

Sunappu: A Genre of Japanese Photography, 1930-1980

by

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Abstract

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This dissertation discusses the development of *sunappu* photography from the 1930s to the end of the 1970s, demonstrating its importance to the history of Japanese photography and art. *Sunappu* is a Japanese photographic term that began to be used in the mid-1930s, derived from the English word “snapshot.” In the broader meaning of the term, it signifies instantaneous photography taken with a hand-held camera. *Sunappu*, however, often took on narrower connotations, referring specifically to candid photographs of people unaware of the presence of the camera. First and foremost, *sunappu* describes a photographic technique. However, it also constitutes a genre of Japanese photography with historical roots stretching back to the mid-1930s.

Although the term *sunappu* has been commonly used in the Japanese photo world, there has been little attention paid to the concept of *sunappu* itself. That is, the significance of *sunappu* as an idiosyncratic genre of Japanese photography has been neglected. This dissertation argues the following points: firstly, *sunappu* is an indigenous tradition within Japanese photography that is epistemically different from the Anglophone snapshot. Many Japanese photographers, including established figures such as Ihei Kimura, Ken Domon, Shômei Tômatsu, Daido Moriyama, Shigeo Gochô, and Nobuyoshi Araki, worked in this tradition, inheriting and transforming it simultaneously.

Secondly, *sunappu* is at once a technique, a genre, and a discourse. As such, it has a unique status within photographic history. Thirdly, *sunappu* photography addressed the issues which were shared by contemporaneous art and literature more significantly than usually believed. This aspect of *sunappu* made it a cultural phenomenon whose relevance goes beyond the relatively insular world of Japanese photography. More specifically, photographers utilized the technique of *sunappu*, i.e., candid photography, to grapple with central issues affecting art and literature at that time, such as the controversy over *Riarizumu* in the early 1950s (Domon), the Americanization of Japanese culture in the 1960s (Tômatu and Moriyama), and the representation of everydayness in the early 1970s (Gochô and Araki).

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Note to the Reader

In the Japanese writing system, the family name comes before given names. In this dissertation, however, I apply the Western order; that is, the given name followed by the family name. There is no uniform rule regarding the transliteration of long vowels in Japanese. For instance, 森山大道 can be spelled out as Daido Moriyama, Daidô Moriyama, or Daidoh Moriyama. In this text, I keep the use of macrons to a minimum, using them only when a name would be pronounced differently in English if there were no macrons added. I thus use Daido Moriyama (rather than Daidô Moriyama), and Shômei Tômatsu (rather than Shomei Tomatsu). All translations from Japanese to English are mine unless otherwise noted. A large number of the books or works referred to in the text have only Japanese titles (for example, Moriyama's 1972 book *Shashin yo sayônara* does not have an original English title and has been translated *Bye Bye Photography* or *Farewell to Photography*), but in some occasions, they are accompanied by English ones conceived by either the photographer or the editor. When there is one, I use the original English title, except in rare instances in which the meanings of the English titles are considerably different from those of the Japanese titles.

Introduction

This dissertation discusses the development of *sunappu* photography from the 1930s to the end of the 1970s, demonstrating its importance to the history of Japanese photography and art. *Sunappu* (スナップ) is a Japanese photographic term that began to be used in the mid-1930s, derived from the English word “snapshot.” *Sunappu*, however, is not the same thing as the noun “snapshot” or the verb “to snap,” but rather a concept and entity that should be considered indigenous to Japanese photography.

Sunappu was originally employed to describe a technique of photography as well as a photograph produced using that technique. In the broader meaning of the term, it signifies instantaneous photography taken with a hand-held camera. *Sunappu*, however, often took on narrower connotations, referring specifically to candid photographs of people unaware of the presence of the camera. Indeed, a large number of photographs labeled as *sunappu* are pictures of human beings. Moreover, unlike the snapshot in English, *sunappu* as a term used to discuss Japanese photography does not necessarily imply casualness. This means that the word *sunappu* can be used to describe a work of art photography without adding any pejorative overtones; for example, works by Henri Cartier-Bresson, Robert Frank, and Garry Winogrand have often been called *sunappu* or *sunappu shotto*, because they characteristically include candid photographs of people on the street.¹ Considering that the work of these photographers is rarely described as “snapshots” in English, even if it is an instantaneous photograph taken with a hand-held

¹ Recently, in Japanese-language writings on photography, the term *sunappu shotto* began to be used interchangeably with *sunappu*, making the situation even more confusing. However, until 1980, the period when this dissertation ends, *sunappu* was a more commonly used term than *sunappu shotto*.

camera, the difference in implications between the English term “snapshot” and Japanese *sunappu* is apparent.

First and foremost, *sunappu* describes a photographic technique. However, it also constitutes a genre of Japanese photography with historical roots stretching back to the mid-1930s.² For example, a series of guidebooks on amateur photography often included a volume devoted to *sunappu*, along with other photographic genres such as landscape and portraiture.³ Two recent books that include *sunappu* in their titles attest to the continued existence of this genre and its popularity. *The Manners and Rules of Sunappu Photography* is a guidebook for amateur photographers edited by the Japan Professional Photographer’s Society, the largest association of professional photographers in Japan. The book advises amateur photographers to observe “manners and rules” when they take *sunappu* on the street lest they get into trouble.⁴ *Sunappu* in this book does not signify snapshots of a photographer’s family or friends but candid photographs of strangers he or she encountered in public spaces. The fact that such a book exists suggests a unique aspect of photographic practices in Japan; for serious amateurs who take photographs with their expensive SLR cameras, people walking on the street continue to be one of their most popular subjects. But *sunappu* is not something that is practiced only by amateur photographers; rather, their *sunappu* is usually inspired by the work of professional photographers. Another recent book on *sunappu* consists of interviews with

² In art historical discourse, the word “genre” often signifies paintings depicting everyday scenes. In this study, however, I use the word to mean “a particular type or style of literature, art, film or music that you can recognize because of its special features” (*Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*).

³ For example, see Asahi Shimbunsha, ed., *Sunappu shashin (Sunappu Photography)*, vol.3, *Asahi camera kyôshitsu (Asahi Camera Lectures)* (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbunsha, 1970).

⁴ Japan Professional Photographer’s Society, ed., *Sunappu shashin no rûru to manâ (The Manners and Rules of Sunappu Photography)* (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbun Shuppan, 2007).

one such professional photographer: in a small book entitled *An Exhortation to Street-Sunappu*, Daido Moriyama relates the how-to and philosophy of his *sunappu* photography.⁵ Now an internationally recognized photographer, Moriyama is one of the figures whose work has often been described as *sunappu*. In the book, the interviewer defines *sunappu* as “a technique of photography in which one shoots instantaneously a natural expression or action of the subject.”⁶ Although Moriyama’s *sunappu* does not always depict people, it is almost always taken on the streets (therefore earning the term “street-*sunappu*”) with a hand-held camera in the way that emphasizes the quickness of shooting. For example, in one of the photographs in the book, Moriyama captures a couple embracing on a street in Ginza, an upscale shopping district in Tokyo (fig. 0-1). The Caucasian girl, who stands out among the Japanese pedestrians, smiles radiantly while her companion’s face and identity are hidden from view in a way that stirs up the viewer’s curiosity. She appears to be unaware of the presence of the camera, making this photograph a typical example of *sunappu*.

These two books suggest that *sunappu* is not just a technique but also a field of Japanese photography in which professional and amateur photographers have worked and made their own contributions. Moreover, if one considers the history of postwar Japanese photography, it is apparent that the most canonical works are photographs taken with a 35mm hand-held camera rather than those with a large view camera using 4 x 5 or 8 x 10 inch sheet films, a type of apparatus that must be fixed on a tripod. As the photography critic Shino Kuraishi has recently pointed out, “in Japan *sunappu* photography has long

⁵ Daido Moriyama and Takeshi Nakamoto, *Rojô sunappu no susume* (An Exhortation to Street-Sunappu) (Tokyo: Kobunsha, 2010).

⁶ “スナップとは、被写体の自然な表情、動作を瞬間的に写す撮影手法のことだ。” Ibid., 6.

formed the mainstream of serious photographic expression and to some extent it still does.”⁷

What this dissertation does *not* try to do is to explain in English what is already obvious to Japanese readers. Rather, it attempts to challenge Japanese and non-Japanese readers alike. Although the term *sunappu* has been commonly used in the Japanese photo world, there has been little attention paid to the concept of *sunappu* itself. That is, the significance of *sunappu* as an idiosyncratic genre of Japanese photography has been neglected. In this dissertation, I argue, firstly, that *sunappu* is an indigenous tradition within Japanese photography that is epistemically different from the Anglophone snapshot. Many Japanese photographers, including established figures such as Ken Domon, Shômei Tômatsu, Daido Moriyama, and Nobuyoshi Araki, worked in this tradition, inheriting and transforming it simultaneously. Secondly, I argue that *sunappu* is at once a technique, a genre, and a discourse. As such, it has a unique status within photographic history. In the 1950s, photography critics noticed that *sunappu* had become a genre of Japanese photography, involving both professional and amateur photographers. This suggests that *sunappu* constituted a discourse, because a genre is a concept that cannot be reduced to the works’ inherent qualities but is influenced by various external factors including art criticism and public reception of works. Thirdly, I argue that *sunappu* photography addressed the issues which were shared by contemporaneous art and literature more significantly than usually believed. This aspect of *sunappu* made it a

⁷ Shino Kuraishi, “The Technique of Encounter: Snapshots by Keizo Kitajima,” translated by Yoshiaki Kai, in Keizo Kitajima, *The Joy of Portraits* (Tokyo: Rat Hole Gallery, 2009), 702. Translation slightly modified.

cultural phenomenon whose relevance goes beyond the relatively insular world of Japanese photography. More specifically, photographers utilized the technique of *sunappu*, i.e., candid photography, to grapple with central issues affecting art and literature at that time, such as the controversy over *Riarizumu* in the early 1950s, the Americanization of Japanese culture in the 1960, and the representation of everydayness in the early 1970s.

Rather than try to give a trans-historical definition of this term, in this dissertation I will demonstrate how the concept of *sunappu* and its manifestations in specific works of photography has transformed over time. *Sunappu*'s broader meaning as an instantaneous photograph taken with a hand-held camera has remained relatively unchanged. The implications of the term "instantaneous" photography, however, were considerably different in the 1930s than they were in the 1970s because of the technical advances in photographic apparatuses. While in the 1930s one needed to have a special camera (and possess special skills to handle it) in order to take successful instantaneous photographs, by the 1970s inexpensive automated electronic cameras allowed even an utter amateur to take instantaneous photographs quite easily. Therefore, the history of *sunappu* is not just a history of representative works categorized in this genre but also a history of technical innovations in photographic apparatuses. Such technical innovations have been important in Japan since the late 1950s, when the country first emerged as an international leader in photographic technology. This also implies that *sunappu* is entangled in the photographic apparatus industry.

Although many of the photographers whose works will be examined at length are well-known figures in Japanese photography, this dissertation should not be regarded as a

survey of postwar Japanese photography. It does not even aim at a comprehensive study of *sunappu*; there are some important photographers whose works may be categorized as *sunappu* but who are not discussed in detail, such as Ikko Narahara and Kikuji Kawata. Rather, each section of the dissertation focuses on a significant topic explored by *sunappu* photography, introducing works by a few photographers relevant to it. The reason that I organize chapters according to specific themes rather than by individual photographers is that it will help to demonstrate the nature of *sunappu* as a genre unique to Japanese photography. The important point is not that some well-known photographers made works that can be categorized as *sunappu*, but that *sunappu*, both as a technique and a genre, enabled those photographers to tackle specific areas of interest shared by their colleagues, contemporary artists, and intellectuals.

Although *sunappu* continues to be a popular genre of Japanese photography, this study limits itself to works made between the mid-1930s and 1980. I chose these dates because they constitute the most prolific period of *sunappu* photography that produced its most substantial contributions. Many photographers that are currently influential in the field of *sunappu* photography, such as Daido Moriyama and Nobuyoshi Araki, have a career that goes back to before 1980. In contrast, the most important photographers who emerged after 1980 tend to work outside the genre of *sunappu*, some consciously taking a distance from this tradition of Japan photography: they include Yasumasa Morimura, Hiroshi Sugimoto, Naoya Hatakeyama, and Keizo Kitajima. In short, the period this dissertation covers constitutes the golden age of *sunappu* from the 1950s to the 1980s.

Looking at the history of Japanese photography from the perspective of *sunappu* allows us to have a clearer view of the mechanism whereby Japanese photographers

received and responded to Western, especially American, photography. Scholars have pointed out the influence of Western photography on the work of Japanese photographers.⁸ The significance of these influences is undeniable, but the problem is that it has often been explained as a one-way relationship. Although most of the critics who emphasize Western influences end up appreciating the uniqueness of Japanese photography, one thing that is often ignored is that the reception of Western photography—which work by whom was introduced at a certain point in time—was determined by the concept of *sunappu*. As I will discuss in the following chapters in detail, Japanese photographers often interpreted particular works of Western photography as *sunappu* and appreciated them from that point of view. Moreover, at least until the 1970s, Japanese photographers were relatively indifferent to works of Western photography that could not be categorized as *sunappu* from their perspective. This explains the Japanese situation in which William Klein and Robert Frank have always been much more popular and admired in Japan than other photographers who are equally influential in the U.S such as Walker Evans or Minor White. Therefore, however significantly Japanese photographers were influenced by Western art photography, they were also very selective in their reception of it. As this study will make clear, the genre of *sunappu*, its concepts and discourses, functioned as a criterion through which to receive and evaluate works introduced from abroad.

⁸ For example, in her essay summarizing the development of postwar Japanese photography until the 1970s, Sandra Phillips does not forget to mention the importance of such photographers as Henri Cartier-Bresson, Robert Capa, and William Klein for Japanese photographers. See Sandra Phillips “Currents in Photography in Postwar Japan,” in Leo Rubinfien, ed., *Shômei Tômatsu: Skin of the Nation* (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2004), 42-57.

Secondly, a close attention to *sunappu* allows us to better understand the historical structure of Japanese photography. In his essay arguing for the efficacy of genre criticism, the literary critic Fredric Jameson suggested that the examination of a genre makes possible “the coordination of immanent formal analysis of the individual text with the twin diachronic perspective of the history of forms and the evolution of social life.”⁹ Although genres of literature cannot be equated with those of photographic art, the nature of literary genres as explained by Jameson, the notion that “[g]enres are essentially literary *institutions*, or social contracts between a writer and a specific public, whose function is to specify the proper use of a particular cultural artifact,” also applies to photographic counterparts.¹⁰ A study of *sunappu*, for example, illuminates the triad of professional photographers, amateur photographers, and the photographic apparatus industry as the three entities that constituted the Japanese photographic community. I place particular emphasis on the relationships between professional and amateur photographers in the first two chapters, which focus on works by Ihei Kimura and Ken Domon. One significant characteristic of *sunappu* is that it has been a genre open to amateur photographers; one can even say that *sunappu* would not have flourished as it did without the participation of amateur photographers. Note that the two recent books I mentioned above are targeted at amateur photographers who practice photography as a hobby. The roles of the photographic apparatus industries—camera and film manufacturers—are also important. It is not just because one cannot take *sunappu*

⁹ Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (London: Methuen, 1981; Routledge, 2002), 92.

¹⁰ Ibid [Emphasis original].

without a camera and film, but also because the photographic apparatus industries played active roles in fostering the culture of *sunappu*.

An attention to *sunappu* also helps to contest one dominant, but misleading notion of the history of postwar Japanese photography; that is, the idea that the history of postwar Japanese photography is characterized by a shift from the documentary approach to an emphasis on personal expressions. In fact, it is difficult not to encounter this type of explanation in both English and Japanese-language writings on Japanese photography. For example, discussing Takuma Nakahira's 1970 photography book *Kitarubeki kotoba no tameni* (*For a Language to Come*), Ian Vartanian, one of the authors of *Japanese Photobooks of the 1960s and '70s*, states:

Photographs no longer show us the reality of another place or time, only that of the photographer's own world. The photograph now documents not larger social issues but the intimate realities of personal life, a trend that continues in Japanese photography today, as exemplified by an abundance of diaristic bodies of work.¹¹

Such a claim, that works of Japanese photography began to represent "the intimate realities of personal life," runs the risk of neglecting a very important characteristic of photographic art; namely, the fact that the photographic image is always mediated by the mechanical apparatus of camera, lens, and film.¹² However close the distance between the photographer and his or her subject may seem, the technology of the camera always

¹¹ Ian Vartanian, "The Japanese Photobook: Toward an Immediate Media," in Ryûichi Kaneko and Ivan Vartanian, *Japanese Photobooks of the 1960s and '70s* (New York: Aperture, 2009), 17.

¹² In 2000, the influential photo critic Kotaro Iizawa published a book entitled *Shishashin ron* (Essays on I-Photography) in which he argues that every work of photography is ultimately a personal expression and hence worth looking at. In his contribution to *The History of Japanese Photography*, Iizawa also describes the development of postwar Japanese photography as a shift from an emphasis on the public to an emphasis on the private. See Kotaro Iizawa, "The Evolution of Postwar Japanese Photography," in Anne Wilkes Tucker, ed., *The History of Japanese Photography* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 222-225.

intervenes in the process of picture making. Paying attention to *sunappu* reminds us of this basic fact of photography, a fact that tends to get overlooked in writings that seek to present photographs as works of art infused with personalities

Vartanian's suggestion is not totally off-point, however. Indeed, it is true that since the 1970s photographers such as Nobuyoshi Araki have chosen to capture aspects of everyday life. However, the important point is that Araki's seemingly straightforward documents of his own private life—the most significant inspiration for the subsequent generation of Japanese photographers who continue to produce what Vartanian called “diaristic bodies of work”—can also be historically contextualized. I suggest in Chapter Four how Araki's work derived from the earlier tradition of *sunappu* photography and the discourse of everydayness, a topic widely discussed in Japanese contemporary art from the late 1960s through the early 1970s. A *sunappu* photograph sometimes looks artless, and is thereby taken as an honest visual document of society or personal life. However, as I will argue in the following chapters, such artlessness is an important feature of *sunappu* that allows it to be situated in a historical context.

This dissertation is written with the ambition of opening up new perspectives on the history of Japanese photography. But I also believe that the conceptual framework employed in this study will call into question some of the methodologies employed in the history of photography as a discipline. The earliest writings on the history of photography mostly focused on the technical developments of photographic apparatuses.¹³

¹³ Douglas R. Nickel, “History of Photography: The State of Research,” *The Art Bulletin* 83, no. 3 (September 2001): 549. For historiographies of the history of photography, see also Martin Gasser, “Histories of Photography, 1839-1939,” *History of Photography* 16, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 50-60; Anne McCauley, “Writing Photography's History Before Newhall,” *History of Photography* 21, no. 2 (Summer 1997): 87-101.

Subsequently, writings that emphasized the artistic qualities of photography began to appear, culminating in Beaumont Newhall's *Photography, A Short Critical History* published by the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1938.¹⁴ Loosely drawing on the structure of Newhall's books, the standard histories of photography have privileged the work of a small number of art photographers, neglecting the basic fact that a large proportion of the photographs produced in the world were not made as works of art. Beginning in the 1980s, however, scholars of photography began to contest these early histories of photography for attaching too much importance to artistic values. As Geoffrey Batchen has suggested, emerging scholars of photography who are dissatisfied with traditional models of the history of photography "address themselves to commercial and ordinary photographs rather than just to art objects, and tend to focus on issues like race, sexuality, power and everyday experience—they focus, in other words, on photography's relationship to life."¹⁵ Simply put, the primary subject of the history of photography has moved from mechanism, to art, and then to society. However, it is also important to note that all three elements continue to play important roles in our everyday relationship with the photographic medium. What this dissertation proposes is that by paying attention to *sunappu*—a concept that simultaneously encompasses the technology of photography, art photography, and vernacular photography—we can integrate these

¹⁴ This publication was, in essence, a reissue of Beaumont Newhall, *Photography 1839-1937* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1937). Also see Allison Bertrand, "Beaumont Newhall's 'Photography 1839-1937': Making History," *History of Photography* 21, no. 2 (Summer 1997): 137-146.

