, which the U.S. recognized as a key component of its new identity as a

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<sup>161</sup> In the future, the author continued, the orphanage hoped to secure farm land to provide boys with more practical experience, implying the importance of physical labor in the boys’ reformation. John P. Wooden, “Foster Fathers,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, February 25, 1950, 7, 11.

<sup>162</sup> “Modern Reform School,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, August 13, 1949, 5.



global leader.<sup>163</sup> In the postwar period, the treatment of minorities in the U.S. had become a concern for “foreign policy and national prestige,”<sup>164</sup> and the Army proposed to take a leadership role by offering equal opportunity to all service members regardless of race and by championing desegregation.<sup>165</sup> In the GI orientation film “Our Job in Japan,” the narrator told recruits that it was their job in Japan to prove that the “‘American way’ or democracy” is a “good way to live.” Americans don’t push people around, he continued; they believe in fairness, regardless of race. The scene playing out as the narrator spoke showed Black and white Americans lined up side-by-side in the chow line to fill their trays with food.

“Our Job in Japan” obviously portrayed racial equality as a positive characteristic of American society; however, when the film was initially screened for approval, critiques of its content centered on its depiction of relations between white and Black American troops—or rather the lack thereof. The chief complaint centered on the dearth of scenes in which white and Black troops interacted, such as during religious worship, playing sports, or while on duty. Such scenes had to be spliced together—like the men in the chow line—because they simply did not exist.<sup>166</sup>

Despite its public commitment to racial equality, the U.S. military in actuality fostered racial inequality. In fact, segregation was rampant in the U.S. military, and Black servicemen were consistently relegated to positions of lower rank. Segregation extended to amenities as well, such as swimming pool facilities, men’s clubs, and off-duty recreational facilities.<sup>167</sup> Even

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<sup>163</sup> Shibusawa, *America’s Geisha Ally*, 183.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>165</sup> Linn, *Elvis’s Army*, 260.

<sup>166</sup> Hornstein, “Our Job in Japan,” 65-66.

<sup>167</sup> Takemae, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, 130.

prostitution was subject to segregation: GHQ asked the head of the Tokyo municipal government's hygiene department, Dr. Yosano Mitsuru, to segregate prostitution districts between white and Black enlisted men.<sup>168</sup> President Truman ordered U.S. forces to desegregate when he issued Executive Order 9981 in 1948, but MacArthur refused to follow the order. Racial integration of military units would not occur until 1951, when General Matthew Ridgway took over leadership of SCAP and implemented Truman's directive.<sup>169</sup> Despite the Army's attempt to brand itself as a leader of desegregation, and despite the presence of African American units across Japan,<sup>170</sup> Black American GIs rarely appeared in the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* or other news media.

One American minority group that did appear in *Pacific Stars and Stripes*—albeit infrequently and usually only in relation to their language skills—were Nisei service members.<sup>171</sup> In one feature, Nisei are seen putting their language skills to work by helping to maintain social order: assisting a Japanese chief of police in summoning witnesses to military court, interpreting for witnesses in court, combing through newspapers to understand the current Japanese “national trend of thought,” and conducting public opinion surveys. The accompanying text positioned Nisei as ambassadors of the U.S. When Sergeant A. Yonekura visited his ancestral village in Mie

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<sup>168</sup> Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 130.

<sup>169</sup> Takemae, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, 130.

<sup>170</sup> By August 1946, the Eighth Army included over 10,000 African American personnel. Twenty-six all-Black units were stationed in Yokohama by early 1949, and other units were located in Sendai, Zama, Tokorozawa, Kobe, Nara, Kyoto, Gifu, and Tokyo. Okada Yasuhiro, “Race, masculinity, and Military Occupation: African American Soldiers' Encounters with the Japanese at Camp Gifu, 1947-1951,” *The Journal of African American History* 96, no. 2 (2011): 199, n.8.