¹⁵ Geoffrey Batchen, "Snapshots: Art History and the Ethnographic Turn," *Photographies* 1, no. 2 (September 2008): 127.

three elements under one perspective, illuminating the inseparable connections between them.

Notes on Method and Translation

The meanings and implications of *sunappu*, a technical photographic term that has been in use since the mid-1930s, remain in continual flux. Many Japanese photographers and photo-experts no longer know its original usage, and, indeed, the genealogy of the word and, therefore, the concept of *sunappu*, has remained obscure even in Japanese literature on the history of photography. As mentioned above, *sunappu* is an abbreviated form of the English word “snapshot,” but its meaning is considerably different from that word’s modern usage in English. But before discussing the differences in detail, let us quickly take a look at “snapshot” as an English word. The *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* explains that “snapshot” or “snap” can be distinguished from “photograph” in that the former means “an informal photograph that is taken quickly, and not by a professional photographer.”¹⁶ According to an etymological note in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word “snap-shot” originally meant “a quick or hurried shot taken without deliberate aim, especially one at a rising bird or quickly moving animal.”¹⁷ Some time after the invention of photography was publicized in 1839, the word came to be associated with photography, signifying “an instantaneous photograph, especially one

¹⁶ *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English*, (The eighth edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 1139.

¹⁷ *Oxford English Dictionary*, vol. XV (The second edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 837.

taken with a hand-camera.”¹⁸ The *OED* suggests that its first use in connection with photography was made by John Herschel, the English scientist known for his involvement with the invention and subsequent publicizing of photography, who wrote in 1860 of “the possibility of taking a photograph, as it were, by a snap-shot—of securing a picture in a tenth of a second time.”¹⁹ With recourse to an analogy to hunting, Herschel emphasizes the technical possibility of instantaneous photography. It almost goes without saying that in Herschel’s time, a photographic method that could be likened to a “snap-shot” in hunting was far from usual, in fact virtually impossible; most photographic apparatuses before the 1880s were difficult to handle because of their bulky size and primitive construction. They were certainly not tools likely to be compared to a shotgun.

The usage of the word “snap-shot” by Herschel suggests that even in English the meanings and implication of the word have changed considerably since the invention of photography. Today “snapshot” does not necessarily emphasize instantaneousness as much as it did in Herschel’s period (instantaneousness in this case means not just the quickness of the shutter speed but also the brevity of the entire picture-taking process). This change is essentially due to the technical progress made in the evolution of photographic apparatuses. Over the last few decades, most photographs have been taken almost automatically and instantaneously with the help of electronic cameras, therefore requiring no more than a slight amount of preparation and technique on the part of the photographer. Corresponding to this fundamental change in people’s relationships to photographic apparatuses, “snapshot” (in English) has come to signify photographs that

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Sir J. F. W. Herschel, “Instantaneous Photography,” *The Photographic News* 4, no. 88 (May 1860): 13.

are taken by untrained amateurs, usually without conscious aesthetic deliberation. One can probably say that “snapshot” is now synonymous with an amateur photograph. Yet it is not so easy to establish a rigid definition of “snapshot” because identifying the precise aesthetic qualities of amateur photographs or casually taken photographs remains elusive and problematic. However, what matters here is that the word “snapshot” carries a certain stable meaning and there exists a general consensus about the meaning to the extent that words such as “snapshot aesthetic” have been widely used in the photography community in English-speaking countries.

In the Japanese language, *sunappu* is now a common word that is widely used beyond the photographic community. Before discussing the current usage of the word *sunappu* in Japanese, I would like to explain some basics about the writing system of the Japanese language, which is considerably different from that of English. The Japanese language has used three different types of character since the medieval era: *kanji* (Chinese characters), *hiragana*, and *katakana*. *Kanji* is an ideogram whose characters originally came from Chinese. Each character has an intrinsic meaning and a word consisting of multiple *kanji* usually has a meaning related to its constituent *kanji*. For example, the word which means “photography” in Japanese is “写真,” a word consisting of two *kanji* letters. “写” roughly means “copy” and “真” means “truth” or “reality.”²⁰

²⁰ It is itself an interesting topic to consider how and why “photography,” which etymologically means in English “writing by light,” was translated into a Japanese word that implies “copy of reality.” For more about this, see Naoyuki Kinoshita’s suggestive essay in which he discusses the earliest period of Japanese photography. See Naoyuki Kinoshita, “The Early Years of Japanese Photography,” in Tucker, ed., *The History of Japanese Photography*, 26; For an account on the use of the word “shashin” before the introduction of photography in Japan, see Maki Fukuoka, “Toward a Synthesized History of Photography: A Conceptual Genealogy of *Shashin*,” *Positions* 18, no. 3 (Winter 2010): 571-597. For the etymology of the word “photography,” see Geoffrey Batchen, “The Naming of Photography: ‘A Mass of Metaphor,’” *History of Photography* 17, no.1 (Spring 1993): 22-32.

Whereas almost every *kanji* has several pronunciations and one cannot decide how to read it unless it is used as a word or a part of a word, *hiragana* and *katakana* are phonograms, functioning like an alphabet. Each character has an intrinsic pronunciation, but no meaning. Any word written using *kanji* can be also written with *hiragana* and *katakana*, although the other way around is not always the case. Thus, if one writes “写真” in *hiragana*, it will be “しゃしん,” which is pronounced “sha-shin” (“し” is always pronounced “shi” whereas “ん” is “n”). Furthermore, since *hiragana* and *katakana* are phonetic signs, even foreign words with different characters can be described in Japanese using those signs.

Each *hiragana* has a corresponding *katakana* that is pronounced identically. Therefore, every Japanese word theoretically can be written with both *hiragana* and *katakana*, but *katakana*, which appears much less frequently than *hiragana* in Japanese texts, is normally used for special kinds of words. One type of word that is written using *katakana* is any related to or derived from Western languages or cultures. As one can easily imagine, a great number of Western, mostly English, words have now become a part of daily Japanese language. As I wrote above, the Japanese equivalent of “photography” is “写真” or “しゃしん,” but most Japanese people, including nonprofessionals, will understand that “フォトグラフィー,” the transliterated *katakana* expression of the English word “photography,” means “写真” because “フォトグラフィー” also belongs to everyday Japanese words. In fact, many of the words that are related to photography and photographic processes are usually written with *katakana*. For example, “camera” is “カメラ”, pronounced “kamera,” “film” is “フィルム,”

pronounced as “firumu,” “lens” is “レンズ,” pronounced as “renzu,” and the list goes on. This is understandable given that photography is a technique that originally came from Europe and most photographic apparatuses were invented there, even though Japan has been well known for its prosperous camera industry since the 1950s.

Sunappu is another photography-related word that is written with *katakana*, therefore suggesting its origin in a foreign language. In *katakana*, *sunappu* is written “スナップ,” and pronounced “sunappu,” in the almost same way as the English pronunciation of the word “snap.” But *sunappu* is now also a word that is widely used by the general public outside the photographic community, a relatively self-enclosed world where people use a great deal of technical jargon. In the usage of the word by the general public, *sunappu* in Japanese means roughly the same as the English “snapshot;” that is, “an informal photograph taken by an amateur.” There are several variations of the word *sunappu* in Japanese. Sometimes *sunappu* is paraphrased as “*sunappu shashin* (スナップ写真)” meaning “*sunappu* photography,” and less frequently as “*sunappu shotto* (スナップショット),” a word coming from “snapshot.” Basically, there is no difference in the meaning between these variations.

Sunappu as a technical word used in the Japanese photographic community has different meanings and implications from those used by the general public in Japan.²¹ In short, *sunappu* in the Japanese photographic community means more than just a snapshot. As I mentioned above, the work of the French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson has

²¹ The paragraphs below are based on my short essay published in Japanese. See Yoshiaki Kai, “Sutorito snappu to iu janru (Street Sunappu as a Genre),” in *EOS Art Books Catalogue 2009/Fall* (Tokyo: EOS Art Books, 2009), 14-17.

been called “*sunappu*” or “*sunappu shotto*” and admired using such denominations since it was first introduced into Japan in the early 1950s (the reception of Cartier-Bresson’s work will be discussed in Chapter One). For example, in the foreword to the catalogue of a recent retrospective exhibition of Cartier-Bresson’s work held at the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, the organizers of the exhibition describe Cartier-Bresson as “a pioneer in snapshots using the 35mm format.”²² Similarly, in an exhibition at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography that featured the work of photographers Cartier-Bresson and Ihei Kimura, whose work has often been compared to that of Cartier-Bresson, the curator suggests that their common ways of using the Leica is what can be described as “ ‘*sunappu shotto*’ .”²³ It goes without saying that the curators who used the term “*sunappu*” or “*sunappu shotto*” in these instances do not intend to mean “an informal photograph that is taken quickly, and not by a professional photographer.”²⁴ Rather, “*sunappu*” or “*sunappu shotto*” in this context implies a kind of photograph taken quickly *and* skillfully, suggesting none of the amateurishness when the word is used in English or in Japanese outside the photographic community.

In the English language, the word “snapshot” is not usually applied to works of art photography. When describing photographs as art, “snapshot” in English might sound too

²² “35mm カメラによるスナップショットの先駆者 (...) ” The Organizers, “Foreword,” in The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, ed., *De qui s'agit-il?: Rétrospective de Henri Cartier-Bresson* (Tokyo: Nikkei, 2007), unpaginated. The catalogue is written in both Japanese and English (despite its French title).

²³ Ryuichi Kaneko, “Tôyô to seiyô no manazashi sono sôji to sôji (Eastern Eye and Western Eye, Their Differences and Similarities), in Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, ed., *Kimura ihei to anri karutie buresson: Tôyô to seiyô no manazashi* (Ihei Kimura & Henri Cartier-Bresson: Eastern Eye and Western Eye) (Tokyo: Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, 2009), 11. The author places scare quotes around the word “snapshot,” perhaps suggesting the difference of its meaning from the English “snapshot.”

²⁴ *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English*, 1139.

disrespectful or even pejorative, because it could be taken to imply that those art photographs look similar to boring pictures taken by amateurs (unless it is obvious that the photographer *deliberately* imitates the appearance of an amateur snapshot, as seen in the work of Nan Goldin or Wolfgang Tillmans). Therefore, in his essay published in the catalogue of the 2010 retrospective of Henri Cartier-Bresson at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the curator Peter Galassi never uses the word “snapshot” to describe the French master’s work.²⁵ One can hardly say that his avoidance of the term is exceptional. In fact, in the catalogue of the first museum exhibition of Cartier-Bresson’s work in the United States, which took place at the same museum in 1947, then-curator Beaumont Newhall also refrains from using the term “snapshot” to describe Cartier-Bresson’s photographs.²⁶ Therefore, when Cartier-Bresson’s work began to be frequently reproduced in Japanese photographic magazines in the early 1950s as a “masterwork of *sunappu*” it had never been called a “snapshot” in English, at least by the American museum that pioneered the institutionalization of photographic art. The discrepancy in the meanings of *sunappu* and snapshot across the Pacific is thus readily apparent, suggesting the uniqueness of *sunappu* as a Japanese photographic term, which has been overlooked both in Japanese and Western academic writings on Japanese photography.

Literature

²⁵ Peter Galassi, “Old World, Modern Times,” in Galassi, ed., *Henri Cartier-Bresson: The Modern Century* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2010), 10-77.

²⁶ Beaumont Newhall, ed., *The Photographs of Henri Cartier-Bresson* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1947).

To date, there exist no book-length studies or substantial writings that reconsider the history of Japanese photography from the perspective of *sunappu*. The reason for this disregard could be attributed to the fact that *sunappu* has been taken for granted in the Japanese photographic community; people have considered *sunappu* to be so obvious and common as a photographic technique that it does not require further attention. However, as I have already explained, an attention to *sunappu* itself will illuminate important aspects of Japanese photography that otherwise remain invisible and overlooked. Indeed, *sunappu* is so commonplace as a photographic term that it is difficult to find Japanese-language books on photography that do not reference it. In contrast, writings on Japanese photography by American scholars generally do not employ the word “snapshot” to describe the work of such canonical *sunappu* photographers as Ihei Kimura and Moriyama.²⁷ Apparently these American scholars do not realize (albeit for understandable reasons) that photographs by Cartier-Bresson, Klein and Winogrand, among others, have been historically called *sunappu* or *sunappu shotto* in Japan and categorized into this genre.

Although books about *sunappu* continued to be published since the term was first used in the mid-1930s, most of them have been guidebooks for amateur photographers who wanted to learn how to take *sunappu* (the two books discussed above also fall into this category). Those technical guidebooks, which form the subjects of this study and will be discussed in detail in following chapters, generally lack insights into the concept and history of *sunappu* (despite the fact that they include important essays by Yônosuke

²⁷ For example, in his contribution to *The History of Japanese Photography*, Iizawa uses the term *sunappu* or *sunappu shotto* several times, which is translated as “snapshot,” whereas Anne Wilkes Tucker’s introduction does not use the word at all. See Iizawa, “The Evolution of Postwar Japanese Photography,” 212, 221.

Natori, Moriyama, Tômatsu, and Kiyoji Otsuji). Instead, they concentrate on explaining the practical aspects of *sunappu* photography such as the choice of equipment and subject matter. One recent book discusses *sunappu* from a scholarly point of view, however. The photo critic Shino Kuraishi entitled his collection of writings on contemporary Japanese photography *Sunappu shotto: Shahin no kagayaki (Sunappu-shotto: Glance of Photography)*.²⁸ The work he discusses is not necessarily *sunappu* but the book does include insightful essays in which the author considers the present condition of *sunappu* photography. My dissertation uses as its starting point Kuraishi's suggestion quoted above that *sunappu* was central to Japanese art photography until recent years. In this book devoted to contemporary photography, however, Kuraishi fails to examine the historical process by which *sunappu*, once just a photographic technique, became a dominant genre of Japanese photography after Second World War. Moreover, like other Japanese photo critics, he overlooks the fact that *sunappu* and *sunappu shotto* as Japanese photographic terms cannot be equated with the snapshot.²⁹

By focusing on a photographic technique that was closely tied to technical innovations in photographic technology, this dissertation attempts to offer a new interpretative model of the history of photography in which both photography's mechanism and its art are given equal importance. To consider the history of Japanese *sunappu*, however, my methodology draws from Western studies on the history of

²⁸ Sino Kuraishi, *Sunappu shotto: Shahin no kagayaki (Sunappu-shotto: Glance of Photography)* (Tokyo: Taishukan Shoten, 2010). The book reprints "The Technique of Encounter: Snapshots by Keizo Kitajima," the essay mentioned in note 7.

²⁹ For example, in one part of the book, Kuraishi calls Robert Frank, Lee Friedlander, and Garry Winogrand "people who take excellent *sunappu shotto*" ("優れたスナップショットを撮る人たち"). See Ibid, 36.

photography published in the past two decades. My attention to the concept of *sunappu* was particularly inspired by those who have examined the historical shift in the “idea” of photography; in other words, studies that treated photography not just as a group of images but also as a discourse. Such studies emphasized the dual importance of textual and visual analyses to our understanding of photography.³⁰ I believe that this attitude is especially important to my study because a large part of the historical discourses of Japanese photography remain opaque not just to Western audiences but also to Japanese scholars.

This dissertation defines *sunappu* as a photographic practice engaged both by professional and amateur photographers. This point of view has benefitted from scholarship that examined the role played by amateurs in the history of photography. In his classic study first published in 1965, analyzing the receptions of photographic images among different classes of French contemporary society, the distinguished sociologist Pierre Bourdieu defined photography as a “middle-brow art” characterized by conformism and aesthetic banality.³¹ It was only later, however, that photography historians began to pay serious attention to the role of amateur photographers. Grace Seiberling’s 1986 book *Amateurs, Photography, and the Mid-Victorian Imagination* is a pioneering work in this regard.³² More recently, in her detailed analysis of the advertising

³⁰ See, for instance, Geoffrey Batchen, *Burning with Desire: The Conception of Photography* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1997) and Joel Eisinger, *Trace and Transformation: American Criticism of Photography in the Modernist Period* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1999).

³¹ Pierre Bourdieu, *Photography, A Middle-Brow Art*, translated by Shaun Whiteside (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1990).

³² Grace Seiberling, with Carolyn Bloore, *Amateurs, Photography, and the Mid-Victorian Imagination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

strategies by Eastman Kodak though the 1920s, Nancy Martha West has demonstrated that the photographic industry tried to expand its market by turning everyone, including women and small children, into a photographer.³³ These studies are limited to European or American photography, however, whose contexts are considerably different from those in Japan.

While investigating historical documents such as contemporary photo criticism, I also conduct close visual analyses of works of *sunappu* photography. The reader will notice that most of the photographic works examined in this dissertation are not gelatin silver prints held in art museums, but printed matter published in magazine or book form. As the authors of *Japanese Photobooks of the 1960s and '70s* have made clear, photography books were the most important form of expression for most Japanese photographers during the period covered by this study. Also important are monthly photography magazines such as *Camera* (1921-1940, 1946-1956), *Asahi Camera* (1926-1940, 1949-present), and *Camera Mainichi* (1954-1985). The readership of these magazines consisted of amateur photographers who were not necessarily interested in serious discussions about the artistic or political significance of photography; the majority of the articles were devoted to commercial and technical issues. However, photography magazines also played a significant role in the development of Japanese photographic discourse, including that of *sunappu*. They continuously reproduced the latest works of Western photography and sometimes published theoretical writings on various issues concerning contemporary photography, which must have bored those who were only interested in the gadgetry of cameras. Plentiful photographic illustrations were

³³ Nancy Martha West, *Kodak and the Lens of Nostalgia* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2000).

also a selling point for those magazines; all the photographers discussed in this dissertation regularly contributed photographic essays, which in most cases, consisted of no more than ten photographs accompanied by technical information, such as the type of the camera used, as well as a short comment by the photographer.

The primacy of print media as a form of expression for Japanese photographers meant that their work was usually presented as a coherent group of photographs; issues of arrangement and sequence were integral to their photographic practice. Therefore, this work cannot be properly understood as long as one applies methods of visual analysis originally conceived for paintings or other kinds of objects intended to be looked at independently. Such methods cannot adequately address visual effects and meanings produced by a sequence of multiple photographs. Indeed, traditional Western histories of photography have been accustomed to treating the individual photograph like a painting, often assuming that a good photograph stands alone and is therefore self-sufficient enough to be interpreted individually. A few scholars, however, have defied this assumption and discussed some canonical works of art photography by paying special attention to the sequencing of photographic images. Alan Trachtenberg's analysis of Walker Evans's 1938 book *American Photographs* and the curator Sarah Greenough's recent exhibition and catalogue devoted to *The Americans* by Robert Frank are two notable examples.³⁴ Following their lead, I consider photographs as objects belonging to a group or series, whose identity lies not just in the visual qualities of individual pictures but also in their juxtaposition and sequencing.

³⁴ Alan Trachtenberg, *Reading American Photographs: Image as History: Matthew Brady to Walker Evans* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989); Sarah Greenough, ed., *Looking In: Robert Frank's The Americans* (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 2009).

Outline of Dissertation

Chapter One, “The Birth of *Sunappu* in Japanese Photography,” discusses how instantaneous photography taken with a hand-held camera came to be called *sunappu* in the mid-1930s and was then established as a genre of photography. The German 35mm Leica camera, invented in 1925 and exported to Japan soon thereafter, enabled photographers to take candid photographs of people on the streets. As *sunappu* became a popular practice among serious amateurs after the Second World War, the professional photographer Ihei Kimura (1901-1974) was admired as the “master of *sunappu*.” Inspired by the works of the French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson, he developed his own style of *sunappu* photography, which came to be considered the standard work of this genre. Although Kimura was once a propaganda photographer working for the imperial state, his status as the “master of *sunappu*” after the war helped to conceal the political nature of his work during the war.