<sup>171</sup> Nisei were an integral component of the Occupation forces. Many were assigned to the Allied Translator and Interpreter Service (ATIS), in addition to the Repatriation Program, the Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC), and the CCD. By the end of 1945, there were 2,667 members of ATIS alone, most of whom were Nisei. Civilian Nisei translators and interpreters worked for the Occupation as well. Altogether, there were a total of nearly 10,000 Nisei men and women in Japan during the Occupation. For more, see Azuma Eiichiro, “Brokering Race, Culture, and Citizenship: Japanese Americans in Occupied Japan and Postwar National Inclusion,” *The Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 16, no. 3 (2009): 183-211.

Prefecture, the author reported, he was peppered with hundreds of questions about the U.S. Sergeant Alexander Katano's Japanese relatives were shocked to learn that people of Japanese ancestry served in the U.S. Armed Forces and that they could even become officers.<sup>172</sup> Needless to say, press coverage conveniently glossed over the history of Japanese-American internment during the war, since this would have tainted America's self-image as an idealized alternative to communism.<sup>173</sup>

Articles in the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* and *Life* magazine portrayed the Occupation—and by extension the U.S.—as an international leader in multiple ways. Stories on model airplane clubs and American women teaching Japanese lessons in democracy, for example, helped the American media to craft a narrative focused on friendship and cooperation between the U.S. and Japan. In turn, photos that documented the distribution of material aid, such as children posing with LARA boxes, expressed American benevolence. And features on female members of the armed forces touted the American commitment to gender equality. Lastly, by highlighting the relocation of military families to Japan, American media represented modern nuclear families that preserved an American-style democratic way of life. Taken together, depictions of gender and racial equality, international friendship and aid, and democratic families positioned the U.S. as a global leader and an alternative to communism in a Cold War world.

### Remaking America's Postwar Image

This chapter has identified several themes that emerged from representations of the Occupation in the American media: messages of patriotic duty; the Army as an educational opportunity and means of career advancement; American authority and military prowess; moral values integral to democratic societies; and the Occupation's role in democratizing Japan. These

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<sup>172</sup> Robert S. Sykes, "Linguists in Uniform," *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, February 11, 1950.

<sup>173</sup> Hornstein, "Our Job in Japan," 69.

representations were informed by the demand to present a positive image of the peacetime armed forces to the American public, the desire to tout the United States' emerging identity as a global superpower, and the effort to position the U.S. as an alternative to communism.

The above themes were highlighted in a special feature published in the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* titled "The Soldier's Story."<sup>174</sup> The message of patriotic duty is most obviously depicted in a statement from President Truman on the first page, avowing that the Army fulfilled a critical role by protecting "those values and principles upon which our society is founded." On subsequent pages, photos show soldiers diligently studying in a classroom as well as carrying out practical field exercises that involved firing artillery. On another page, which shows GIs "vacationing" in Japan, Japanese-American Sergeant Harold S. Toma of I Corps poses in "beautiful Kyoto," the "recreation headquarters of all the officers and enlisted men of the Regular Army." By depicting American war materiel as well as GIs on leave, the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* displayed the power and privilege of the American Occupation.

Images in "The Soldier's Story" captured American efforts to reconstruct Japan into a modern, democratic society, both formally and informally. Photos show GIs carrying out prison welfare programs and retraining police to act as "servants of the people." On another page, one photo shows Sergeant Toma overseeing women registering to vote in a local election in Kyoto, while another shows him playing baseball with Japanese children. "Sportsmanship," the caption explained, was "an integral part of democracy" and was "developed in the youth of Japan by a program of athletics sponsored by the Occupation."

The last image in "The Soldier's Story" exemplifies the Occupation's role in Japan, as presented by the *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, *Life*, and Signal Corps photographers (fig. 7.12).

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<sup>174</sup> Far East Weekly Review, *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, August 6, 1949.

Superimposed over a photo of GIs standing at attention, the American flag billowing in the background, is the following text:

On the ramparts of America's far flung bastions of defense, the youth of our country, as personified by these members of the Honor Guard, Company 'B,' 19<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment stand guard: guardians of our freedom and our inherited privileges and evangelists of democracy.

A powerful American military. Upstanding young men standing rigidly at attention. The promise to defend American freedoms. And the claim to protect democracy across the globe. These are the representations that American media employed to define the Occupation's place in Japan.