Chapter Two, “*Sunappu* and Photojournalism in the 1950s,” examines *sunappu* in the 1950s. While *sunappu* by amateur photographers has often been characterized by its indifference to larger issues such as national politics, *sunappu* in the 1950s was, in fact, socially oriented. Ken Domon (1909-1990) played a leading role in advocating what he called *Riarizumu* Photography. He served as a judge of monthly photography contests sponsored by the photography magazine *Camera*, exhorting amateur photographers to take *sunappu* in order to capture the harsh realities of society. In Domon’s view, the technique of *sunappu* was indispensable for *Riarizumu* Photography because he believed that the candidness characteristic of *sunappu*, which was often taken without the consent

of the subject, guaranteed the authenticity of the image. In his own photojournalism work such as *The Children of Chikuhô* (1960), however, Domon was sometimes forced to abandon the technique of *sunappu*, especially when he photographed subjects for whom he held sympathies.

Domon's deliberate abandonment of *sunappu* suggests that he clearly understood that taking photographs of people on the street without their consent could be construed as an aggressive act. Chapter Three, "Targeting America: The Work of Shômei Tômatsu and Daido Moriyama in the 1960s," argues that Tômatsu (1930-) and Moriyama (1938-) applied this quality of aggressiveness found in *sunappu* to their work dealing with the Americanization of Japanese society. Although Tômatsu did not call his photographs *sunappu*, his 1960s work such as *Occupation* was influenced by the photographs in William Klein's 1956 photography book *Life is Good & Good for You in New York*, a work that Japanese critics have usually interpreted as an innovative work of *sunappu*. Tômatsu's originality lies in his use of the style borrowed from Klein to visualize the ominous mood engendered by the American military presence in Japan. Compared to Tômatsu, Moriyama might appear more appreciative of American culture. However he was no less aggressive than Tômatsu in his attitude toward America. Exploring such works as *Accident* (1969) and *Hunter* (1972), I suggest that Moriyama employed a strategy of appropriation in his references to Andy Warhol and Jack Kerouac, simultaneously celebrating and debunking the lure of American art and culture.

Chapter Four, "*Sunappu* and the Everyday," discusses the relationships between *sunappu* and *konpora*, the photographic style and movement that became popular in the Japanese photographic community from the late 1960s until the early 1970s. The term

konpora was named after a 1966 exhibition at the George Eastman House entitled *Contemporary Photographers: Toward a Social Landscape*, whose catalogue significantly influenced a younger generation of Japanese photographers. However, *konpora* was a distinctively Japanese phenomenon in its exploration of the themes of *nichijôsei* (everydayness). The chapter demonstrates that everydayness was a topic that cut across both the art community and the photographic community, two institutions that were more or less separated at that time. In his representations of everyday life, Shigeo Gochô (1946-1983), one of the representative *konpora* photographers, applied the technique of candid photography typical of *sunappu*, but he also transformed the genre by taking photographs that looked very different from the earlier examples of *sunappu*. Although his work is not usually categorized as *konpora*, Nobuyoshi Araki (1940-) also expanded the genre of *sunappu*, almost turning it into another entity. Araki appropriated the style and concept of the amateur snapshot, blurring the boundary between skillful *sunappu* and the banal snapshot. However, the emphasis on realism found in the works of Gochô and Araki connect them to a tradition of *sunappu* that was always motivated by the desire to produce a truthful representation of the world.

Chapter Five, “*Sunappu* Seen from Abroad: Reconsidering the Exhibition *New Japanese Photography*,” examines how Japanese *sunappu* was perceived and interpreted outside Japan. As a case study, I discuss *New Japanese Photography*, a 1974 exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York co-curated by John Szarkowski and Shôji Yamagishi. Partly because of the scarcity of textual information presented to the viewers, the photographs in the exhibition were regarded as passive *reflections* of a chaotic and discordant contemporary Japanese society. The reception of Japanese photography

outside of Japan demonstrates *sunappu*'s elusiveness as a photographic genre. But the Western reception also corresponded to the fact that the goal of *sunappu* was to obtain authentic representations of the world rather than producing personal works of art photography.

In the Conclusion, I briefly point out a recent decline in *sunappu* photography as a consequence of the diversification of Japanese art photography and suggest that it has become all the more important to look at historical works of *sunappu* to think about its present condition and future legacy. The goal of this dissertation is to change our perceptions of Japanese photography. By reconsidering some well-known works from the perspective of *sunappu*, it offers a more nuanced account of the history of Japanese photography than has been previously available. More specifically, this study will demonstrate that *sunappu* has functioned as a diachronic thread, or an inner structure, that connects photographers across different generations. An acknowledgement of the significance of the historical role played by *sunappu* will challenge simplified notions of Japanese photography such as its alleged embodiment of the conflict between traditional culture and Westernization or that it steadily evolved from a documentary approach to a form of personal expression. In other words, my study of *sunappu* offers a way of engaging the relationship of local and international in general, a relationship that is a central issue for all contemporary art history.

Chapter One

The Birth of *Sunappu* in Japanese Photography

1-1. The Prehistory of *Sunappu* Photography

1-1-1. From *Sukecchi* to *Sunappu*

This chapter considers how *sunappu* came to be considered a genre of photography in the world of Japanese photography and discusses the process by which the professional photographer Ihei Kimura (1901-1974) came to assume a position as one of the “masters of *sunappu*.” Firstly, however, to understand *sunappu* as a photographic genre, one will need to take into account the specific structure of Japanese photographic institutions, which are considerably different from those in the United States and, presumably, those in any other countries.

The earliest instance in which the term *sunappu* was printed in photographic magazines, until recently the primary medium for photographic discourse in Japan, go back to the mid-1930s. Although this study mainly discusses *sunappu* photography made after the Second World War, it is necessary to trace the genealogy of the word and the concept of *sunappu*. But, first, I should mention the types of media that generated the discourse on Japanese photography from which I draw in order to better contextualize the term and its usages. One of the most important sources that contain discourse, or written ideas, about Japanese photography is the photographic magazine. Ever since photography came to be practiced by amateur photographers, books and periodicals have played an important role in disseminating photographic techniques and forming communities among its users. This was especially the case at a time when taking photographs involved

a series of complex procedures and technical skills. In Britain, the *Journal of the Photographic Society* began to be published in 1853, and became a place where authors discussed not just photography's artistic merit but also technical matters.¹ In the late nineteenth century, numerous similar magazines began to appear in Great Britain, among other European countries, as well as in the United States. In Japan, *Shashin shinpô* (*Photographic News*), one of the earliest monthly photographic magazines, began to be published in 1882, followed by another major magazine *Shashin geppô* (*Monthly Photographic News*) in 1894.² Both of them continued to be published until 1940. In the early 1920s, when photography became a more accessible hobby for amateurs, further photographic magazines appeared, including *Camera* published in 1921, *Photo Times* in 1924, and *Asahi Camera* in 1926, the last of which has continued to be published until this day.³ These magazines became the primary media in which photographic illustrations were reproduced. Moreover, they also pioneered the development of new photographic discourse. Articles tend to concentrate on the technical side of photography, such as developing processes or photographic apparatuses, but some magazines targeted a more sophisticated readership often introduced critical discussions on the artistic significance

¹ Grace Seiberling, "Introduction: The Amateurs," in *Amateurs, Photography, and the Mid-Victorian Imagination* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), 13-14.

² For a detailed list of historical and contemporary Japanese photographic magazines, see "Major Photography Magazines," compiled by Mari Shirayama, in Anne Wilkes Tucker, ed., *The History of Japanese Photography* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), 378-385.

³ When a magazine or book has its own Anglicized title as well as the Japanese title written with Japanese characters, I note only the former instead of writing, for example, *Asahi kamera* (*Asahi Camera*), except for the cases when the Japanese title and the Anglicized one given by the publisher are considerably different in terms of their meanings. Other pre-war photographic magazines which circulated among more selected readers but are worth mentioning are *Shashin geijutsu* (*Photographic Art*) published by Shinzo Fukuhara and others from 1921 through 1923, *Hakuyo* published by Hakuyo Fuchigami from 1922 through 1926, and *Koga* (*Photography*) by Yasuzo Nojima, Iwata Nakayama, and Ihei Kimura from 1932 through 1933.

of photography, keenly paying attention to the development of art photography in the West.

Sunappu as a term began to be used in those photographic magazines around 1932, but there was an antecedent to the word *sunappu* which carried a similar meaning. It was “*sukecchi* (スケッチ),” a *katakana* expression of the English word “sketch.” *Sukecchi* in the photographic context meant a kind of photograph taken quickly, in much the same way as *sunappu* later came to be used in the Japanese context. However, such a usage of the term was limited to the period until the first half of the 1930s and seems to have been replaced by the word *sunappu* when the latter became popular.

The word “*sukecchi*” seems to have begun to appear in photographic magazines as early as 1927. In that year’s issues of *Asahi Camera*, one can find some photographic illustrations which are titled “*sukecchi*,” such as *Uyeno Sukecchi* by Shigetoshi Furukawa in the February issue (fig. 1-1).⁴ The subject matter of these pictures have no shared characteristics, except that they capture outdoor views with seemingly casual compositions. The title “*sukecchi*” in these cases does not appear to have a strong meaning, but rather functions in a similar way that “A Study” or “Untitled” does, suggesting that the photographer could not decide a specific title suitable for the scene. In other words, “*sukecchi*” as a title of a photograph was used in a rather generic way.

Thereafter, however, in the pages of photographic magazines, “*sukecchi*” began to be also used as a word with which the author seems to be implying a *genre* of photography. For example, in an article published in the July 1929 issue of *Asahi Camera*, one writer mentions, “photographers with a camera in his hand who walk around, keenly

⁴ See *Asahi Camera* (February 1927): 110. Uyeno (Ueno) is the name of a district in Tokyo.

looking for *sukecchi* and landscapes.”⁵ In this remark, however, it is not especially clear what kind of photographs the author means by the word “sketch.” In the June 1931 issue of *Asahi Camera*, Hayao Yoshikawa, a writer who published several technical guidebooks on small hand-held cameras, including the Leica, published an article entitled “The New Type of Cameras for *Sukecchi*: A Study of Taking Photography.”⁶ The type of cameras Yoshikawa introduces in his article use roll films instead of gelatin dry plates, but the film was not 135 format (35 mm wide), which would become the standard size for small hand-held cameras, but larger formats such as 127 film (46mm wide), the format used by Vest Pocket Kodak, one of the more popular cameras at that time, or 120 film (56mm wide) used by Kodak’s Brownie cameras. In Japanese the former format has been called “Besto-ban (Vest-format),” the latter “Burônî-ban (Brownie-format).”⁷

Cameras using roll films are more suitable for instantaneous photography than those using dry plates for several reasons. Most importantly, the roll film released photographers from the troublesome maneuver of removing and inserting photographic plates each time after they click the shutter, and, of course, a roll film occupies a much smaller space for carrying, compared to a box of dry plates. These characteristics of cameras with roll films helped to increase the photographer’s mobility. It is worth emphasizing here that this type of camera was considered to serve the purpose of making

⁵ “カメラを手にしてスケッチや風景に鶺鴒の目鷹の目で歩き廻るカメラマン達(...)。Shûjiro Kobayashi, “Kaki ni kurikaeshi ôi shoshinsya no shippai” (Beginners’ Mistakes That Repeatedly Happen in the Summer Season), *Asahi Camera* (July 1929): 55.

⁶ Hayao Yoshikawa, “Sukecchi yô no shin kamera: Satuei no kenkyû” (The New Type of Camera for *Sukecchi*: A Study of Taking Photography), *Asahi Camera* (June 1931): 608-610.

⁷ For the film formats used in Japan in the 1930s, see Gordon Lewis, ed., *The History of the Japanese Camera*, from a translation by William and Amy Fujimura of *Nihon camera no rekishi* (Rochester: The International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House, 1991), 40-41.

sukecchi photography, although the author, in his short article, did not clearly define what *sukecchi* in the field of photography really meant. It is also significant that in the title of Yoshikawa's article, the word "*sukecchi*" can be taken to function both as a noun and a verb because he just mentions "*sukecchi yô* (for *sukecchi*)."⁸ Such a use of the term suggests that *sukecchi* at that time was already associated not just with a type of photographic image that can be made with the help of smaller hand-held cameras with mobility, but also with the action of making such images. It is in this respect that one can assume that *sukecchi* was a word which began to be used prior to *sunappu* and a word which had a roughly equivalent meaning. However, obviously *sukecchi* would soon become a much less frequently used word with the rise of the term *sunappu*.

One of the earliest articles to include the term *sunappu* in its title as it would later come to be understood is Hayao Yoshikawa's "Ginza at Night Where I Snapped" published in the November 1933 issue of *Asahi Camera*.⁸ The article was accompanied by photographic illustrations taken by the author (fig. 1-2). Here Yoshikawa uses the word "sunappu" as a verb. He writes "sunappu shita," which is a past tense rendition of "sunappu suru." "Suru" means "do" in Japanese, and by adding "suru" to a noun, the noun is turned into a verb. Thus, "sunappu shita" means "[I] snapped" in English. Perhaps being mindful that *sunappu* was an unfamiliar word to readers of the magazine, Yoshikawa, in the text, paraphrases the *katakana* word "*sunappu*" with a *kanji* compound "速写 (sokusha)." Since "sokusha" means "photographing quickly," it is clear that

⁸ Hayao Yoshikawa, "Sunappu shita yoru no ginza" (Ginza at Night Where I Snapped), *Asahi Camera* (November 1933): 494-497. There are a few 1931 magazine articles in which the author mentions "*sunappu*" with a similar meaning, but they do not contain illustrations. See Sumimasa Karasawa, "Gaitô satueika" (Street Photographer), *Asahi Camera* (January 1931): 124-127; Sumimasa Karasawa, "Gaitô jôkei" (Street Scenes), *Asahi Camera* (December 1931): 583-586.

sunappu in this article of 1933 already had a meaning which is similar to that in the current usage. Although it is unclear whether Yoshikawa's use of the term was common at that time, it is reasonable to assume from his words "sunappu shita ([I] snapped)" that *sunappu* was already not just a type of photograph, but also something to be *done* by a photographer.

Another important point of Yoshikawa's article is that his *sunappu* were taken in Ginza at night. Ginza in Tokyo was (and is) a high-class shopping district often compared by the residents of Tokyo to Fifth Avenue in Manhattan, New York. In the 1930s, Ginza was the most fashionable town in Tokyo and the place where one encountered novelties from Western culture. Most of his photographs reproduced in the article depict people walking on the street, unaware of being photographed. In a sense, this article and its illustrations anticipated the subsequent development of *sunappu* photography. The subjects chosen by Yoshikawa—people in an urban setting, being unaware of the camera— would become the most popular motif of *sunappu*, even though, theoretically speaking, *sunappu* as a technique of photography was not limited to any particular type of subject. In other words, even though the literal meaning of *sunappu* is "photographing quickly" and, in that sense, it does not signify anything other than a photographic technique, in reality it was associated with the human subject and urban scenes from the start. Since Yoshikawa was not an art photographer, but rather a technical expert on photography, his *sunappu* were meant to be an example for amateur photographers who would try to make their own *sunappu* following his guide.

1-1-2. Yoshio Watanabe's *How to Aim at and Shoot Sunappu Photography* (1937)

The usage of the word “*sunappu*” in the photographic magazines in the next few years remains unstable, however, and “*sukecchi*” continued to be used alongside “*sunappu*” in the first half of the 1930s.⁹ For example, in the June 1934 issue of *Asahi Camera*, one finds a term like “*yakyû sunappu* (baseball *sunappu*),” captioning photographs of players taken during the match. Although they are undoubtedly “photographs taken quickly,” sports photography would not be usually called *sunappu* after the Second World War. Probably one of the early books which helped to stabilize the meaning and usage of *sunappu* is *How to Aim at and Shoot Sunappu Photography*, a book by the photographer Yoshio Watanabe (1907-2000) published in 1937.¹⁰ After the Second World War, Watanabe, who would later be known for his architectural photography, became an influential figure in the Japanese photo world and became the first director of the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, which opened in 1990. But, before the Second World War, he was a photographer mainly known for his *sunappu* photography.¹¹

⁹ For example, the February 1935 issue of *Asahi Camera* published an article entitled “*Sukecchi shashin no torikata to kirikata* (How to Shoot and Compose *Sukecchi* Photography),” whereas the September 1935 issue of the same magazine published “*Gaitô sunappu shashin jutsu* (Techniques of *Sunappu* Photography on the Street).” In these articles, *sukecchi* and *sunappu* point to virtually the same thing.

¹⁰ Yoshio Watanabe, *Sunappu shashin no neraikata utsushikata* (How to Aim at and Shoot *Sunappu* Photography), vol. 4, *Shashin jitsugi dai kôza* (Extended Lectures on the Practical Techniques of Photography) (Tokyo: Genkôsha, 1937). For other magazine articles about *sunappu* that precede Watanabe’s book, see, for example, Rokurô Kasama, “*Raika yoruno ginbura*” (Walking around Ginza at Night with a Leica), *Photo Times* (January 1935): 12-16.”; Yasushi Shikano et al., “*Tokushû: Sunappu shashinjutsu no hihô*” (Special Feature: Secret Techniques of *Sunappu* Photography), *Photo Times* (April 1936): 12-40; Yoshiro Chino et al., “*Tokushû: Sunappu shashinjutsu*” (Special Feature: *Sunappu* Photography), *Photo Times* (October 1936): 11-31.

¹¹ In 1932 he began to publish in the photography magazine *Photo Times* his series of candid photographs taken on the street, which he entitled “*Camera Work*” and a part of which was later reproduced in his *How to Aim at and Shoot Sunappu Photography*. Those photographs are reproduced

How to Aim at and Shoot Sunappu Photography was published as part of a ten-volume series titled *Extended Lectures on the Practical Techniques of Photography*, which served as guidebooks on the techniques of photography. It is worth remembering that in Japan this kind of technical guidebook has remained popular even through to the present, and a number of serious photographers whose works are now appreciated in the context of fine art contributed essays and photographs to these types of books. In short, those photographers behaved as “teachers” to a mass of amateur photographers with whom they communicated mainly through such publications. This is an important characteristic in the structure of the Japanese photography world. I will come back to the issue later in this chapter to give a more detailed account.¹²

How to Aim at and Shoot Sunappu Photography became the first book to include the word “*sunappu*” in its title. In the introduction to the book, Watanabe suggests that the meaning of the word “*sunappu shashin* (*sunappu* photography)” had recently changed:

It has been some time since the term *sunappu* photography (*sunappu shashin*) began to be used. But, its meaning has changed considerably between the present day and when the term was first used, and its content seems to have expanded since then.

Sunappu originally meant shooting from the position of a third person, without being noticed [by the human subjects]. Today, people think that shooting instantaneously is always *sunappu*. In this meaning, both shooting using a model

in Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, ed., *Kamera waku: Watanabe yoshio no sekai* (Camera Work: The World of Yoshio Watanabe) (Tokyo: Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, 1996).