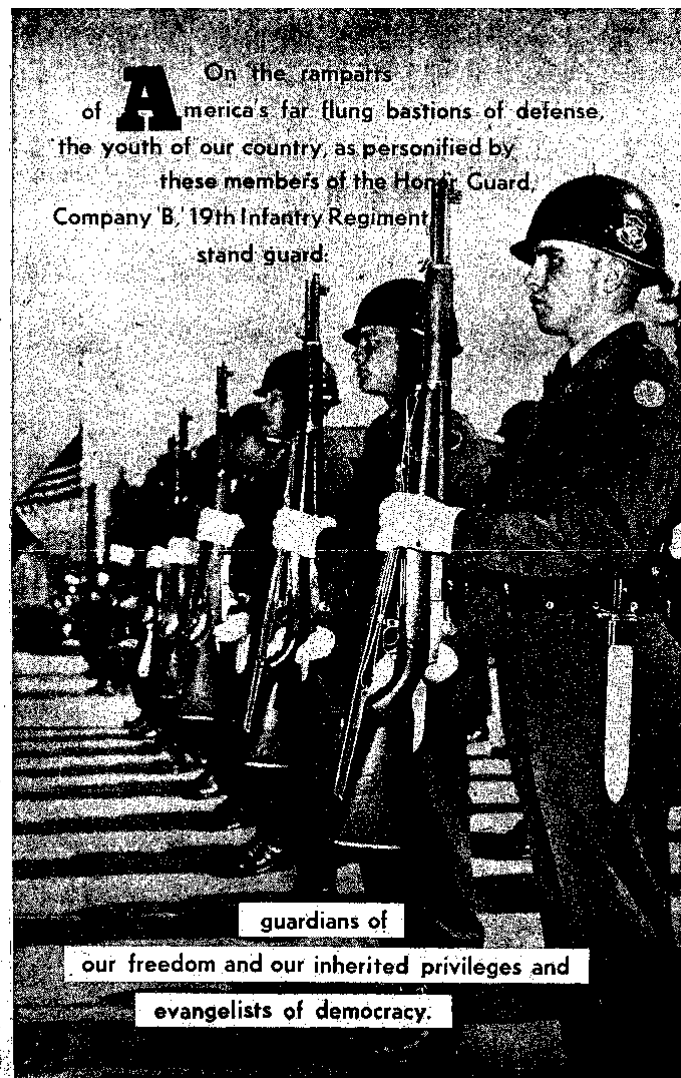


Figure 7.12. *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, Far East Weekly Review. April 6, 1949.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CONCLUSION: PHOTOGRAPHIC ENCOUNTERS OF THE ALLIED OCCUPATION OF JAPAN

In an essay published in 1955, photography critic Ina Nobuo reflected on the decade of Japanese photography since the end of the war:

Among the things that have influenced the trends in Japan's [postwar] photographic world, none was greater than the liberation of humanity, which had been strongly suppressed over the years by feudal morals and militarism. This liberation of humanity engendered the quest for human beauty, on the one hand, and the discovery of an interest in humanity, on the other.<sup>1</sup>

As Ina reminds us, Japanese photographers greeted the end of the Asia-Pacific War with a sense of liberation after nearly a decade of harsh wartime restrictions that had constrained the practice of photography. At the same time, Japan underwent a cultural identity crisis following its crushing defeat, the collapse of its empire, the demise of wartime militarism, and the arrival of a foreign military occupation. Despite the exhaustion and chaos that characterized early postwar society, as we have discussed, photographers of all sorts were eager to rebuild Japan's photographic world.

In the new postwar "spring of freedom," as one photographer called it, widespread enthusiasm for photography blossomed as more and more amateurs picked up cameras to engage in creative cultural activity, leading to a "boom" in amateur photography by 1950. Photography was an essential means of "cultural education" (*bunka kyōiku*) for such amateurs, offering them an outlet for artistic expression, but it also connected them to a wider community of photo enthusiasts as they joined amateur clubs, attended photo shoots, and submitted their images to magazines. Photography magazines, in turn, facilitated the development of Japanese photography by providing instruction to amateurs and circulating images among photographers

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<sup>1</sup> Ina Nobuo, "Sengo jū-nen no Nihon no shashin-kai sengo shashin no dōkō to sakka katsudō," *Asahi Kamera*, October 1955, 139.

across Japan. These magazines also provided a platform for professional photographers to advocate for the re-imaging of Japan as a “new cultural nation” (*shin bunka kokka*). The camera thus became a tool of culture in two ways in the early postwar: first, as a form of artistic expression accessible to professionals and amateurs alike; and second, as a means to re-image Japanese cultural identity in a time of extreme social upheaval.

The photographs published in magazines, news pictorials, photobooks, and other visual media did not simply document Japanese society. As this dissertation demonstrates, photography played an active role in helping Japanese to forge a new cultural identity after the war and under occupation. Japanese photographers captured vivid and telling representations of Japanese society and culture. Their photos depicted idyllic rural villages that remained bastions of tradition, as well as dynamic urban neighborhoods that exuded modernity and cosmopolitanism. While photos of *matsuri* celebrations evoked national unity and cohesion, others of wounded repatriated soldiers and *pan pan* symbolized war, defeat, and Occupation. Photographers captured the ethos and the pathos of postwar Japan in their images: the *kyodatsu* condition, fashion shows on department store rooftops, cabaret performances, people praying at shrines and temples, GIs loitering in Japanese streets, seedy brothel areas near U.S. military bases, and streets signs posted in English by the American Occupiers. In short, photography magazines and other visual media presented a composite image of Japanese cultural identity.

This dissertation has further highlighted the significance of photography in understanding the complex engagement between Japan and the U.S. during and immediately after the Occupation. On the one hand, photography facilitated cross-cultural exchange between Japanese and Western photographers by introducing the works of the latter to Japanese readers through photo spreads, interviews, and articles in photography magazines. Many of these photographers,

among them such big names as Horace Bristol and Carl Mydans, traveled to and worked in Japan during the Occupation, striking up lasting friendships with Japanese photographers and showcasing their work in magazines and photo exhibitions held in Tokyo and other Japanese cities. This photographic cross-cultural exchange was significant for two reasons. First, the foreign places, material cultures, and photographers featured in photography magazines promoted Japan's renewed internationalization in the wake of wartime isolation. Second, renewed engagement with Western photographers introduced their Japanese counterparts to new ideas and approaches, including American-style photojournalism and European-inspired human-interest photography. The popularity of these two genres, in particular, swept through Japan's photographic world, inspiring photographers to document Japanese life in all its complexity.

Finally, by looking at the photographic record on both sides of this historical encounter, we can understand the varied and complicated ways that Japanese and Americans perceived, experienced, and documented each other. Japanese photographers quietly addressed the presence of the Occupation, sometimes positively and at other times critically. Most American photographers, on the other hand, tended to tout the Occupation as a transformative intervention aimed at helping "feudal" Japan recover from the devastation of war and embrace the superior American way of life. Here, we must consider the socio-political factors that informed these mutual representations: Japan's status as a defeated and occupied nation; SCAP-imposed censorship that effectively controlled the Occupation's public image; and America's emerging identity as a global superpower after World War Two. These factors yielded several similarities in how Japanese and Americans documented the Occupation, including the portrayal of America as a "liberating" presence, an "authoritative" presence, and a "seducing" presence.