¹² Some American art photographers such as Ansel Adams also communicated with amateurs through technical guidebooks. One such book, Adams’s *Ansel Adams Photography* series is still in print. See, for example, Ansel Adams, *The Camera, Ansel Adams Photography Book 1* (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1980).

and shooting after interaction [with human subjects] from the position of a second person are also called *sunappu*.¹³

Watanabe suggests that the word “*sunappu*” now became a generic term meaning “instantaneous photography” as a whole, and he seems to try to recover its “original” meaning. In his text he speculates where *sunappu* came from, mentioning that it derived from a technical term related to cinema. According to his explanation, “around ten years ago [1927], photographing instantaneously without being noticed by the subject was called doing *sukecchi*.”¹⁴ Watanabe’s testimony confirms our observation that *sukecchi* is an earlier equivalent to *sunappu*, although he suggests an earlier date of the word’s origin than I could find from publications at that time. He also tells us that before the words “*sukecchi* photographs (*sukecchi shashin*)” came to be used, instantaneous photography was called “早取写真 (*hayadori shashin*),” which can be translated as “quickly-taken photographs.”¹⁵

The point of Watanabe’s argument in this book on *sunappu* photography can be found in his remark that *sunappu* in the narrow sense of the word should be applied only to photographs in which the subject (or subjects) is unaware of being photographed.¹⁶ In

¹³ “スナップ写真といふ言葉が用ひられてから、相当の時日が経過してみますが、最初に用ひられた頃と、今日では、大分その意味を異にしてをり、その内容も拡大されたかのやうであります。／本来のスナップは、気付かれずに、第三者の立場で撮影することでありました。今日では、瞬間撮影することが凡てスナップであるやうに思われてゐます。この意味では、モデルを使って撮影することも、第二者的交渉を経た後の撮影も、皆スナップであります。” Watanabe, *Sunappu shashin no neraikata utsushikata* (How to Aim at and Shoot *Sunappu* Photography), 5.

¹⁴ “十年位前には、被写体に気付かれずに、瞬間撮影することをスケッチすると言っておりました。” *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁶ Much later, in a round-table discussion in 1953, Watanabe looks back at his earlier opinion, by saying that “around Showa 12 [AD 1937], I wrote a book in which I tried to claim, because

other words, in his view, a genuine *sunappu* must be a candid photograph, and indeed Watanabe refers to the concept of “candid photo,” as he writes the words in *katakana*. This fact suggests that at that time “キャンデット (kyandiddo)” had already become a part of the technical language of photography in Japanese.¹⁷ As he maintains in the citation above, *sunappu* in a wider sense of the word, then, began to include photographs which were taken “from the position of a second person,” in other words, with an agreement or consciousness on the side of the subject (or subjects) about to be photographed.¹⁸ However, Watanabe is not totally convinced about the quality of such photographs, made, to use his words, “under a prepared nature (*yôï sareta shizen no nakade*).” He maintains:

However, the author does not want to recommend this prepared nature, but would like to emphasize that this will not be necessarily a condition that results in a great work. Rather, only when one dives into an unprepared and real nature, find and extract beauty from the dynamic movement of the subject, does it become an expression that fully demonstrates the objective depiction of photography. I think the original goal of *sunappu* is found here.¹⁹

candidness is the nature of *sunappu* photography, candid photography is *sunappu* photography” (“昭和十二年ごろ、キャンデットがスナップ写真の本質だから、キャンデットの写真をスナップ写真というふうに考えて話をしたいといつて、私は本を書いたことがあります。”)。See Hachirô Suzuki et al., “Saron pikuchâ ka sunappu shashin ka” (The Salon Picture or *Sunappu* Photography?), *Camera* (April 1953): 89.

¹⁷ Here I use the words “candid photograph” with the meaning that *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* tells us, that is, “one that is taken without the person in it knowing that they are being photographed.” As far as it can be understood from the context in which Watanabe uses the words, he understands a “candid photograph” in the same way.

¹⁸ As an example of this kind of *sunappu* photography, Watanabe points out the work of the German photographer Paul Wolff (1887-1951), who worked with Ernst Leitz GmbH, the manufacturer of Leica cameras, and published several books advertising the merits of the Leica.

¹⁹ “しかし、筆者はこの用意された自然をすゝめるものでもなく、又それが必ず傑作を生む条件とはならないことを、強調し度いと思います。寧ろ不用意な、本当の自然の中に飛び込んで、目まぐるしい対象の躍動の中に、美を発見して、それを摘出してこそ写真の客観的描写性を、十分に発揮した表現でありませう。スナップの本来の使命はこゝにこそ見出されるのであらうと思ひます。” Watanabe, *Sunappu shashin no neraikata utsushikata* (How to Aim at and Shoot *Sunappu* Photography), 6.

Watanabe shows us an example of what is *not* a “genuine *sunappu*” (fig. 1-3). In the caption to the illustration, he writes: “Of course, this is a picture made by an instantaneous shot, but one is rarely lucky enough to encounter nature like this. In this photograph, a model was asked to walk along a particular path, and it cannot be called *sunappu* in the genuine sense of the word.”²⁰ The difference will be clear if one compares this example to other photographs which Watanabe uses as examples of “genuine *sunappu*” (fig. 1-4). In both examples, the passers-by do not look toward the camera, and, therefore, do not show their awareness of the camera in a visible way. In the earlier “bad” example, too, the female subject does not look at the camera. Yet, in this one the position of the camera is apparently low compared to the subject, as if the camera’s eye is looking up at her from below. It is unlikely that the photographer can take a photograph from such an unusual position without being noticed by the subject. Besides, the setting where the woman stands—on a river bank, as it appears—further adds to the “stagedness” of the picture.

When compared to this picture, the photographs Watanabe shows us as “good” examples of *sunappu* look much more candid because of several visual characteristics of the photographs. First of all, the eye level of the camera is almost at the height of a standing human eye. Secondly, the compositions of “good” examples are much more disordered (especially in the treatments of the backgrounds where one can see the surroundings behind the subjects) than in the “bad” one, another factor that makes the former more candid, and therefore more realistic, than the latter.

²⁰ “勿論、瞬間撮影による作画ですが、このやうな自然には殆ど恵まれないものであります。この写真もモデルに位置を決めて歩いて貰ったものですから、真の意味のスナップとは申されません。” Ibid., 9.

Watanabe's insistence on the importance of the unawareness of the subject (or subjects) as an essence of *sunappu* photography poses a question worth examining because it has various implications for the history of photography as a whole that go beyond the Japanese context. From a broader perspective, his claim that photographs should capture an "unprepared nature" and his preference for unstaged pictures was related to the aesthetics of photographic portraiture since the invention of photography in the mid-nineteenth century, but more specifically to the modernist sensibility that had renewed the standard of art photography in the West.²¹ This subsequently had a huge impact on photographic communities in Japan. Indeed, in 1937, when this book was published, Western ideas and works of modern photography were already being introduced into Japan.²² Notice that Watanabe mentions "the objective depiction of photography" in the passage where he defines *sunappu*. Watanabe implies that "objective

²¹ According to the art historian Michael Fried, photographers' general tendency to pursue naturalness in their pictures is not unrelated to the "antitheatrical" tradition of art that, in his view, goes back to the mid-eighteenth century. In his *Courbet's Realism*, Fried specifically discusses A-A-E. Disdéri as the nineteenth-century photographer who manifested this tendency in his writings. See Michael Fried, *Courbet's Realism* (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1990), 45-49. In his recent book on contemporary photography, Fried claims that the "antitheatrical" tradition is still valid. Michael Fried, *Why Photography Matters as Art as Never Before* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). Also see Yoshiaki Kai, "Contemporary Photography and the Antitheatrical Tradition: An Interview with Michael Fried," *Photographers' Gallery Press* (Tokyo), no. 9 (2010): 10-51.

²² The photography part of the groundbreaking exhibition *Film und Foto* (Film and Photography), organized by the Deutscher Werkbund in 1929, toured to Japan in 1931, stimulating the advent of modern photography in Japan. In the first issue of the short-lived photography magazine *Koga* (Photography) published in May 1932, the photography critic Nobuo Ina contributed "Return to Photography," an essay which is generally considered as a manifesto of modern photography in the Japanese photographic community. In this essay, which extensively cites writings by German photographers such as Franz Roh, Albert Renger-Patzsch, and László Moholy-Nagy, Ina repudiates pictorial photography, claiming that "mechanicality (kikaisei)" is the nature of the photographic medium. See Nobuo Ina, "Shasin ni kaere" (Return to Photography), *Koga* 1, no.1 (May 1932), reprinted in Nobuo Ina, *Ina nobuo shashin ronshû: Shashin ni kaere* (Writings on Photography by Nobuo Ina: Return to Photography), edited by Hiroshi Oshima (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2005), 21-35. For the most comprehensive English-language essay written on Japanese photography in the 1930s, see Joe Takebe, "The Age of Modernism: From Visualization to Socialization," in Tucker, ed., *The History of Japanese Photography*, 142-157.

depiction” is the quality which distinguishes photography from other traditional visual media, and that *sunappu* is a type of photography which utilizes such a quality.

1-2. *Sunappu* as a Photographic Genre and its Suspension during the War

1-2-1. *Sunappu* and Small Hand-Held Cameras

Watanabe’s *How to Aim at and Shoot Sunappu Photography*, despite being published before the Second World War, already demonstrates the basic concepts and problems inherent in *sunappu* photography in Japan (that these concepts and problems are indeed basic to subsequent *sunappu* works will be clearer as this study proceeds). The book was published as part of a ten-volume series, including volumes on portrait photography and landscape photography. *Sunappu* is therefore juxtaposed with art historical genres; while the latter two concern subject matter, the former is primarily a technique. The strangeness of such a title list in which *sunappu* and “landscape” are treated on equal footing might remind one of the categorization employed in an ancient Chinese encyclopedia mentioned in Jorge Luis Borges’s story, which Michel Foucault discusses in the Preface of his highly influential *The Order of Things*. In the encyclopedia, animals are divided into such odd sub-categories as “belonging to the Emperor,” “stray dogs,” “innumerable,” and “drawn with a very fine camelhair brush,” all of which are juxtaposed on an equal level.²³ Foucault directs our attention to this episode of Chinese logic as an example demonstrating “the limitation of our own, the stark impossibility of thinking *that*” because of the “sudden vicinity of things that have no relation to each

²³ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Science* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1971), xv.

other.”²⁴ In other words, Foucault claims that a seeming naturalness of any categorization, in fact, depends on its cultural and historical context, which in turn regulates our ways of recognizing and understanding things, the *episteme*, to deploy the term used in Foucault’s book.²⁵ I would claim that the difficulty of understanding Japanese *sunappu* photography, especially for those outside Japan, essentially derives from the differences of *episteme* between the photographic community in Japan and those elsewhere in the world. One purpose of this dissertation is to describe, as clearly as I can, such an *episteme* in which the history of Japanese photography developed.

To return to Watanabe’s book, that *sunappu* was given a volume in the series of amateur photographic guides also means that *sunappu* began to be considered a genre of photography. This was despite the fact that “*sunappu* as a genre” was not as self-evident at that time as it would become after the Second World War. Generally speaking, a technique by itself cannot become a genre of the visual arts. For example, if we consider the techniques of modern painting, neither “collage” nor “dripping” are typically designated as genres of painting. In a similar way, in the field of photographic art, neither “solarization” nor “photogram” are considered genres of photography. In other words, it was people’s reception of *sunappu*, rather than its intrinsic qualities, that turned this photographic technique into a genre of Japanese photography. As Fredric Jameson has suggested, genres are dependent on “institutions” that determine “the proper use of a particular cultural artifact.” *Sunappu*’s popularity among amateur photographers was

²⁴ Ibid., xv-xvi.

²⁵ Ibid., xxii.

instrumental in transforming it into a photographic institution; namely, a practice regulated by implicit rules and models.

A 1940 article by a writer named Yûichiro Doi testifies to the growing popularity of *sunappu* at that time. He states, “recently, because of the vogue for and the spread of small cameras, everyone would, I think, try street *sunappu* (tojô *sunappu*).”²⁶ It is worth noticing that Doi uses such a compound word as “tojô *sunappu*” (“tojô [途上]” means “on the street”) although it is not clear whether this compound was commonly used at that time. But, an important point here is that this writer associates *sunappu* with “street,” as Watanabe certainly had done in his book with his sample works that were mostly taken on the urban street rather than in a domestic setting or untouched nature, for example. Remember that Yoshikawa also took his *sunappu* on the streets in Ginza in 1933. Doi also shares Watanabe’s idea about the ideal form of *sunappu* because, as he suggests in his article, “one must be careful not to be noticed by the subject [when he or she took *sunappu*] because it will certainly lose the charm of *sunappu*.”²⁷

Doi’s short article tells us that *sunappu* had already gained a certain degree of popularity among amateur photographers even before the Second World War and that this popularity was accelerated by “the vogue for and the spread of small cameras.” Indeed, the establishment of *sunappu* as a genre was closely related to the dissemination of small hand-held cameras as newly invented industrial products. Thus, it is necessary

²⁶ “このところ、小型カメラの流行と普及により、誰もが一度は試みるであろう事は、途上スナップであると思ふ。” Yûichiro Doi, “Sunappu satsuei” (*Sunappu Photography*), in Asahi Shimbunsha, ed., *Asahi camera rinji zôkan saishin shashin chishiki* (A Special Issue of Asahi Camera: Latest Knowledge on Photography) (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbunsha, 1940), 24.

²⁷ “先方に気付かれることは、スナップの妙味が先ず失われてしまうから、注意すべきことと思う。” Ibid, 25.

here to briefly look back at the history of the camera until this point (this history has been unjustly underestimated in the standard histories of photography). The history of the camera was (and is) the history of its technical innovations and, simultaneously, that of its popularization beyond small circles of professionals and enthusiasts. It must be remembered that for almost five decades after public announcements of the invention of photography in 1839, photographic processes, including the operation of a camera and developing and printing negatives, were too troublesome a process for the general public to easily engage. This situation changed dramatically when, in 1888, the American entrepreneur George Eastman started to sell his Kodak No.1 to international markets, with the well-known catch phrase, “You press the button, we do the rest.”²⁸ The arrival of Kodak changed people’s views on photography. Yet, it should be emphasized (because this is often neglected) that it did not mean that Kodak rendered completely obsolete the idea that photography was an esoteric technique open only to some specialists. Rather, it would be more correct to say that Kodak generated a sort of hierarchy among amateur photographers. Even though the Kodak No.1 made everyone a photographer, it did not necessarily mean that it made everyone a *good* photographer. The simple structure and cheap quality of the camera did not allow the photographer to produce images of high quality. Thus, amateur photographers who were making their photographs as a work or those who wanted to take better pictures did not usually look to this type of popular

²⁸ For the significant role Eastman Kodak played in the popularization of photography, see Nancy Martha West, *Kodak and the Lens of Nostalgia* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 2000).

camera, but tried to get a more expensive, high-grade type of camera.²⁹ As a result, the camera industry, including Eastman Kodak, took advantage of such a mentality and stimulated the desires of millions of amateurs to increase the company's sales (of course, such a strategy is not limited to the camera industry, but essentially pertains to the modern consumer society at large).

Let us quickly summarize the development of the Japanese camera industry until the 1930s. Photography was an invention of Western culture and it was not until 1857 that a Japanese photographer succeeded in taking a daguerreotype.³⁰ However, it would not be exaggerating to say that by the end of the nineteenth century, the popularity of photography in Japanese society was as high as in any other part of the world.

Responding to the increasing demand for photography, Asanuma Shôkai (Asanuma & Co.), a trading company for photographic supplies, was established in Tokyo in 1871, followed by Konishi Honten (a company name meaning "the main store of Konishi," Konishi being the founder) in 1873. Both companies imported the latest foreign photographic supplies, including cameras, lenses, film, and photosensitive papers, from Europe and the United States. They were also enthusiastic about fostering a culture of amateur photography, namely, photography as a gentleman's hobby, with the expectation that such a culture would contribute to their sales.³¹ In February 1894, Konishi Honten began to publish the monthly photography magazine, *Shashin geppô* (*Monthly*

²⁹ According to the camera historian Todd Gustavson, "George Eastman's goal was to have a camera at every price point." See Todd Gustavson, *Camera: A History of Photography from Daguerreotype to Digital* (New York and London: Sterling Innovation, 2009), 155.

³⁰ See Kinoshita, "The Early Years of Japanese Photography," in Tucker, ed., *The History of Japanese Photography*, 17-18.

³¹ Lewis, ed., *The History of the Japanese Camera*, 4-5.

Photographic News), and in November 1896, Asanuma Shôkai took over the publishing of *Shashin shinpô* (*Photographic News*), another monthly photography magazine that had been published by other companies since 1882.

Konishi Honten, later Konishiroku (now known as Konica Minolta), soon started to manufacture its own cameras, although it would continue to use lenses and shutters imported from Europe or the United States until the early 1930s.³² Since a high rate of import duties was placed on imported cameras, cameras fabricated in Japan could be put on the Japanese market with more affordable prices. In 1903 Konishiroku put on the market the Cherry Tesage Anbako (Cherry Hand-held Camera), an inexpensive box camera intended for beginners of photography that used the *carte-de-visite*-sized (8.3 x 6.0 cm) dry plate. This camera, which was sold at an inexpensive price of 2 yen 30 sen, is said to have become a trigger for the vogue of “easy cameras (*keiben shashinki*)” in Japan.³³ Based on the Vest Pocket Kodak, a folding camera small enough to fit into one’s pocket on a vest, Konishiroku designed and sold a camera named the Pearlett in 1925, which became an immediate bestseller. As can be seen from this brief description of the development of cameras, Japanese cameras before the Second World War were essentially imitations of foreign cameras.

It might seem from this that *sunappu* photography was already about to be born, as the cameras got smaller and easier to handle. But, in reality, it did not emerge on a full scale until the camera and photographic apparatus industry underwent a few more technical breakthroughs. In 1928, the first Japanese-made roll films were offered for sale

³² Ibid., 45-46.

³³ Ibid., 39.

by Asahi Shashin Kogyô (Asahi Photographic Manufacturer), and then by Konishiroku in the following year.³⁴ The domestic production of roll film greatly contributed to its spread. A few years earlier, the history of photography had seen a significant invention whose impact was invaluable not merely for the history of *sunappu*: the invention and the commercialization of the Leica. Leica is the brand name of cameras manufactured by the German company, Ernst Leitz GmbH. Its Leica I, announced in 1925, was the pioneer of small hand-held rangefinder cameras using 35mm film, the standard size of film up through to the present day (until the advent of digital cameras). Since then, Ernst Leitz kept improving its Leica series, putting on the market Leica II (D) in 1932, Leica III (F) in 1933, and, after two decades, Leica M3 in 1954 which adopted a totally different system than the earlier versions.

I do not want to dwell too much on what one might think of as trivial details of antique cameras, but the importance of the invention of the Leica has been repeatedly mentioned in the standard writings on the history of photography, including those by Beaumont Newhall.³⁵ Many photographers whose works are now evaluated for their artistic merits were, in fact, fascinated with the Leica and made habitual use of it.³⁶ The Leica was imported to Japan not long after it appeared in 1925: as early as November 1926, an advertisement of the Leica by an import agent appeared in *Asahi Camera*.³⁷ At

³⁴ Ibid., 38.

³⁵ See Beaumont Newhall, *The History of Photography* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1982), 220-221.

³⁶ One of those photographers was the Russian photographer Aleksandr Rodchenko, who acquired his own Leica in 1928 when he was travelling to Paris. See Peter Galassi, "Rodchenko and Photography's Revolution," in Magdalena Dabrowski, ed., *Aleksandr Rodchenko* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1998), 112.

³⁷ Lewis, ed., *The History of the Japanese Camera*, 41.

the same time, it is important to remember that the Leica was one of the most expensive cameras on the market at that time and most amateurs could not afford it.