It was not only American photographers who cast the U.S. as a liberating presence, but many Japanese as well. Kimura Ihei and Kikuchi Shunkichi did so in their photobook *Tokyo Fall of 1945*, which sequenced photographs of war damage with images of GIs and American jeeps to construct a narrative of the U.S. helping to rebuild Japan. This narrative resonated with the sentiments of many Japanese who, like Ina Nobuo (quoted above), welcomed the demise of Japan's militarist government. The American media, of course, was replete with narratives of liberation. Reports on SCAP's democratization efforts uniformly praised the Occupation for reforming Japanese political, social, economic, and cultural institutions. As the Occupation leadership put it, America's "job in Japan" was to transform it from a feudal nation into a modern democracy made in America's image. The *Pacific Stars and Stripes* documented SCAP's accomplishments: everything from introducing "modern" health centers and health care practices, to organizing knowledge in a "modern" way at CI&E libraries; and on to overseeing the "respectable maturity" of Japanese telephone systems. In short, the American news media presented the Occupation as a positively "modernizing"—and "Americanizing"—influence on postwar Japanese society. Anthropologist John Bennett likewise bore down on themes of "liberation" by highlighting the democratizing effects of SCAP's policies in his photographs of Japan. As we have discussed, Bennett recorded images of rapid economic recovery and urban reconstruction to portray the "extraordinary success" of the Occupation, and believed that Japanese men had responded to '*demokurashii*' by becoming better husbands and fathers.

Another prominent theme in the photographs of both Japanese and American photographers was the authority of the American military. In American media such as the *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, unsurprisingly, the American military might was placed front and center. Images of tanks, airplanes, artillery, and uniformed GIs evinced America's emerging status as a

global superpower. These symbols of American war potential were often placed against backdrops such as the Imperial Palace or the GHQ in downtown Tokyo that affirmed America's military occupation in Japan in no uncertain terms. In addition, the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* projected the authoritative presence of the U.S. military by publishing articles on tourism, thus illustrating the privilege that accompanied the power of the armed forces.

Although American photographers generally took photos that highlighted the authority of the American military, some took a more critical perspective. As we have discussed, U.S. Marine Joe O'Donnell recorded scenes of unimaginable suffering with his personal camera: orphaned children, burn victims covered in flies and maggots, and bones left in piles by clean-up crews. O'Donnell wrote that he became increasingly disturbed with each photograph he took: "The people I met, the suffering I witnessed, and the scenes of incredible devastation taken by my camera caused me to question every belief I had previously held about my so-called enemies."<sup>2</sup> Ultimately, O'Donnell's photobook *Japan 1945* reveals the emotional transformation that he and other Americans underwent in the face of the human cost of destruction as they witnessed their former enemies rebuilding their lives in cities that had been destroyed by bombing raids.

In contrast to the American media, Japanese photography magazines treated American authority with much greater subtlety—in part at least because SCAP circumscribed their photographic freedom. Censorship prevented photography magazines and other media from printing anything that tarnished the Occupier's public image or posed a threat to its authority in Japan. Of course, some photographers still managed to express a critical view of the Occupiers—but magazines did not print these in their monthly issues. When Okumura Taiko finally published a collection of his photos in the 1980s—which documented the American presence in his hometown of Yokohama—the contrasting images of comfortable American base housing and

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<sup>2</sup> O'Donnell, *Japan 1945*, xiii.

ramshackle Japanese shelters amidst the urban ruins painted the Occupation in a very different light.

The impact of censorship notwithstanding, the Japanese obviously viewed the Occupation from an entirely different perspective—as the Occupied rather than the Occupier. Japanese photographers frequently snapped symbols of the Occupation’s presence, such as “Off Limits” signs and requisitioned buildings, that evidenced the separate spheres in which Japanese citizens and Allied personnel lived and worked. Japanese photographers rarely, if ever, snapped images of Japanese and Americans in casual interactions—except when the Japanese were in a position of subservience, such as male rickshaw pullers. The dearth of scenes portraying casual, everyday encounters in Japanese photographs contrasted sharply with photos in the American media that depicted GIs and other Allied personnel actively interacting with Japanese society—thus crafting a narrative of friendship, cooperation, and American benevolence that bolstered America’s claim to leadership on an international stage buffeted by the Cold War.