Indeed, the arrival of the Leica to the Japanese photographic community was the most direct impetus that helped *sunappu* to establish itself as a genre of photography in Japan, as Leica was naturally considered as the most suitable camera for taking *sunappu*. In his *Raika satuei zensyû* (*A Complete Guide of Taking Photography with Leica*) published in 1938, the photographer Fujio Matsugi asserts: “Even those who are not Leica enthusiasts, I think, would feel inclined to admit that the Leica is the best camera for taking *sunappu*. It should be admitted that the Leica contributed to open a new ground for *sunappu* photography and facilitated the taking of *sunappu*.”³⁸ Then, every amateur photographer who was taking *sunappu* on the street must have been eager to buy his own Leica, and those who could not afford it must have contented themselves with a camera which was less expensive, yet clumsier to handle and more obtrusive to carry on a crowded street.³⁹ As if encouraging those less well-to-do amateurs, Watanabe, in the preface to his *How to Aim at and Shoot Sunappu Photography*, writes:

It seems that in these few years, the development of cameras and their accessories remarkably expanded the field of subjects for photographic images. However, some of these excellent works were made using expensive cameras and many capable lenses accompanying them, whose prices are beyond the reach of ordinary photographers. They are ideal, but, judging from today’s economic situation, I think that only a very limited number of people are using them. Thus, in this

³⁸ “ライカ・マニアならずとも、スナップ撮影にはライカこそ最適のカメラであると礼賛せざるを得ないと思うのであって、ライカがスナップ撮影の新境地の開拓に貢献し、また撮影を可能ならしめたことは充分認められるのである。” Fujio Matsugi, *Raika satuei zensyû* (*A Complete Guide of Taking Photography with Leica*) (Tokyo: Genkosha, 1938), 165.

³⁹ A substitution may have been American-made Vest Pocket Kodak, Japanese-made Pearlette, or the recently invented German-made twin-lens reflex camera, Rolleiflex, all of which used roll films larger than 35mm (135) films. It should be remembered that before the Second World War, cameras using 35mm films were of higher rank than those using a larger film format.

lecture on *sunappu*, I explain how to aim at and shoot not so much *sunappu* photographs that can be made only with such ideal cameras, but rather those that amateur photographers can achieve.⁴⁰

Thus, the position of *sunappu* in amateur photography was still ambiguous. It was open to anybody, and amateurs were encouraged to take *sunappu* by themselves. Compared to other genres of photography such as nature photography or studio portraiture, *sunappu* was an easy genre to enter because one could make it in one's own neighborhood at any time. However, most cameras available for ordinary amateurs at that time were not suitable for the purpose of making excellent works of *sunappu* photography. This was because, as long as *sunappu* was defined as a candid photograph, the capability of a camera in terms of quick operation directly affects the quality of *sunappu*, and most cameras were not capable enough to make aesthetically satisfying candid photographs. Therefore, in the 1930s, those who could learn how to take *sunappu* photography on the streets were, after all, the ones who could afford expensive hand-held cameras. This was one of the conditions that prevented *sunappu* from spreading across a broader range of amateur photographers before the War.

⁴⁰ “カメラとその付属材料の発達は、ここ数年間で、写真作画の対象の範囲を著しく拡大したようであります。然し、これ等の優れた作品の中の一部には、一般写真家には容易に手のとどかぬ程の、高価なカメラや、それに付随する多くの優れた性能を有する各種のレンズが使いわけて居るようであります。これは理想ではありますが、経済的現況から推して、少数の限られた人達に利用されて居るに過ぎないと思ひます。そこで、本講座のスナップも、こうした理想的カメラよりも、一般アマチュアによって獲得出来得るスナップ写真の、狙い方・写し方の要領を述べたものであります。” Watanabe, *Sunappu shashin no neraikata utsushikata* (How to Aim at and Shoot *Sunappu* Photography), unpaginated (the first page of the book).

1-2-2. *Sunappu* and the Second World War

In this dissertation, I consider *sunappu* photography not as a body of work made exclusively by established photographers, but, rather, as a vernacular practice of photography in Japan where both professional and amateur photographers have played a role in its development. Although I do not negate the concept of photographic “work,” such “work” by a photographer-cum-artist must always be assessed in relation to productions by unknown and often unskilled amateur photographers. But, in any discussion of 1930s photography, we have to necessarily limit our argument to a small circle of professional photographers and advanced amateurs, because photography as a hobby was not as popularized as it would become after the Second World War.

When the improved Leica D (II) was on the market in 1932, photographers were already equipped with a camera whose performance would not be significantly surpassed by newer models until the arrival of the Leica M3 in 1954. It is not a coincidence that most of the works which have been called *sunappu* in the Japanese terminology of photography, including Henri-Cartier Bresson’s early work or Walker Evan’s street photographs taken with a hand-held camera, were born after 1932 and before 1939, the year in which the Second World War erupted in Europe. In Japan, the *sunappu* photographers I will discuss in this chapter and Chapter Two, such as Ihei Kimura and Ken Domon, were already adults in the mid-1930s and began their professional careers using the Leica. Their photographs taken during this period would have a prominent position in the list of representative works from each photographer’s entire career. Nevertheless, in my view, it was not until after the Second World War that the most significant works of Japanese *sunappu* photography began to appear.

As one can easily imagine, the single greatest obstacle that blocked the development of *sunappu* photography was the Second World War, in which Japan comprised a part of the Axis Powers and was finally defeated. Since the early 1930s, reflecting the unsettling political situation in Europe and Japan's military invasion of Manchuria (now northern China), the police had been regulating any civil activities that it deemed antisocial, such as Marxism. Free speech was virtually nonexistent after the Sino-Japanese War erupted in July 1937.⁴¹ But, before 1937, the life of ordinary people was much quieter, compared to the subsequent eight years. Life was especially turbulent after December 1941, when Japan declared war against the United States and its Allies by attacking Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. During this period, every Japanese civilian was affected by the disastrous war, particularly urban dwellers who risked their lives by frequent air raids from American combat planes that continued from April 1942 until the end of the war in August 1945. In May 1938, a National Mobilization Law was enforced for the purpose of establishing a wartime organization throughout the nation. Any activities which were not directly related to the national goal of winning the war were considered unpatriotic and thereby accused by the government and the public.

The war wrought unfathomable damages on every field of cultural activity (as it did in most countries involved in the Second World War), and there have been a number of studies on the impact of the war on Japanese philosophers, writers, and artists.⁴² Some withdrew from society, trying to make themselves as socially invisible as possible, some

⁴¹ See Takafusa Nakamura, *A History of Shôwa Japan, 1926-1989*, translated by Edwin Whemmouth (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1998), 113-115.

⁴² For a classical study on this topic, see Shisô no kagaku kenkyukai, ed., *Tenkô: Kyôdô kenkyû* (Ideological Conversion: A Collective Study), 3 vols. (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1959).

joined the army as foot soldiers, and some collaborated with the information agency and engaged with national propaganda, making use of their expertise in the arts. Professional photographers were, of course, not exempt from national mobilization, and many of the photographers who would become established figures after the War were working for a governmental information agency or a publisher funded by the government to publish propaganda magazines.⁴³ Some scholars have criticized the fact that those photographers' active commitments to the War have never been seriously examined in the official histories of Japanese photography. However I believe that it is more important to consider the influence of these photographers' wartime experiences on their postwar work, rather than simply accuse them of the propagandist attitudes manifested in their wartime images.⁴⁴ Therefore, in this study, their wartime work will be discussed always in relation to their postwar productions.

The war also suspended the amateur practices of *sunappu* photography. During wartime, indulging in such hobbies as photography was considered anti-patriotic. As the war intensified, the circulation of films and other expendable supplies necessary for photography were regulated by the government and were no longer within easy reach of

⁴³ Among them, two magazines are especially important: *Nippon* published by Nippon Kôbo and *Front* published by Tôhôsha. Nippon Kôbo, a design studio and publishing office, was run under the directorship of the photographer and editor Yônosuke Natori (I will discuss Natori in Chapter Two). At Tôhôsha, Ihei Kimura served as the director of the photographic department. For a meticulous study on the work of Natori and Nippon Kôbo during the War, see Mari Shirayama and Yoshio Hori, *Natori yônosuke to nippon kôbo [1931-1945]* (Yônosuke Natori and Nippon Kôbo, 1931-1945) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2006). About the propaganda magazines during the War in general, see Ryûichi Kaneko, "Realism and Propaganda: The Photographer's Eye Trained on Society," translated by John Junkerman, in Tucker, ed., *The History of Japanese Photography*, 184-207.

⁴⁴ Recently there have been insightful studies on the integration of photographic magazines during the War, the integration accomplished under the National Mobilization Law enforced in 1938. See, for example, Shino Kuraishi, "Hôdô to zen'ei: Senjika no takiguchi shûzo" (Reportage and the Avant-Garde: Shûzo Takiguchi during the War), in *Photographers' Gallery Press* (Tokyo), no. 7 (2008): 51-61.

amateurs.⁴⁵ In addition, after 1937, taking photography in public spaces was restricted by counterespionage laws such as Gunki Hogo Hô (Classified Military Information Protection Law) and Gunyô Shigen Himitsu Hogo Hô (Classified Information of Military Resource Protection Law). These laws were enforced lest beneficial military information leak out to the enemy. They banned not only taking photographs of military facilities or views in which military facilities can be glimpsed, but also photographing in major cities, including Tokyo and Osaka, from any place over 20 meters above the ground, such as the rooftop of a five-story department store.⁴⁶

These counterespionage laws did not uniformly ban taking photographs on the street, but one can easily imagine that in an almost hysterical social climate in which not only the police but also the public feared the enemy's spying acts in their land, *sunappu* on the street must have been considered a dubious act. The October 1940 issue of *Asahi Camera* publishes a roundtable with a range of participants, including one of the editors of the magazine, a major of the Army, and an officer of Naikaku Jôhôbu (Information Department of the Cabinet).⁴⁷ In the roundtable, the major states: "as to places which are not forbidden to take photographs, the police cannot refrain from people doing so. Yet, when they make their work public, I would like them to think about how it relates to national defense."⁴⁸ The major also claims that photographs which capture the

⁴⁵ Lewis, ed., *The History of the Japanese Camera*, 57-58.

⁴⁶ About these laws, see Eikichi Tadama, ed., *Kokubô to shashin no satsuei* (National Defense and Taking Photography) (Tokyo: Hakubunkan, 1941).

⁴⁷ Major W et al., "Zadankai shashin to bôchô" (A Roundtable: Photography and Counterespionage), *Asahi Camera* (October 1940): 585-591.

⁴⁸ "撮影禁止になつて居ない場所は、警察の力で撮影禁止することは出来ないのです。けれども、撮つた成果を発表する時には、国防上果してどんなものかと一応考えて見るやうにしていただき度いのです。" *Ibid.*, 587.

economically adverse circumstances of the nation had been used as negative propaganda by the enemy. Thus, he basically discourages amateur photographers from taking pictures that do not conform to the idealized image of the nation, and asks their cooperation by appealing to their sense of patriotism. A few months later, Yoshio Watanabe, the advocate of *sunappu* whose book I have discussed above, advises amateur photographers to conform to their social circumstances, by stating:

When taking *sunappu*, . . . one should avoid taking pictures with a viewpoint or a way of taking them that gives the impression of a shortage of commodities or overflow of poor people, which is often misinterpreted by foreigners, or he or she should be careful not to make such pictures public. One should take photographs with sound thought, and it is best for an amateur to avoid taking a critical attitude as far as possible.⁴⁹

In such a social circumstance, as mentioned by Watanabe, it is not difficult to imagine that there was no room for *sunappu* photography to develop, despite the improvements in photographic apparatuses. It was not until the end of the war and the subsequent occupation of the land by the Allies that *sunappu* was artistically and ideologically permitted to flourish.

1-3. Ihei Kimura, the Master of *Sunappu*

1-3-1. The End of the War and a New Beginning

The war against China and then the Allies, lasting eight years from 1937 until 1945, affected every aspect of the Japanese photographic community. During the war

⁴⁹ “斯かるスナップの中にも、「防諜に協力しませう」で外人に曲解され易い物資欠乏とか、難民充満とか云った感じのするやうな観方や狙ひ方は、出来るだけ避けるとか或ひは発表は要心するやうにしたいものである。あくまでも健全な思想のもとに撮る可きで、アマチュアとしては成る可く批判的な態度になることは避けた方が安全である。” Yoshio Watanabe, “Tokushû: Kisetu no shashin justu sunappu dôraku kara jitsuyô e” (A Feature Article: Seasonal Photographic Techniques: *Sunappu*, from a Pastime to a Practical Use), *Asahi Camera* (December, 1940): 831.

almost all professional photographers, who had previously occupied the position of guiding amateurs through the medium of photographic magazines, worked for the state, whether willingly or not. The war ended on August 15, 1945 with Japan's acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration, which called for Japan's unconditional surrender to the Allies. The Allies, for the most part led by the United States, established the General Headquarters (GHQ) of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) in Tokyo. The occupation of Japan continued until April of 1952 when the Treaty of Peace with Japan came into effect.⁵⁰ This is not a place to examine the SCAP's 'democratization' of Japan conducted during the period of the Occupation, but it should be noted at least that the seven-year occupation's consequences had a tremendous impact on every aspect of Japanese culture after the Second World War, photographic art included. As I will discuss in Chapter Three, some photographers dealt with the political and cultural presence of America in Japan as a theme of their *sunappu* works.

There is a certain disconnect between the society and culture of prewar Japan and that of postwar Japan. This rupture is relevant to the Japanese photographic community as well, given that photography is also a part of Japanese culture. At the same time, so far as *sunappu* is concerned, a careful attention to the continuities across the wartime divides is also important. For, as I have suggested in the earlier sections of this chapter, the basic concepts and problems of *sunappu* had already emerged by the end of the 1930s with the arrival of small hand-held cameras. One aspect of the postwar normalization of the photographic community in Japan was marked by the re-emergence of photographic

⁵⁰ For the Japanese society and the culture during the Occupation, see Mark Sandler, ed., *The Confusion Era: Art and Culture of Japan during the Allied Occupation, 1945-1952* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1997).

magazines in circulation when Japan was still under the occupation of the Allies. In January 1946 the monthly magazine *Camera* was republished, followed by *Asahi Camera* in October 1949. Another photographic magazine, *Photo Art*, was inaugurated in May 1949.

It was Ihei Kimura, who had been working as a professional photographer since the early 1930s and greatly contributed to the postwar development of *sunappu* photography. Although in Japan, Kimura, who died more than thirty-five years ago, remains one of the most famous and popular of photographers, he is virtually unknown outside of the country. Kimura was born in 1901 in the area that is presently Taito Ward of Tokyo. Taito Ward, which lies east of downtown Tokyo, was a place considered to have preserved the spirit and culture of the traditional Edo (the old name of Tokyo before the Meiji era), and this has often been said to have influenced Kimura's character and his work.⁵¹ He was born into a family of wealthy merchants, and ever since he was a teenager, he had familiarized himself with photography as a hobby, which was then enjoyed mostly by the affluent class. Hoping to continue with photography as a profession, in 1924 he opened his photographic studio in Nippori, Tokyo with financial assistance from his father. After 1929, he also started to practice commercial photography, shooting advertisements for soap or tooth paste. In 1932, Kimura joined the members of

⁵¹ For more details about the biography of Kimura, see Ihei Kimura, "Watashi no shashin seikatsu" (My Life in Photography), in *Kimura ihei kessaku shashin shû* (Select Pictures by Ihei Kimura) (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbunsha, 1954), 1-19; Kineo Kuwabara, "Kaisô no kimura ihei" (Kimura Ihei Remembered), in Ihei Kimura, *Kimura ihei* (Ihei Kimura), vol. 1, *Gendai nihon shashin* (The Complete Works of Contemporary Japanese Photography) (Tokyo: Sogensha, 1959), 1-7. As a short English-language reference to Kimura's work, the essay below is useful in the sense it epitomizes the common understanding of Kimura's work. Ryûichi Kaneko, "Ihei Kimura, The Eye of Ihei Kimura, 1970," in Ryûichi Kaneko and Ivan Vartanian, *Japanese Photobooks of the 1960s and '70s* (New York: Aperture, 2009), 164-167.

the short-lived photographic magazine *Koga (Photography)* and regularly published his photographs there.⁵²

Stimulated, most importantly, by the *Doitsu Kokusai Idô Shashin Ten (German International Travelling Photography Exhibition)*, the 1931 exhibition that brought to Japan the photography part of the groundbreaking exhibition *Film und Foto (Film and Photography)* organized by Deutscher Werkbund in 1929, modern Western photography began to replace the pictorialism of art photography in Japan. Pictorialism was characterized by the blurred focus and the drawing-like finish of its photographic prints. In *Koga*, a magazine known for its pioneering role in introducing modern photography to Japan, Kimura published a type of photograph which may be called *sunappu* from the present perspective (though the word was not yet common at that time) (fig. 1-5). His work in the magazine *Koga* tells us that Kimura was associated with this technique of photography from the beginning of his career.⁵³

Kimura is known as a longtime user of the Leica, and he was never shy about his attachment to this high-end model of camera. From the Western perspective, one might think it strange that a photographer whose work is evaluated primarily for its artistic merit not just openly speaks about his or her equipment but also declares his or her debt specifically to the Leica. This is due to the specific context of the Japanese photographic

⁵² All the photographs Kimura submitted to the magazine are reproduced in Kôtarô Iizawa and Ryuichi Kaneko, eds., *Kôga kessakushû (Masterpieces from Kôga)*, a supplementary volume, *Nihonshashi no shihô (Masterpieces of Japanese Photography)* (Tokyo: Kokusho kankokai, 2005).

⁵³ The term *sunappu* appears only once throughout the eighteen issues of the monthly magazine *Koga* (1931-1932): in the vol.1, no.5 issue published in October 1932, an unsigned comment on a photograph submitted by a reader mentions *sunappu* only in passing, suggesting that “*sunappu* is the field [of photography] which paintings cannot share” (“きわめてスナップこそは絵画の企て兼ねる領分だ。”) (127). However, no articles in *Koga* specifically discuss Kimura’s photographs in relation to *sunappu*, or *sunappu*’s position in modern photography.

community and as a consequence of publishing in photography magazines: for the majority of Kimura's professional career, he was obliged to talk about his cameras and photographic techniques because the primary outlet for his work was photography magazines whose target was amateur photographers. Throughout his career, Kimura acted as a "teacher" of photography, and gained great popularity for having that status.⁵⁴

Kimura's position as a mentor to amateur photographers goes back to the 1930s when he was still in his mid-thirties. He published *Taking Photography with a Small Camera* in 1936, and *How to Take with and Use a Small Camera* in 1937.⁵⁵ The latter was part of a ten-volume lecture series on photographic techniques published by Genkôsha. Yoshio Watanabe's *How to Aim at and Shoot Sunappu Photography* was also included. Although the titles of these books do not specify a preferred camera model, the small camera, at that time, typically meant the Leica. Aside from portraits, for which Kimura was also renowned, most of the examples used in the books consisted of what would later be called *sunappu*, and those *sunappu* photographs were intended to be consulted by amateur photographers.

When, in 1949, he began to work for republished photographic magazines, Kimura resumed the kind of work he had been doing before the Second World War.

⁵⁴ In the United States, some artist-photographers such as Minor White are known for their influence as teachers. However, Kimura, like many other photographers of his generation, never had a position at school, and his influences were always through the print media. Considering the fact that Kimura and White belong to the same generation (both were born in the first decade of the twentieth century), the difference of the structure of photography worlds in Japan and the United States is clear. One of the first Japanese photographers who influenced succeeding generations as a professor at a college is Kiyoji Otsuji (1921-2001), who started teaching at Kuwasawa Design School in 1958. Otsuji's work will be discussed in length in Chapter Four.

⁵⁵ Ihei Kimura, *Kogata kamera shashin jutsu* (Taking Photography with a Small Camera) (Tokyo: Seibundo Shinkosha, 1936; reprint, Tokyo: Asahi Sonorama, 2002); Ihei Kimura, *Kogata kamera no utsushikata tsukaikata* (How to Take with and Use a Small Camera), vol. 2, *Shashin jitsugi dai kôza* (Extended Lectures on the Practical Techniques of Photography) (Tokyo: Genkôsha, 1937).