As the Occupation drew to a close in 1952, Japanese photographers confronted subjects that they had been compelled to skirt. Suddenly and vividly, they exposed what had remained hidden before: photos and reporting on social problems associated with the American military forces, including biracial children, fraternization, and crimes committed by American troops. By thus problematizing the American presence, photographers joined others in Japanese society who had begun to protest the post-Occupation preservation of American military bases in Japan.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, both Japanese and American photographers produced images that evoked America’s “seducing” presence. In American media, material cultural influences were framed by narratives of democratization that emphasized Japan’s postwar embrace of American cultural

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<sup>3</sup> Linda Hoaglund, “Protest Art in 1950s Japan.” Yoshimi Shunya, trans. David Buist, “‘America’ as Desire and Violence,” 441.

norms and lifestyles. Much as American photographers seized on new fashions as a sign of change, Japanese photographers likewise portrayed the discarding of kimono for Western-style blouses and skirts as evidence of the liberation of Japanese women from the feudal strictures of the past. As well, Japanese photographers often posed their models with props like American fashion magazines—the titles conspicuously visible—to construct the image of a “modern” woman. The depiction of women modeling expensive Western-style fashions is particularly striking given that Japan faced severe material scarcities well into the 1950s. For those struggling in the postwar *kyodatsu* existence, the vision of American material culture on display was especially alluring, reflecting the hopes and dreams of a people who yearned for a better future.

Even as they vividly documented foreign influences in fashion, however, Japanese photographers continued to capture women in lavish kimono. Indeed, one key feature of photographic spreads on postwar material culture was the constant juxtaposition and sequencing of traditional Japanese imagery and modern Western imagery. In this way, photography magazines demonstrated the process of adopting and adapting Western cultural influences into Japanese society. This process is also evident in images that collapsed the Western-Japanese binary within the picture plane by portraying Japanese women clothed in both styles. In this way, the photographs demonstrate how the Japanese had assimilated the material cultural influences of the occupying American “Other.”

One key difference in the images that Japanese and American photographers took of each other can be observed in pictures of traditional Japanese material culture and customs. The American perspective was framed, largely, by an Orientalist lens that exoticized Japanese culture and by a “Pax Americana” perspective that subordinated Japan to America by contrasting the “traditional East” to the “modern West.” When Horace Bristol photographed symbols of “old

Japan,” he used a photographic technique—namely, fast shutter speeds—that froze the subject’s motion and thus stressed the stasis inherent in tradition. When he then juxtaposed such photos to depictions of the “new Japan,” he suggested that the Japanese had begun to emulate modern Western culture, especially fashion. In Bristol’s photos, as well as many others that appeared in American news media, Japan was depicted as traditional, feminine, and child-like, while the U.S. was presented as martial, male, and mature.

But constructing images of “traditional” Japan involved a very different set of issues for Japanese photographers. The early postwar was an “epistemologically chaotic time,” as Sharalyn Orbaugh aptly puts it, characterized by defeat, a *kyodatsu* existence, and Occupation.<sup>4</sup> Amid the anxieties and tensions that beset Japanese society, photographers looked to symbols of tradition that linked Japan’s postwar identity to the past. Kuwabara Kineo and others urged photographers to highlight the valuable traditions that Japan possessed. By capturing scenes of harmony in rural villages and the familiar sight of *matsuri* celebrations, photographers projected in their images unchanging notions of Japanese-ness.

In the postwar period, Japanese photographers employed the camera as a tool to engage the contemporary discourse on Japanese culture and identity. Eager to renounce the militarism and ultra-nationalism that had previously overwhelmed Japan, photographers endeavored to re-image Japan as a “new cultural nation.” The images they captured of daily life conveyed Japan’s negotiation of a diverse, multifaceted cultural identity born of war and Occupation. Yet we must remember that early postwar photography was a highly gendered practice dominated by men and the male perspective.

Because most photographers in the early postwar were men, scholars have largely ignored women photographers. One exception is Kelly Midori McCormick, whose research on

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<sup>4</sup> Sharalyn Orbaugh, *Japanese Fiction of the Allied Occupation*, 53–58.