However the War inscribed a significant page on his career which cannot be overlooked. During the war Kimura worked as head of the photographic department of Tōhōsha, a publishing company established in 1941 and backed by the Army General Staff Office. He provided photographs for *Front*, the English-language luxurious picture magazine published by Tōhōsha with the purpose of advertising Japanese policies to international readers, as well as for other propaganda magazines such as *Shashin Shūho* (*Photographic Weekly Magazine*).⁵⁶ In 1943 Kimura published a photobook entitled *Ôdôrakudo* (*Peaceful Land Governed by the Rule of Right*), essentially a propaganda publication justifying Japan's occupation of Manchuria, by showing the prospering land and the peaceful coexistence of different races. In considering Kimura's *oeuvre*, *Ôdôrakudo* is an important work. While a large part of his wartime photographs have been generally marginalized in the present understanding of his work as a stain on his career, some of the photographs published in *Ôdôrakudo* appear in his postwar publications that survey his career. Below I will discuss *Ôdôrakudo* in relation to his postwar work.

Despite his active commitment to war propaganda photography and the SCAP's policy of purging war criminals and supporters from official jobs, Kimura made a smooth transition back into the photographic community. One might say that his quick return to the position he once had occupied was due to his shrewdness and impudence. At the same time, it should be noted that Kimura was in fact *needed* by the photographic community. His great popularity among amateurs became a part of his identity as a professional photographer. In his 1959 text on the career of Kimura, the editor and photographer

⁵⁶ For more on *Front*, see Kaneko, "Realism and Propaganda: The Photographer's Eye Trained on Society," 184-207.

Kineo Kuwabara calls Kimura the “symbol (shôchô)” of the Japanese photographic community and aptly describes his excessive commitment to amateur photographers:

If I question whether his attentiveness to amateurs has been, in the postwar period, advantageous or disadvantageous to Ihei Kimura as a photographer, I have to say that there are a lot of disadvantageous aspects. He was brought out to various amateur photography contests as a judge, or to amateur gatherings for photo-shooting. Although such an excessive attentiveness is a byproduct of the camera boom in Japan, it is a strange phenomenon that is unlikely to happen to top-class photographers in foreign countries. It may be adequate to say that Mr. Kimura was pushed away by the pressures of powerful journalism and [camera] manufacturers in Japan.⁵⁷

If we follow Kuwabara’s suggestion, Kimura’s identity as a photographer cannot be separated from the postwar boom of amateur photography as well as the camera industry which supported and was supported by such a boom. But, in this chapter I limit my argument to Kimura as a professional photographer. The postwar flourishing of amateur photography will be discussed in depth in Chapter Two.

1-3-2. Ihei Kimura and Henri Cartier-Bresson

In Japan, Kimura has been frequently compared to the French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson.⁵⁸ Whether Kimura’s photographs match Cartier-Bresson’s is open to question, but the fact remains that Kimura was one of the first Japanese photographers

⁵⁷ “しかしながらも、アマチュアへのサービスは、木村伊兵衛という作家にとって、戦後、プラスになったかマイナスになったかといえば、マイナスの面もおおかつたのである。種々なアマチュア写真の審査や撮影会などへも引っぱりだされ、その過剰なサービスは、日本のカメラブームの生んだ副産物とはいえ、外国の一流写真家にはありえない珍事であって、これは旺盛なエネルギーをもつ、日本のジャーナリズムやメーカーの圧力に、木村さんがおしやられたというのが妥当をもしれないのである。” Kuwabara, “Kaisô no kimura ihei” (Kimura Ihei Remembered), 6.

⁵⁸ For example, recently the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography organized an exhibition of Kimura and Cartier-Bresson. See Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, ed., *Kimura ihei to anri karutie buresson: Tôyô to seiyô no manazashi* (Ihei Kimura & Henri Cartier-Bresson: Eastern Eye and Western Eye) (Tokyo: Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, 2009).

who understood and admired the work of Cartier-Bresson. The Frenchman's work inspired Kimura to produce a series of impressive examples of *sunappu* in the 1950s. In this section, I discuss the enthusiastic reception of Cartier-Bresson's photography in 1950s Japan, paying special attention to Kimura's contemporary works. The discussion will illuminate, I hope, not only a rarely examined aspect of Kimura's work, but also the process by which Japanese photography interpreted Western art photography in a way that suits the structure and tradition particular to Japanese photography. This process was, one might say, a sort of creative misinterpretation.

As the curator Rei Masuda discusses in his essay entitled "Henri Cartier-Bresson and Japan," it was in June 1951 that photographs by Cartier-Bresson were introduced in Japan by the photographer Jun Miki (1919-1992)⁵⁹: twenty-five prints by Cartier-Bresson, which Miki borrowed from the photographer through the office of the magazine *Life*, were shown in the exhibition *Japan-France-U.S.-Britain Joint Photographic Exhibition* organized by Shûdan Photo, an association of professional photographers, which took place in Ginza, Tokyo. Following the exhibition, Cartier-Bresson's portrait series of Henri Matisse was reproduced in the August 1951 issue of *Asahi Camera*, predating the publishing of Cartier-Bresson's celebrated photography book *Images à la sauvette* (*The Decisive Moment*, as entitled in the English edition) in July 1952.⁶⁰ Since then, as Masuda notes, the work of Cartier-Bresson has frequently appeared in Japanese

⁵⁹ Rei Masuda, "Henri Cartier-Bresson and Japan," translated by Haruko Kohno, in The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, ed., *De qui s'agit-il?: Rétrospective de Henri Cartier-Bresson* (Tokyo: Nikkei, 2007), 104-113.

⁶⁰ Henri Cartier-Bresson, *Images à la sauvette* (Paris: Éditions Verve, 1952); Henri Cartier-Bresson, *The Decisive Moment* (New York: Simon and Schuster, in collaboration with Éditions Verve, Paris, 1952).

photography magazines,⁶¹ and he won popularity among amateur photographers, so much so that in 1957 he had a solo exhibition, *Henri Cartier-Bresson Photographic Exhibition 'The Decisive Moment*, which was held in Tokyo and Osaka.

Cartier-Bresson was not the only foreign photographer whose work was introduced in Japanese photography magazines in the 1950s. Indeed, the magazines enthusiastically reproduced and discussed the works of a number of established Western photographers, such as Margaret Bourke-White, Edward Weston, and Robert Capa.⁶² The frequency of articles on Western photography in postwar Japanese photography magazines suggests how hungry Japanese photographers were for the latest trends of documentary and art photography from the West. Such an avid absorption of Western production was not a phenomenon limited to the photographic community, but reflected, rather, the general condition of immediate postwar Japan. During the War, the flow of Western commodities and culture into the country was heavily restricted. And such postwar consumption of Western (more precisely, American) commodities and culture

⁶¹ Masuda, "Henri Cartier-Bresson and Japan," 108-110. Below is an excerpt list of the issues in the 1950s which featured Cartier-Bresson's work: *Asahi Camera* (August 1951, March 1952, March 1953, June 1953, September 1953, October 1953, August 1955, September 1955, June 1956, and March 1957), *Camera Mainichi* (August 1954, March 1955, October 1956, and May 1957). The first Japanese translation of the introduction to *Images à la sauvette* written by Cartier-Bresson was published in the August, September, and October 1952 issues of *Asahi Camera*.

⁶² The introduced photographers include Berenice Abbott (*Asahi Camera* [December 1949]), the FSA photographer Arthur Rothstein (*Asahi Camera* [January 1950]), Andreas Feininger (*Asahi Camera* [February 1950]), Yousuf Karsh (*Asahi Camera* [April 1950]), Imogen Cunningham (*Asahi Camera* [May 1950]), Ansel Adams (*Asahi Camera* [November 1950]), Edward Weston (*Asahi Camera* [December 1950] and *Asahi Camera* [May 1956]), the photojournalist David Douglas Duncan (*Asahi Camera* [January 1951]), Robert Capa (whose well-known reportage of Picasso and his family was published in *Asahi Camera* [September 1951]), Margaret Bourke-White (*Camera* [September 1951]), who stayed in Japan for about ten months in 1952 and whose interview was published in the August 1952 issue of *Asahi Camera*, Robert Doisneau (*Asahi Camera* [December 1951]), the Magnum photographer Werner Bischof (*Camera* [January 1952]), Eugene Smith (whose *Spanish Doctor* was published in *Asahi Camera* [March 1952]), Brassai (*Asahi Camera* [July 1952]), and Bill Brandt (*Asahi Camera* [April 1953]).

was half voluntary and half coerced. The fact that American photographers dominate the list above conforms to the SCAP and Japanese government's policy of the "democratization" of Japanese society, including spreading American art and culture among the Japanese community.⁶³

The exceptional importance of Cartier-Bresson in the history of Japanese photography, among a variety of Western photographers introduced in photography magazines, lies not just in his influence on Ihei Kimura, but also in the fact that Cartier-Bresson's work helped to renew the concept of *sunappu*. As mentioned in Introduction, at Cartier-Bresson's photographs have been described in Japan as "masterwork of *sunappu*." And, for such an understanding to be established, Kimura's interpretation of the French photographer's work played a significant role.

The first occasion on which Kimura mentioned Cartier-Bresson's work in a photography magazine goes back to the roundtable published in the November 1949 issue of *Asahi Camera*. In the roundtable, the topic of which was contemporary American photography, Cartier-Bresson's photographs in the March 3, 1947 and January 3, 1949 issues of *Life* were discussed by the participants, including Kimura.⁶⁴ The article in the

⁶³ There is no evidence that the editorship of photography magazines at that time followed the government's directions, but it is important to remember that the SCAP censored every publication until the Occupation ended in April 1952. Basically, any article criticizing the Allies' policy was prohibited from publication. The fact that photographs documenting the disaster of Hiroshima right after the dropping of an atomic bomb were not available to the public until August 1952 also relates to this censorship. For a study on the SCAP's censorship during the Occupation, see Jun Etô, *Tozasareta gengo kûkan: Senryôki no kenetsu to sengo nihon* (The Enclosed Discursive Space: Censorship during the Occupation and Postwar Japan), (Tokyo: Bungeishunju, 1989).

⁶⁴ Shigene Kanamaru, Nobuo Ina, and Ihei Kimura, "Sengo amerika no shashin geijutsu: Shashin sakka to sakufû o chûshin ni" (Photographic Art of Postwar American Photography: A Focus on Photographers and their Styles), *Asahi Camera* (November 1949): 108-114. In the article, the date of the issue of *Life* in which Cartier-Bresson's work is published is incorrectly mentioned as March 31, 1947, in which none of his work is reproduced.

latter issue is Cartier-Bresson's ten-page photo reportage on China, and the former is a short article introducing his work.⁶⁵ Since six of the seven photographs reproduced in the article are among the most famous works by Cartier-Bresson, Kimura, having seen this issue of *Life*, already had a chance to glimpse the most celebrated examples of his work.⁶⁶ However, Kimura's first public response to it was far from enthusiastic; he remarked that Cartier-Bresson's photographs were "mysterious (fushigina)" and described *Behind the Gare Saint-Lazare, Paris* as "kimi ga warui," an adjective that roughly translates to "creepy" in English.⁶⁷

However, after original photographic prints by Cartier-Bresson were shown in the June 1951 photo exhibition mentioned above, Kimura's evaluation of the French photographer changed dramatically. In an August 1951 conversation with the photographer Werner Bischof, who was then making a long-term stay in Japan, Kimura already spoke of Cartier Bresson very highly: "I am observing the photographs by Bresson [sic] with much interest. I realized that he is a maverick photographer. . . . In Bresson's photographs, there is no such pattern (kata) [as other photographers have]. All

⁶⁵ Anon., "Speaking of Pictures: Cartier-Bresson Shows His Eloquent Camera Work," *Life*, 3 March 1947, 14-16; Anon., "A Last Look at Peiping: Photographs for *Life* by Henri Cartier-Bresson," *Life*, 3 January 1949, 13-21.

⁶⁶ Published photographs in the *Life* article include, as they are presently entitled, *Behind the Gare Saint-Lazare, Paris* (1932) (a silhouetted man jumping over a puddle), *Allée du Prado, Marseille* (1932) (a man in flock coat turning back to the photographer), *Madrid, Spain* (1933) (a white wall with small windows behind children), *Calle Cuauhtemoczin, Mexico City* (1934-1935) (two prostitutes looking through windows on the wooden door), and *Dessau, Germany* (1945) (a female Nazi informer accused by an inmate).

⁶⁷ Kanamaru, Ina, and Kimura, "Sengo amerika no shashin geijutsu" (Photographic Art of Postwar American Photography), 113.

of the photographs are taken flatly (heimenteki ni).”⁶⁸ By “pattern (kata),” Kimura means a preconceived schema in terms of composition. It is not completely clear, however, what he means by stating that Cartier-Bresson’s photographs “are taken flatly (heimenteki ni).” It is likely that he is pointing out a characteristic of Cartier-Bresson’s composition; that is, his way of filling the rectangular frame with multiple elements, thereby “flattening” the composition, rather than making a main subject stand out against the background, emphasizing the three dimensionality of the subject.

In his memoir published in his 1954 photobook surveying works from his entire career, Kimura does not hide his admiration for Cartier-Bresson:

Just at that time, in Showa 26 [1951], I was confronted by the reportage photos taken by Cartier-Bresson of Matisse and others, which were brought to me by Jun Miki to be shown at the Shûdan Photo exhibition. I felt a shiver, and was completely overcome by what I saw. “This was what I had forgotten; here is the path that photography must take. This is the only way that photography as art can walk on its own in triumph in society.” – this is what I told myself over and over again. . . . Bresson’s [sic] work, which appears to capture things casually, understands the limits of photography and represents things that can only be achieved through photography. I was all the more envious of the accuracy of his eyes behind these photographs, which are perfectly aware of the reality seen through the naked eye and the reality of the moment captured by the mechanism.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ “私はブレッソンの写真を興味をもつて見ているのです。そうすると彼が型破りだということが分つたんです。(…中略…)ブレッソンの写真にはそういう型がないのです。みんな平面的に撮っています。” Werner Bischof, Ihei Kimura, Shigene Kanamaru, and Nobuo Ina, “Zadankai berunâ bishoffu shi ni kiku: Ôshû shashinkai no shun’ei tachi” (An Interview with Werner Bischof: Significant Talents in the European Photographic World), *Asahi Camera* (November 1951): 88, as quoted in Masuda, “Henri Cartier-Bresson and Japan,” 112 (English translation slightly modified).

⁶⁹ “そんな矢先に、昭和26年、三木淳君に集団フォト展に出品するために持ってきたカルティエ・ブレッソンの、マチスその他の報道写真を突きつけられたときは、ぞっとしてすっかりまいってしまった。「俺はこれを忘れていたのだ、どうしても写真の行くべき道はここにあるのだ。写真が芸術として社会に大手を振って一人歩きできるのは、この道より他にない。」と幾度も心に言い聞かせた。(…中略…)何の気なしに写しているようにみえるブレッソンの仕事は写真の限界を心得ていて、写真以外では出すことのできないものを描写している。肉眼でみた現実と機械が掴んだ瞬間の現実を知りきって、写真を作っていく彼の眼の正確な働きが、一層うらやましかった。” Ihei Kimura, “Watashi no shashin seikatsu” (My Life in

But why did Cartier-Bresson, among other internationally renowned photographers who had been introduced into Japan, attract such exceptional attention from Kimura? The most likely reason is that Kimura felt in Cartier-Bresson's work an affinity to his own. Besides, the fact that Cartier-Bresson was working as a photojournalist publishing his works in magazines such as *Life* must have encouraged Kimura. He had always wanted, as he mentioned on more than one occasion, to "switch [his] work to reportage photography," even though this ambition was never fulfilled.⁷⁰ Thirdly, Cartier-Bresson's French nationality also must have contributed to his popularity in Japan and Kimura's sympathy for him. In the 1950s, a number of American photographers began to be introduced in Japanese photographic magazines. But, generally speaking, artists and intellectuals of this period were still looking to European culture as a model to follow, rather than American culture. For example, the art magazines in the 1950s mainly focused on French contemporary art and most artists who wanted to study abroad went to Paris, not to New York.⁷¹ Considering this background, Kimura's admiration for and even his identification with the French photographer seemed inevitable, despite their completely different circumstances during the Second World War: Kimura worked as the

Photography), 5, as quoted in Masuda, "Henri Cartier-Bresson and Japan," 106 (English translation slightly modified).

⁷⁰ See Kimura, "Watashi no shashin seikatsu" (My Life in Photography), 6.

⁷¹ This aspect is often neglected in the English-language writings on Japanese postwar art, which tend to overemphasize the importance of the Gutai group, which had artistic exchanges with the New York art scene. About the Japanese art scene around 1950, see Ichiro Haryû, *Sengo bijutsu seisui shi* (The Ups and Downs in the History of Postwar Art) (Tokyo: Tokyo Shoseki, 1979), 65-79.

state's propaganda photographer, Cartier-Bresson was interned in a German prison camp.⁷²

1-3-3. The Idealized Form of *Sunappu*— Kimura's Photographs

Despite the continuing popularity of Kimura as one of the most famous photographers in the history of Japanese photography, there have been few substantial discussions about the significance of his work. In this section, I will describe the characteristics of Kimura's photographs in comparison to Cartier-Bresson's. In so doing, I hope to demonstrate that Kimura's work distilled and then elaborated the concept of *sunappu* as a unique genre of Japanese photography.

After the Second World War, Kimura published seven photobooks before his death in 1974. If we consider Kimura as more than just a "symbol" of Japanese photography, whose symbolic value is effective only in Japan, we need to look seriously at his photographs and determine their true significance. It is well known that Kimura had no interest in making original photographic prints, as earlier generations of Japanese art photographers did. Rather, in the darkroom he made prints so that they looked best when published in books.⁷³ This episode conforms to Kimura's ambition to work as a reportage photographer, for whom magazines and books are the primary media through which the work is made public. Nevertheless, it is difficult to classify Kimura's work as reportage

⁷² In 1954, when overseas travel was still difficult for the general public, Kimura travelled to Europe with financial support by Nihonkogaku, the manufacturer of Nikon cameras. He met Cartier-Bresson in Paris for the first time, and, after returning to Japan, published two photobooks compiling his photographs taken during this period of travel. About this travel, see Yasushi Mishima's insightful book, *Kimura ihei to domon ken: Shashin to sono shôgai* (Ihei Kimura and Ken Domon: Their Photographs and Lives) (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2004), 215-235.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 320-321.

or documentary in the usual sense of the word. Rather, the crux of his work seems to lie in its *deviation* from orthodox photo reportage. In 1954, when he was fifty-three years old and at the height of his career, Kimura published *Kimura ihei kessaku shashin shû* (*Select Pictures by Ihei Kimura*).⁷⁴ More important than any of his other photobooks, including posthumous ones, it surveys his work since the 1930s until the 1950s, with 132 black-and-white photographs. The format and layout of the book is apparently inspired by Cartier-Bresson's 1952 photobook, *Images à la sauvette* (*The Decisive Moment*). Although Kimura's book is a little smaller than Cartier-Bresson's, both have a vertical format and disposition of pictures, each of which usually occupies a full page without margins.⁷⁵ In addition to the layout, what is similar is the relation of each image to the sum of photographs that constitute the photobook as a whole; the photographs are not arranged in a way that generates a particular sequential order or a *Life*-like photo-story (to be exact, the pictures in Kimura's book are arranged in a chronological order, which is not totally deprived of a narrative, that is, a story related to the biography of the photographer). Neither do they have an overall specific theme connecting each photograph, although a group of photographs gathered in a book inevitably generates an idea, if not a "theme," that each of its components cannot do when standing alone. As a consequence, this way of editing, along with the one-photograph-on-one-full-page layout, requires the reader to look at and appreciate each photograph individually, more than as part of a sequential experience.

⁷⁴ Kimura, *Kimura Ihei kessaku shashin shû* (Select Pictures by Ihei Kimura).

⁷⁵ A notable difference is that, whereas in the Cartier-Bresson's book horizontal pictures are often printed on two facing pages, in Kimura's book they are rotated by 90 degrees and printed on a single page.

The photographs in *Select Pictures by Ihei Kimura* can be broadly categorized into three categories: 1) *sunappu* taken on the street in different regions of Japan, 2) portraits of prominent people taken with a Leica, and 3) stage photographs of *kabuki* (a traditional popular play in Japan) and *jôruri* (a traditional puppet theater). All of these three genres have been considered representative of Kimura's work and what Kimura was good at shooting, but here I would like to focus on his *sunappu* work on the street.⁷⁶ As mentioned above, the layout of *Select Pictures by Ihei Kimura* encourages the reader to contemplate each photograph individually, and this almost automatically leads to an "iconization" of the photographs; in other words, a treatment of a photograph in a similar way to the one we use to look at a painting.

In his introduction to *Images à la sauvette*, Cartier-Bresson states, "Above all, I had the desire to capture in one single image the essence of a scene which springs up. The idea of making photographic reportages, in other words, telling a story by means of several photographs, never came to me."⁷⁷ This remark suggests what would be substantiated and popularized with the concept of "the decisive moment," the key phrase with which Cartier-Bresson's work has often been explained.⁷⁸ Kimura must have been

⁷⁶ The latter two genres are also not unrelated to the concept of *sunappu*, in the sense that they were also taken with the Leica and depict fleeting moments otherwise hard to capture.

⁷⁷ "J'avais surtout le désir de saisir dans une seule image l'essentiel d'une scène qui surgissait. Faire des reportages photographiques, c'est-à-dire raconter une histoire en plusieurs photos, cette idée ne m'était jamais venue." Henri Cartier-Bresson, introduction to his *Images à la sauvette*, unpaginated [the second page of the introduction], my translation.

⁷⁸ In the French edition, the term "un moment décisif" appears only in the epigraph and is not used in the title. As Peter Galassi has pointed out, there are some discrepancies between the French and English texts (see Galassi, "Old World, Modern Times," 74, note 141). In the English edition the words "the decisive moment" appear in a few parts whose equivalent lines in the French edition do not include the French words "un moment décisif." Through these changes, "the decisive moment" emerges as if it is a concept unifying Cartier-Bresson's *oeuvre*. It is interesting to note such a

influenced and encouraged by Cartier-Bresson's preference for single images and by the layout of *Images à la sauvette* that embodies it. In Kimura's work, too, more importance has been put on single images rather than a group of photographs that might constitute a reportage or story. A consequence is, as is the case with Cartier-Bresson's work, some select photographs stand out as the work epitomizing the photographer's whole career, usually removing them from the contexts in which they were originally situated.

Kimura's *sunappu* photographs which have been reproduced most frequently include *A Market in Naha: The Main Street (Okinawa)* (1936) (fig. 1-6), *Around Nishikatachô Neighborhood (Hongo Morikawachô)* (1953) (fig.1-7), *Winter (Akita, Omagari)* (1953) (fig. 1-8), *A Wooden Wall (Akita-shi)* (1954) (fig. 1-9), and *Youths (Akita-shi)* (1953) (fig. 1-10). It is notable that many of Kimura's representative photographs are taken in Akita, a prefecture in the northeast region of Honshû, facing the continent of Asia across the Japan Sea. The region is known for its heavy snowfall in the winter, rice cultivation, and the preservation of a traditional culture even at that time. Already in 1959, the photography editor and photographer Kineo Kuwabara commented that Kimura's series taken in Akita represented the highest peak in his entire career.⁷⁹

Some have suggested that the appeal of Kimura's work lies exactly in his indifference to telling a specific story through his photographs, concentrating instead on

(mis)interpretation also existed when French photography was introduced to English-speaking countries, not just to Japan.

⁷⁹ Kuwabara, "Kaisô no kimura ihei" (Kimura Ihei Remembered), 6. One volume of Kimura four-volume anthology is dedicated to his photographs taken in Akita. See Yoshio Watanabe, ed., *Kimura ihei shashin zenshû: Shôwa jidai* (Complete Works of Ihei Kimura: The Shôwa Period), vol.4 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 1984) and Kiyoshi Sonobe's essay "Mikan no tabi 'akita' " ('Akita,' An Incomplete Journey) (189-194) published in the volume.

depicting the everyday life of ordinary people.⁸⁰ Others regarded this as a weakness of his work, as proof of a lack of social responsibility of a photographer who, during the Second World War, let his photographs be used as imperialistic propaganda.⁸¹ I think both of these opposite views have some truth (since they are essentially two sides of the same coin), but previous writings on Kimura's work have lacked a serious look at the characteristics and structure of his photographs.

If one looks at Kimura's work made after 1951, the year he encountered a group of Cartier-Bresson's prints at the Shûdan Photo exhibition, it is obvious that his work is strongly influenced by Cartier-Bresson's. They both used the best kind of 35mm range finder camera available at that time, and from a technical point of view, Kimura could imitate pictures that Cartier-Bresson was making.⁸² There seems to be two particular stylistic influences that Kimura received from the French photographer. Firstly, it is related to his compositions in which multiple thematically unrelated elements are juxtaposed to each other. For example, let us look at *Farm Children (Akita-shi)* (1953) (fig. 1-11), another well-known picture from his Akita series. In this photograph, the

⁸⁰ Such interpretations are characteristic of the reevaluation of Kimura's work in the 1970s. See, for example, Tsutomu Watanabe, "Kimura ihei: Nichijôsei ni tesshita shiza" (Ihei Kimura: His Point of View Which Stuck to the Everydayness), *Intabyû hyôron sanjûgo nin: Gendai no shashin to shashinka* (Essays on and Interviews with 35 People: Contemporary Photography and Photographers) (Tokyo: Asahi Sonorama, 1975), 291-300.

⁸¹ For an example of such a view, see Shino Kuraishi, "Riarizumu no sen: Domon ken no sengo" (On the Lines of Realism: Domon's Postwar Years), *Photographers' Gallery Press* (Tokyo), no.9 (2010): 83-99, esp. 85-87.

⁸² Kimura continued to be an enthusiastic user of the Leica after the Second World War, even when Japanese cameras caught up with German ones in terms of technical advancement. But, according to the list of works published in his *Select Pictures by Ihei Kimura*, his 1953 Akita series was mostly taken with the Nikon S equipped with Nikkor 35mm lens (Cf. Kimura, *Kimura ihei kessaku shashin shû* [Select Pictures by Ihei Kimura], 28). His choice of a Nikon camera for this occasion is likely to be related to the fact that in the previous year he took a position of the permanent board of the Nikkor Club, an organization for amateur photographers run by the Japanese camera company Nihonkogaku.

heads of five children are scattered across the composition, piling up in the vertical frame. The upper right of the composition, where there is no human head, is instead occupied by blossoming onions (by the way, an onion blossom is called “negi bôzu” in Japanese, which literally means “shaven head of an onion,” a name inspired by its shape). Thus, every part of the composition is filled by elements that attract the viewer’s attention. Kimura makes this style of composition by flattening elements that were, in reality, placed at different distances from the photographer. To do so, the aperture of the lens must be set as small as the light condition permits so that a great depth of focus is attained in the picture. Otherwise, either the boys or blossoming onions will be out of focus.

A similar compositional technique is also found in *Winter (Akita, Omagari)* (1953) (fig. 1-8), one of his most famous works. In this photograph, too, different elements, all of which are in focus, pile up in the vertical format, letting the viewer’s eyes move across the composition. This manner of composing a picture is also characteristic of a number of photographs in Cartier-Bresson’s *The Decisive Moment*—for example, see *Juvisy, France* (1938) (fig. 1-12)—and are not particularly visible in Kimura’s prewar work. As cited above, regarding the idiosyncrasies of Cartier-Bresson’s work, Kimura mentioned, “all of the photographs are taken flatly.”⁸³ This remark seems to be evidence that Kimura consciously referred to Cartier-Bresson in terms of this “flat” composition.

It is worth remembering that, in the 1950s, making a *sunappu* with a great depth of focus, especially when human figures were in the composition, was not an easy task

⁸³ See note 68 in this chapter.

for multiple technical reasons, and required high skill on the part of the photographer.⁸⁴ Thus, the composition of *Farm Children (Akita-shi)* must have impressed amateur photographers at that time with the photographer's virtuosity. But, showing off his photographic techniques was not the only purpose of employing this type of composition. Rather, the choice of composition relates to how the photographer understands each single shot, and this understanding ultimately constitutes the concept of *sunappu*. Given that in Japan the work of Cartier-Bresson was, as it is now, understood in the context of *sunappu*, it would not be exaggerating to suggest that the type of composition Kimura learned from Cartier-Bresson also helped to renew the genre of *sunappu* in general.

The type of composition in which different elements are scattered, making full use of the rectangular frame, generates the following pictorial outcome, which is another stylistic characteristic of Cartier-Bresson's work that influenced Kimura. First of all, such a composition tends to be centrifugal rather than centripetal, because the main motif (or motifs) usually does not occupy the center of the frame. And, especially in Kimura's work, the centrifugality of the composition is often emphasized by the gazes of the subjects looking toward the outside of the frame, as is typically shown in *Farm Children (Akita-shi)*. Importantly, the meaning of a picture with a centrifugal composition that incorporates multiple elements in one frame tends to be ambiguous, because the viewer's focus cannot rest on a single motif in the picture. Furthermore, in some cases, a

⁸⁴ In his essay written in 1957, Ken Domon talks about the technical difficulty with taking *sunappu* of moving subjects. He might be exaggerating, but maintains: "Although people look down on *sunappu*, there are only a few photographers who can take *sunappu*. In fact, many professional photographers cannot make tasteful photographs when they photograph moving subjects." ("普通スナップ、スナップといって小馬鹿にしても、スナップが撮れるというのは、日本中に何人もいないのだ。実は、プロのなかでも動くものになったら、ちっとも味がでないというものが一ぱいいるのだ。") See Ken Domon, *Shashin sappô* (Manners of Photography) (Tokyo: David-sha, 1976), 162.

juxtaposition of thematically disparate yet formally resonating elements in one picture confuses the viewer in terms of its message, so much so that it could produce a surrealist effect.

For example, one of the fascinating points about *Behind the Gare Saint-Lazare, Paris* (1932) (fig. 1-13), probably the most famous image by Cartier-Bresson, is the visual correspondence between the silhouetted man jumping over the puddle and the small dancing figure represented in the poster we see in the background. In the image, chance produces a remarkable scene in which a human and an inanimate object are resonant with each other.⁸⁵ In Kimura's work, too, one can sometimes find a surrealist sensibility, although it is much more subtle than in some of Cartier-Bresson's photographs made in the 1930s, whose reference to Surrealism is manifest. *Mother-in-Law (Akita, Omagari)* (1954) (fig. 1-14), another often reproduced picture from Kimura's Akita series, is one of those photographs possessing such a sensibility: in this work one sees a small arm, whose body is invisible to the viewer, protruding from the forehead of the old woman, as if the woman grew a horn, and a young woman in the lower right of the picture looks like a dwarf, especially when compared to the baby on the far left, an effect caused by the emphasized perspective peculiar to photographs taken with a wide lens.

It must be now obvious how significant was the influence of Cartier-Bresson's work on Kimura's, as Kimura himself admitted publicly. At the same time, the differences between their works, not just in subject matter but also in their pictorial styles, must be carefully acknowledged. In my view, one of the characteristics of Kimura's

⁸⁵ The influence of French Surrealism on Cartier-Bresson's work has often been pointed out. See, for example, Galassi, "Old World, Modern Times," 25-26.

postwar photographs that becomes clear when they are compared to those of Cartier-Bresson, lies in their “ambiguity.” This idiosyncrasy of Kimura’s work, I will argue, is related to his wartime engagement with national propaganda. Cartier-Bresson’s photographs often capture a subject (or subjects) in a state of emotional outburst. For example, what makes his famous photograph, *Dessau, Germany* (1945) (fig. 1-15) so impressive is the accuser’s fierce anger expressed on her face and its contrast with the faces of the surrounding people. Without a caption, the viewer would hardly grasp the meaning of this picture. But once he or she is informed that it depicts a scene in which a Nazi informer is being accused in public, her furious face, which is so exaggerated that it even verges on being comical, becomes not just an indicator of her personal sentiment against the Nazi atrocity, but also a metaphor of the desolation the Second World War caused to so many people. Indeed, a number of photographs appearing in his *The Decisive Moment* depict people crying, in sorrow, or fatigued, and it is difficult not to associate those people’s expressions with the social condition of a Europe exhausted by the War.

In contrast to the strikingly expressive faces in Cartier-Bresson’s photographs, Kimura’s mature work made after the Second World War often depicts a subject (or subjects) whose expression is hard to describe. That Kimura considered *Youths (Akita-shi)* (1953) (fig. 1-10) as one of his best photographs is evident from the fact that this photograph is reproduced in both of his two anthologies published in the 1950s.⁸⁶ In this photograph, the faces of three boys occupy the composition, and their formal relationship seems to be the point of the picture. Two of them are looking toward the left of the

⁸⁶ Kimura, *Kimura ihei kessaku shashin shû* (Select Pictures by Ihei Kimura); Kimura, *Kimura ihei* (Ihei Kimura).

composition, and the third person is turning his head toward the camera. The slightly out-of-focus depiction of his face produces an impression of movement, as if he is caught in the process of looking back at us. Striking in this picture is the expression of the third person's face. Obviously, his expression captured in the shot is not flattering for the model, but it is not ugly, either. The expression is hard to categorize; it shows no definable emotions such as anger or sorrow. It might be described as an "expression without code."⁸⁷

Thus, the expression depicted in this photograph lends a certain ambiguity to, not just this person's feeling when the shot was taken, but also the meaning of the entire image. Kimura did not think that such an ambiguous expression (in the double meaning of the word) was a flaw of his work. Otherwise, he would not include this photograph in his representative works. In fact, ambiguous expressions are found in his other photographs discussed above, such as *Farm Children (Akita-shi)* (1953) (fig. 1-11) and *Mother-in-Law (Akita, Omagari)* (1954) (fig. 1-14).⁸⁸ And it is very rare to find in his postwar photographs people expressing their emotions explicitly.

To further illustrate the point, a readable expression on a human's face often makes the meaning of the entire photograph easier to read. Certainly, compared to the typical *Life* photo-story, such as Eugene Smith's *The Country Doctor*, Cartier-Bresson's

⁸⁷ Roland Barthes famously defined the photographic image as a "message without code." But, as he also admits, photographs are often read following social codes that are superimposed onto them. See Roland Barthes, "The Photographic Message," in *Image-Music-Text*, translated by Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 16-20.

⁸⁸ The fourth volume of *Kimura ihei shashin zenshû: Shôwa jidai* (Complete Works of Ihei Kimura: The Shôwa Period) reproduces the contact print of the film negative which include both *Youths (Akita-shi)* and *Farm Children (Akita-shi)*. It is suggestive that other shots in the same film capture smiling faces of the same subjects. See Watanabe, ed., *Kimura ihei shashin zenshû: Shôwa jidai* (Complete Works of Ihei Kimura: The Shôwa Period), vol.4, 188.

photographs are more open to multiple interpretations. It is undeniable that such a multivalence of meaning gives his images a certain poetic effect, as is the case with, for example, *Calle Cuauhtemoczin, Mexico City* (1934-1935) (fig. 1-16). In this image, prostitutes are smiling at the camera, and yet the entire message of the photograph remains elusive. But in Kimura's work, I would suggest that the ambiguity in the meaning of a photograph is even more pronounced than in Cartier-Bresson's work. Indeed, the term "radicalized" may be more fitting, to the extent that the photograph might appear, in the eyes of those who are not familiar with Kimura's work, too amorphous for them to be impressed. Or they might see it as no more than a meaningless visual play of interesting forms; that is, a mere formalism. Indeed, in each of the photographs discussed above, the photographer's intention is not evident at all. As I have pointed out, Kimura's work is generally meant to be seen as a sum of single images whose meanings and significances are independent from each other. As a consequence, a viewer of his photographs is given no clue from anything outside the frame of each image.

However, it would be misleading to consider that the ambiguity of facial expressions often found in Kimura's work is a clearly intended effect by the photographer. That is, I do not want to claim that Kimura pursued ambiguity for its own sake. It should be regarded instead as a negative consequence of his avoidance of expressive faces captured in the frame. A reason for his tendency to eschew laughing or crying faces—that is, faces that speak something manifest to the viewer—may be ascribed to his antagonism towards sentimental images. On Eugene Smith's *A Spanish Village* published in *Life*, he once wrote: "[they] are perfect in the respect that they express humanism splendidly, but I cannot help but feel that they are entering the field of

painting.”⁸⁹ But I would like to suggest that his avoidance of emotion might be more related to his own self-examination of his wartime work. As I have already suggested, Kimura is notorious for his active role in the production of the state’s war propaganda as the head of the photography department of Tôhôsha, a state-supported publishing company, and for not officially showing any sense of guilt regarding that after the war.

In 1943 he published a photobook entitled *Ôdôrakudo (Peaceful Land Governed by the Rule of Right)* under his name.⁹⁰ *Ôdôrakudo* is a propaganda book published with the support of the state and it tries to impress its readers with Manchuria’s prosperity, a progress, according to the state’s rhetoric, realized by the intervention of Japanese government. The title *Ôdôrakudo* was the official slogan of Manchu State. According to the preface of the book, the photographs printed in the book were taken from May to June of 1940. Japan invaded Manchuria in 1931 and established the puppet government *Manshû koku* (Manchu State) in the following year. The invasion triggered the outbreak of the Sino-Chinese War in 1937, which worsened year after year, having met China’s tenacious resistance, but Japan’s domination of Manchuria continued until the summer of 1945. In the preface of *Ôdôrakudo*, Kimura writes:

At the seventh anniversary of the founding of the nation, the basic principles of government and the rule of right spread around the nation, and the harmony between races and peaceful life of people are unfolding everywhere as the subjects of the camera. I could keep travelling in a relaxed manner, always with these subjects. Since a document of such relaxedness is the content of this book, one might feel that the book is too lukewarm and vexing, considering the current situation of the Manchu State.

⁸⁹ Kimura, “*Watashi no shashin seikatsu*” (My Life in Photography), 5.

⁹⁰ Ihei Kimura, *Ôdôrakudo (Peaceful Land Governed by the Rule of Right)* (Tokyo: Ars, 1943).

However, I do believe that the content of this book is the record of part of the achievements of Manchu State which, tied up with Japan, can now help in accomplishing the brilliant mission of the Greater East Asia War. . . .⁹¹

Indeed, the photographs in the book depict scenes in which “the harmony between races and peaceful life of people” are emphasized so much so that Kimura himself was forced to be cautious that it might look “too lukewarm” compared to the reality of Manchu State at that time. It is worth noting that in his photographs Kimura often emphasizes the peacefulness of the State by including a smiling person (or persons) in the frame (fig. 1-17). Their smiling faces show, or to put it more exactly, *are meant to show* the conditions of their minds, the faces functioning as unmistakable codes of happiness. The minds of people depicted in the book synecdochically signify the happiness permeating the entire state. Of course, we can infer that “the peaceful life” of Manchuria emphasized in the book is not so much a truthful document of the reality as it is a fiction concocted by the Japanese government.⁹²

Although Kimura did not publicly reflect on his responsibility regarding his propaganda work during the Second World War, it is almost certain that he was not proud of it. A large part of his photographs taken during the War were omitted from his

⁹¹ “恰も建国七年、治国の基本原則、王道政治に限なく行き届き、文字通り、民族協和、安居楽業の姿が、いたるところでカメラの対象となって展開されておりました。私はこれ等の対象といつもいっしょになりながら、気軽に旅行をつづけることが出来たのです。この心やすさの記録が本書の内容となっておりますから、満州国の現在の実情から推して、余りにも生ぬるく歯がゆい感じがするかもしれません。／しかし、右の内容がこの度日本と手を携えて大東亜戦争遂行の輝かしい使命達成に協力することが出来る、満州国の実績の一部の記録なのだとは深く信じておりますから (...)” Ibid., unpaginated.