Tokiwa Toyoko and nude photography has added a fresh perspective on the gendered dynamics of Japanese photography. McCormick examines Tokiwa's participation at *nūdo satsuei* (nude photo sessions usually consisting of men photographing women), where she was often the only woman photographer in attendance. Rather than photograph the nude women, however, she photographed the *men* photographing the nude women. In so doing, McCormick concludes, Tokiwa challenged the common belief that women should only be out front of the camera, not behind it.<sup>5</sup>

Tokiwa was one of the most prominent women photographers to enter Japan's photo world in the 1950s. During an interview with *Yokohama Naka Hojinkai News* published in 2004, Tokiwa Toyoko explained that her interest in photography was piqued, in particular, by the dearth of professional women photographers active at the time. Tokiwa began photographing soon after Japan's surrender in the Asia-Pacific War, attending amateur clubs and adopting a documentary style according to contemporary trends. Her first solo exhibit in 1956 featured working women in Japanese society, among them pro wrestlers, nude models, nurses, and prostitutes. Her first book, published the following year, documented prostitutes who lived and worked nearby the U.S. military base in Tokiwa's hometown of Yokohama. Throughout her career, Tokiwa emphasized women's issues and recorded women's changing social roles in postwar society.

In the 1960s and 70s, two more women—Ishiuchi Miyako and Ishikawa Mao—joined Tokiwa in photographing the liminal spaces of U.S. military bases—disconnected from the lives of ordinary Japanese. The collective work of these female photographers confronts themes of gender, violence, race, and power; and these soon became central themes pursued by other (often

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<sup>5</sup> Kelly Midori McCormick, "Tokiwa Toyoko, the Nude Shooting Session, and the Gendered Optics of Japanese Postwar Photography," *Japan Forum* 0, no. 0 (2021): 1-30.

male) photographers bent on exploring the complex relationship between the U.S. and Japan with their images. Their photographs provide a unique perspective for future research on postwar encounters between Japan and the U.S.

The photographic work of Tokiwa, Ishiuchi, and Ishikawa was defined by their identity as women. In an interview on her life near the Yokosuka military base (2016), where “rape was a daily occurrence,” Ishiuchi stated that feminism was a part of her photographic expression.<sup>6</sup> In another interview, she commented on the difficulties women photographers faced in Japan, declaring that there were many other women capable of producing significant bodies of work, but that time and again their ambitions had been squelched.<sup>7</sup> Ishikawa, paradoxically, was praised by her male colleagues precisely because her images “couldn’t be taken by us men!”<sup>8</sup> In short, the perceived difference between the photographic eye of men and women, in addition to the discrimination against women by other photographers, effectively marked these women as outsiders within Japan’s world of photography.

Yet even as these three photographers were marked as outsiders, they shared a common perspective as women photographing other women. Tokiwa and Ishiuchi photographed the women who lived and worked in their respective hometowns of Yokohama and Yokosuka. As discussed in Chapter IV, Tokiwa gained permission to enter homes or other intimate spaces of prostitutes, thus photographing them from a privileged position. Ishikawa, who worked at a

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<sup>6</sup> “Ishiuchi Miyako’s early life near Yokosuka’s U.S. military base,” *Digital Publication: Focus on Japanese Photography*. San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, <https://www.sfmoma.org/watch/ishiuchi-miyako-early-life-near-yokosukas-us-military-base/?transcript=expand>.

<sup>7</sup> Mitsuda Yuri, “Ishiuchi Miyako’s Chronicles of Time and History,” *Aperture*, October 14, 2021. <https://aperture.org/editorial/ishiuchi-miyako-chronicles-of-time-and-history/>.

<sup>8</sup> Paige Silverina, “Mao Ishikawa’s Stunning Photographs of Her Friends in 70s Okinawa,” *i-D Vice*, March 27, 2017, [https://i-d.vice.com/en\\_uk/article/papddk/mao-ishikawas-stunning-photographs-of-her-friends-in-70s-okinawa](https://i-d.vice.com/en_uk/article/papddk/mao-ishikawas-stunning-photographs-of-her-friends-in-70s-okinawa).

segregated bar for Black GIs, photographed Okinawan and Japanese women who dated GIs they met at the bar—even as she dated GIs herself.

Because female photographers recorded their subjects from an insider's perspective, their photographs offer us a unique window into the lives of women who existed in the shadows of American military bases in Japan. As we have discussed, male photographers' images of fraternization in brothels and around military bases played on masculine insecurities that ultimately represented the Japanese male as victim. Female photographers, in contrast, articulated women's victimization by both American GIs and by mainstream Japanese society. Still, women were not always portrayed as victims: the work of Tokiwa, Ishiuchi, and Ishikawa at times highlighted women exhibiting agency and resistance as well.

The photographic work of Tokiwa, Ishiuchi, and Ishikawa, then, visualized structures of power within Japanese society as well as between the U.S. and Japan by evoking notions of victimization, agency, and resistance. The photographers accomplished this chiefly by capturing the ways in which women navigated relationships with American GIs and the impact of such relationships on their daily lives. Ishiuchi's photos focused on the sexual violence perpetrated against Japanese women in Yokosuka. By using dark tonal contrasts and congested frames, and by including only one woman in a single frame—often surrounded by multiple American men—Ishiuchi combined form and content to evoke American hegemony over Japan while simultaneously illuminating the women's exclusion from mainstream society.

As we have discussed, Tokiwa conveyed the precarious position of sex workers by photographing them undergoing forced examinations at hospitals for venereal and other sexually transmitted diseases. But her photographs of Yokohama's red-light district also included candid moments of the same women living seemingly normal lives—surrounded by their children,



enjoying summer festivals, and chatting with friends. By capturing instances of fraternization as well as moments of daily life, Tokiwa articulated women's victimization by American GIs and Japanese society, but also humanized women in the process.

While Ishiuchi and Tokiwa portrayed sexual encounter as victimization and exclusion, Ishikawa, by way of contrast, highlighted the sexual liberation of Okinawan women who dated and lived with Black servicemen freely and openly. Well aware of the strict segregation laws that created Black-only bars around U.S. military bases, Ishikawa attempted to emphasize in her photographs moments of cross-cultural encounter that transgressed societal norms in American and Japanese society.

Because all three of these photographers immersed themselves in the environment occupied by the women they photographed, they offer us a unique insider's perspective of the world they inhabited. Surely, however, Tokiwa, Ishikawa, and Ishiuchi were not the only photographers to capture encounters between Japanese, Okinawans, and Americans around U.S. military bases from the 1950s to the 1970s. The photographers who were active in these decades continued to build on the techniques and trends established by photographers of the Occupation by documenting society and provoking an emotional response from viewers. But rather than use the straightforward, photojournalistic style favored by Domon Ken and others of the early postwar, these later photographers employed unconventional techniques, such as shooting out of focus, to heighten the emotional register of their work. Scholars connect this stylistic shift to the mass protests against the re-signing of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty in 1960, as photographers looked for new ways to record and interpret tensions sparked by America's prolonged military presence in Japan.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Photography critic Iizawa Kōtarō states that the “crisis [of the security renewal] delivered an electrifying stimulus to Japanese photographers” who then “began to explore new documentary styles that examined and indicted social

This brings us back to the Japanese and American photographers who engaged one another, and the larger world, through the act of photography during the Allied Occupation. The photographs studied here do not merely depict two nations at a moment of historical encounter. Considered carefully and collectively, they offer us a composite portrait of postwar Japan, exposing the human drama of an occupation that challenged the Japanese to reinvent themselves, paradoxically, in the image of their American occupiers, but also by retaining and visualizing elements of their own traditions and customs. A statement by Swiss documentary photographer Robert Frank is apt here: “There is one thing the photograph must contain, the humanity of the moment. This kind of photography is realism.” For Japanese and American photographers, the power of photography was not simply to make a record of their surroundings, but to capture for posterity the hardship and grief, the hopes and dreams, and the quiet, mundane moments of life in the early postwar.

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contradictions through photography, and Karen Fraser argues that a “cultural dissonance” created by Japan’s complex relationship with the United States led many photographers to experiment with new ways of documenting reality in order to capture the tensions roiling throughout Japanese society. See Iizawa, “The Evolution of Postwar Photography,” 214, and Fraser, *Photography and Japan*, 138.

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