⁹² This book has been largely neglected in the literature on Kimura because of the problematic ideology on which it is based. As an essay which includes a critical comment on this book, see Daikichi Irokawa, “Jibunshi to minshûshi no aida ni” (Between a Personal History and the History of Folks), in Yoshio Watanabe, ed., *Kimura ihei shashin zenshû: Shôwa jidai* (Complete Works of Ihei Kimura: The Shôwa Period), vol.1 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 1984), 189-194. In the essay, Irokawa suggests that the photographs in *Odôrakudo* do not capture the reality of Manchuria.

anthologies published after the War, and the omission has caused a significant lacuna in his *oeuvre*, which otherwise spans continuously from the early 1930s until 1974, the year of his death. It is interesting to note that a few photographs from *Ôdôrakudo* have been used to fill or mitigate this lacuna. For example, *Watashi o matsu aida* (*Waiting for a Ferry*) (1940) (fig. 1-18), among a few others from the same book, is reproduced in his substantial 1954 anthology, *Select Pictures by Ihei Kimura*.⁹³ In this photograph, a viewer's attention is led to the arrangement of figures and the bucolic riverscape behind them. The choice of this photograph for his 1954 anthology suggests that Kimura selected from the corpus of his prewar and wartime work those that look somewhat 'Cartier-Bressonian.' One might detect the shrewdness of the photographer in his retrospective editing of the earlier work. What I would like to emphasize, however, is that Kimura obviously thought the photographs of smiling faces in *Ôdôrakudo* were not worth reproducing in his anthologies, not just because of their conformism to the state ideology but also because of their dubious aesthetic quality as photographic work, especially from the perspective of *sunappu*.

Considering the photographs in *Ôdôrakudo* and Kimura's later treatment of them, the ambiguous expressions in his 1950s photographs can be regarded as an antithesis to his own propaganda photographs. Since there is no written document in which Kimura talks about the expressions of the subjects, it is not clear whether he programmatically aimed at shooting faces whose expressions cannot be classified into any verbal category,

⁹³ See plate no. 29 of Kimura, *Kimura ihei kessaku shashin shû* (Select Pictures by Ihei Kimura). In the book the photograph is dated ca. 1936 and entitled *Sungari River* (Prewar Manchuria) in English as well as the Japanese title *Nodoka na fûkei*, which can be literally translated as "A bucolic landscape." Although it is not clear if it was a deliberate change or not, the date contradicts Kimura's remark in the preface to *Ôdôrakudo* suggesting all the photographs in the books were taken in 1940.

such as laughter or anger. But, if we focus on the result manifested in the work rather than the photographer's intention, we can see that the faces in his representative postwar photographs succeeded in *not* functioning as indicators of the subjects' states of minds and thereby as a metaphor for the condition of the society in which those subjects live. Certainly, Kimura's *sunappu* taken in Akita depict the place neither as a pastoral farmland nor as a miserable old province, and he achieved such a depiction with his remarkable technique in handling a small hand-held camera.

The context in which Kimura's work was evaluated by critics and other photographers cannot be separated from the fact that *sunappu* had been established as a distinctive genre of Japanese photography. The ambiguity of meaning characteristic of Kimura's work discussed above would be considered as a weakness if seen in the context of documentary photography or photojournalism. This important difference distinguishes Kimura's work from Cartier-Bresson's, work which could, and in fact did, circulate as photojournalism published in such picture magazines as *Life* or *Harper's Bazaar*. Except in wartime, Kimura mainly worked for photography magazines whose primary readers were amateur photographers who practiced photography as a hobby and admired Kimura as the "master of *sunappu*."⁹⁴

As I explained in the second section of this chapter, in the mid-1930s *sunappu* emerged as a genre defined not by its subject matter but by a photographic technique, namely, candid photography, and by the type of cameras that made that technique possible. Therefore, the lack of specific political messages in Kimura's postwar work did not prevent it from being considered an exemplary model of *sunappu*. This is because its

⁹⁴ Kimura did work for general magazines, but it constituted no more than a minor part of his *oeuvre*, both in quality and quantity.

political relevance or lack thereof had no bearing on the definition of *sunappu*. Rather, the political indifference of Kimura's postwar photographs contributed to its pure embodiment of the concept of *sunappu*, or *sunappu* for its own sake. I suggest that this is one of the reasons why Kimura has been evaluated only in Japan, despite the fact that many other Japanese photographers who are less known in Japan have been introduced outside the country; indeed Kimura's work is difficult to understand unless one is familiar with Japanese photographic discourse, namely *sunappu*'s position as a photographic institution. Kimura has long been acclaimed as a "master of *sunappu*" in Japan, but for those who do not understand what *sunappu* is, such an appellation carries little weight. One can consider that the photographic genre of *sunappu* and Kimura's photographs were in the position of mutual dependence: the genre made it possible for his work to be understood in the photographic community while his work substantiated the concept of *sunappu* with concrete images. However, it is misleading to think that the history of Japanese photography has been advanced by such a self-reflective impulse, that is, a pursuit of *sunappu* for its own sake. In Japanese photography of the 1950s, Kimura was rather an exception in this regard. In fact, *sunappu* at that time was closely associated with more socially-conscious reportage photography, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Two

Sunappu and Photojournalism in the 1950s

2-1. The Postwar Development of *Sunappu*

2-1-1. Changing Meanings of the Term “*Sunappu*”

The work of Ihei Kimura, who has been a symbolic figure in the Japanese photographic community and continues to be admired by amateur photographers to this day, was primarily featured in photography magazines. His work was thereby consumed and appreciated by a community consisting of amateur photographers who practiced photography as a hobby. However, Kimura himself mentioned more than once his wish to work as a photojournalist, and lamented his inability to work in the field. He also critiqued the dearth of Japanese publications in which one could publish serious works of photojournalism, like *Life* magazine in the United States.¹ Although Kimura and other like-minded photographers' dissatisfaction with the publishing business in Japan might have been justified, photojournalism is not necessarily bound to a certain type of publication. In other words, even though Japan did not have magazines that rivaled *Life* or *Look* in the United States, this does not necessarily mean that there was no photojournalism in Japan. Here I take a broad view of photojournalism, defining it as a series of images that aim at reporting societal conditions. The history of Japanese photography has been constantly propelled by a mass of enthusiastic amateur

¹ See Ihei Kimura, Nobuo Ina, Yônosuke Natori, and Shigene Kanamaru, “Zadankai: Ôshû satuei ryokô kara kaette” (A Roundtable: Returning from the Shooting Trip in Europe), *Asahi Camera* (March 1955): 125.

photographers.² Even though those amateurs consisted of heterogeneous groups of practitioners, ranging from serious art-oriented photographers who were eventually joined to the canon of the official history of Japanese photography to people who were better defined by the term “camera geeks,” one can easily assume that these various types of amateurs were not particularly enthusiastic about engaging with photojournalism. In Japan as well as in the West, photojournalistic work lies in the domain of professional photographers, precisely because the subjects photojournalism deals with are usually open only to those who practice photography as a profession and are paid to travel. It is difficult to imagine an amateur war photographer, for example.

However, as I try to demonstrate in this chapter, in Japanese photography of the 1950s amateur photography and photojournalism reached an unprecedented level of cross-fertilization. The genre of *sunappu* played an important role in this co-mingling of photographic practices. In this period *sunappu* was associated, in a characteristic manner, with “*hōdō shashin*,” the Japanese translation of the German word “Reportage Foto (reportage photography).” A more detailed explanation of this word will follow. Such professional photographers as Kimura and Ken Domon encouraged amateur photographers to take *sunappu* on the street, document lives of ordinary people around them, and contribute the results to the monthly photography contests held in photography magazines where they served as judges. Especially important was the role played by Domon, who became a charismatic judge of photography contests in the magazine *Camera*, which he started in 1949. He is known to have had a strong affinity for the socialist movement and his advocacy for “*Riarizumu* (Realism) Photography” caused a

² By “amateur photographers” I mean those who do not earn money with photography, whether selling photographs or teaching photography.

heated controversy across the photographic community in the first half of the 1950s. In response to criticism that his words lacked substance and he was basking in the admiration of his amateur fans, in the late 1950s Domon began to concentrate on his own work and finally published two important works of photojournalism, *Hiroshima* (1958) and *The Children of Chikuhô* (1960). In this chapter, I will discuss the latter in detail and demonstrate how he used the technique of *sunappu* in his photographic work.

But before proceeding to discuss the relationship of *sunappu* photography and photojournalism in the 1950s, there should be some explanation of the word “*sunappu*” again, the implications of which changed considerably after the Second World War. In the December 1949 issue of *Asahi Camera*, which had been recently placed back into circulation, a writer named Tanekichi Gotô contributed an essay entitled “Tricks of Street *Sunappu*.” Gotô writes that “street *sunappu* would fail if the camera was noticed by the subject,” claiming that “the most important necessary condition of street *sunappu* is probably to be very daring and courageous.”³ This view on *sunappu* corresponds with Yoshio Watanabe’s opinion put forth in his 1937 book *How to Aim at and Shoot Sunappu Photography*, as discussed in Chapter One. Here Gotô uses “*sunappu*” as a word which signifies candid photography. He does not discuss specific subject matter suitable for *sunappu*, even though the compound “*gaitô sunappu* (street *sunappu*)” in the title implies the characteristic association between street photography and *sunappu*. From this article, one can assume that amateur photographers started to take *sunappu* again on the street, after the ten-year interruption during wartime and in the immediate postwar period.

³ “まず街頭スナップにおける最大の必要条件は、極めて大胆に勇敢になることだと思います。 (...中略...) 街頭スナップでは被写体の人物にカメラを意識されたら失敗 (...)。” Tanekichi Gotô, “Gaitô sunappu no kotsu” (Tricks of Street *Sunappu*), *Asahi Camera* (December 1949): 204, 206.

However, early in the 1950s the meanings and implications of *sunappu* began to change and this change often caught the attention of contemporary critics and photographers. For example, in the August 1954 issue of *Asahi Camera*, a now obscure writer named Kurao Yasuda contributed a short column entitled “What is *Sunappu* Photography?” As this article shows the changes that the meaning of *sunappu* underwent at that time, it is worth a long quotation:

I think that it is after the War that the word *sunappu* photography (*sunappu shashin*) began to be used with a very wide range of meanings. Originally, *sunappu* was a word, I suppose, which came to be used when the type of camera with which one can shoot by holding it in his or her hand, without using a tripod, appeared [in the market]. . . .

Because, in its original meaning, *sunappu* photography is a word about a technique of photography, it could include portrait photography or landscape photography. Probably it indeed does. Nevertheless, the word *sunappu* photography as has been used after the War is, in a great measure, given the meaning of reportage photography (*hodô shashin*). Then, it would be better to call it simply reportage photography, but in reality we could not. Probably there was a reason for it.

The reason was, I guess, that reportage photography had an explicit aim of dealing with social events. There appeared a large amount of photographs that were similar to it but do not show such an explicit aim. It seems that because it made them hesitate to call it reportage photography, people came to call it “*sunappu*.”⁴

⁴ “スナップ写真という言葉が、非常に広い意味に用いられるようになったのは、戦後のことだと思う。もともとスナップという言葉は、三脚に載せずに手に持ったままで写せるカメラが、出現したときに使われるようになった言葉だと思う。（...中略...）／言葉の本来の意味からいえば、スナップ写真とは、撮影の技術の上の言葉なのだから、スナップ写真の中にも人物写真や風景写真があっただけでいいはずである。また事実そうなのであろう。ところが戦後の日本で使われだしたスナップ写真という言葉は、多分に報道写真の意味を持たされていた。それならば報道写真とってしまえばよかったものを、報道写真とまでは言いきれなかったのには、それにも理由があったのかも知れない。／それは、報道写真がある社会的な事象を作品の対象としているというハッキリした目標があったからであらう。このようなハッキリした目標こそは出ていないが、何かそれに似たような写真が数多く現れてきたので、これらを報道写真と呼ぶには躊躇されるというところから、スナップと呼ぶようになったのではないかと思われる。” Kurao Yasuda, “Kamera no me (27): Sunappu shashin towa” (The Camera’s Eye 27: What is *Sunappu* Photography?), *Asahi Camera* (August 1954): 141.

What Yasuda tries to suggest with his unclear writing is that after the Second World War *sunappu* approached reportage photography in its content, but there still existed a difference between them, especially since the latter has “an explicit aim of dealing with social events” and the former does not. In fact, his impression that the postwar *sunappu* is something like halfway photo reportage was a widely shared idea at that time, but it seems that no one, including Yasuda, could clearly articulate how *sunappu* was different from reportage photography. To clarify the relationship between the two is one of the main objectives of this chapter.

In 1956, Tsutomu Watanabe, one of the three most active photo critics in the 1950s (the other two were Nobuo Ina and Masao Tanaka) claimed that the word “*sunappu*” had become too “ambiguous” and thereby “abused with arbitrary interpretations.” Watanabe suggested that this phenomenon was not unrelated to the technical development of photography. In an essay entitled “The Abuse of Photographic Terms,” he writes:

Sunappu was a word which meant a way of photographing, and in the past when taking photographs instantaneously was difficult, this word had an important meaning. However, in the present circumstance in which the photographer can freely take a photograph of the moment almost instantaneously, as he or she wants, the word has little importance. For, in a broader sense of the word, *sunappu* means nothing but taking a photograph.⁵

⁵ “スナップとは写真の写し方をいった言葉で、瞬間撮影が困難だった過去のある時代には、この言葉にも大いに意味があったわけである。しかし、今日のように写真家が、これだと思ふ状態を自由に、ほとんどが瞬間のうちに写すことのできる時代になっては、たいして意味がない。広義に解釈すれば、スナップとは写真を撮ることに他ならなくなったからだ。” Tsutomu Watanabe, “Shashin yōgo no ranyō” (The Abuse of Photographic Terms), *Asahi Camera* (November 1956): 115.

According to Watanabe, the word “*sunappu*” became ambiguous since every photograph, thanks to the technical development of photography, was now taken instantaneously. He goes on:

However, since the War ended the word *sunappu* has been abused in different ways. Some think it as another name for reportage photography (*hodô shashin*), and others as a synonym for *Riarizumu* Photography (*riarizumu shashin*). Generally, it is used as [a word which signifies] a genre of photography, along with landscape photography or figure photography, causing a great confusion today. In such a circumstance, everyone will answer differently if asked about what *sunappu* photography is.

Then, what kind of photography is actually *sunappu* photography, which we use as if we understood its meaning? In terms of technique, it is a sort of candid photography (*kyandiddo foto*), and in terms of content, it can be called household photography (*seikatsu shashin*) or genre photography (*fuzoku shashin*). Therefore, if we called it candid photography when we classify by the way of photographing and called it household photography or genre photography when we classify by the field, we would not have experienced the confusion as we do now.⁶

A number of Watanabe’s points are especially relevant to my argument. First of all, he points out that after the Second World War, *sunappu* had been treated as a “genre” of photography (he writes “*gyanru*” in *katakana*, another word of English origin which is in everyday use). This is one of the earliest instances in which a contemporary critic wrote in a photography magazine that *sunappu* was becoming a *genre* of photography. As I have already suggested, this is one of the distinctive characteristics of Japanese photography. The fact that *sunappu* has been treated as a photographic genre cannot be

⁶ “ところが戦後は、もっと別の形でスナップ写真という言葉が乱用されているのである。あるものは報道写真の別名のように考えているし、またあるものは、スナップ写真をリアリズム写真の同義語のように解釈している。そして一般的には、風景写真や人物写真とともに、一つの写真のジャンルとして使われていて、非常に混乱をきわめているのが現状である。これではスナップ写真とは何かという質問を出したら、おそらく十人が十人異なった答えを出すだろう。／おたがいが何となくわかったつもりで使っているこのスナップ写真とは、それでは実際にはどういう種類の写真だろうか。それは技術的には一種のキャンデッド・フォトであり、内容的には生活写真、風俗写真とっていいものである。したがって写し方で分ける場合はキャンデッド・フォトといい、分野で区別する場合は生活写真なり、風俗写真といえ、今日のような混乱をみずにすんだと思う。” Ibid.

attributed to the intrinsic nature of *sunappu*, but is, rather, a contingent event to it. As Watanabe rightly indicates, *sunappu* itself is a concept which only concerns a photographic technique, and a technique does not automatically become a genre of art.

Secondly, like Yasuda in the article quoted above, Watanabe also mentions the situation in which *sunappu* was equated with reportage photography by many, and both of them question this equation in some way. Whereas Yasuda believes that *sunappu* lacks “an explicit aim of dealing with social events” which he considers a prerequisite of reportage photography, Watanabe concludes, “in terms of content, it can be called household photography or genre photography.” It is interesting that in his essay Watanabe proposed to use the word “candid photography” to signify what was usually called *sunappu*. But, as I have demonstrated in Chapter One by examining the publications of the 1930s, when the *katakana* word “*sunappu*” began to be used in Japanese, it already implied candid photography, not just instantaneous photography as a whole. And Gotô’s text quoted above suggests that it was a widely shared idea that the genuine *sunappu* must be candid, rather than posed, instantaneous photography. Thus, Watanabe’s reasoning that *sunappu* began to be associated with reportage photography because the meaning of the word became too ambiguous is not very accurate. The narrower meaning of the word “*sunappu*” as candid photography was retained even after the practice of taking instantaneous photography with a hand-held camera was no longer technically difficult. Rather, one can assume that the postwar association of *sunappu* with reportage photography noticed and then questioned by the critics had to do with some essential characteristic of *sunappu* after the War. These remarks by critics suggest that the circumstances surrounding *sunappu* changed considerably after the War. As a

consequence, some came to consider the word too confusing to be meaningfully used. One of the factors that caused the ambiguity of term *sunappu* is the rise of the photography industry and the postwar popularity of amateur photography in the 1950s, the period in which the economy of Japan recovered at a remarkable speed from the devastation brought by the War.

2-1-2. The Camera Industry and the Fad of Amateur Photography

Although the small hand-held camera using 35mm film had already appeared in the market in the prewar period, it was too expensive to spread among average amateur photographers; those who could afford it were either wealthy dilettantes or professional photographers. However, after the War ended in 1945, this situation changed dramatically. In the reconstruction era under the occupation of the Allied Powers, the photography industry became one of the fields that contributed to the fast recovery of the Japanese economy. During the war, photographic companies such as Nippon Kogaku (now Nikon), were mobilized to provide munitions and many of its factories in urban areas were destroyed by air raids. When the war ended, like other manufacturing industries in Japan, those companies were deprived of facilities and materials to produce cameras, photographic lenses, and film. But the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), which administered Japan under the Occupation, noticed the potential of the photography industry. As early as October 1945, the SCAP permitted the manufacturers that had been turned into munitions companies during the war to resume

producing cameras and selling them to the soldiers of the Occupation Forces.⁷ These cameras were the same models that had already been designed before the War deteriorated, consisting mostly of folding cameras using medium-format Best-size films, the standard type of camera before the War.

It is ironic that the Japanese photography industry actually owed the technical development of small hand-held cameras using 35mm film, which laid the groundwork for the postwar boom of *sunappu* photography, to a restriction posed by the Occupation Forces. In July 1946 the SCAP banned photographic film companies, such as Fuji, Konishiroku, or Oriental, from producing 120 and 145 mm film, because of the general shortage of X-ray films that the SCAP thought should be prioritized. Thus, 35mm film, which is smaller than 120 or 145 mm film and therefore uses less cellulose, was the only format that could be produced and made available to consumers.⁸ This situation stimulated camera manufactures to design and produce a variety of 35mm cameras which matched the needs of different classes of users, from professional photographers to beginners. Recall that before the Second World War small 35mm cameras such as the Leica were more expensive than cameras using a larger format of film, and this condition made *sunappu* a field of photography open to a limited class of amateur photographers (to take *sunappu* on the street, you must have been rich enough to buy the equipment).

These newly designed 35mm cameras were designed based on the Leica and ranged from inexpensive, crude imitations of the German camera to high-performance

⁷ Gordon Lewis, ed., *The History of the Japanese Camera*, from a translation by William and Amy Fujimura of *Nihon camera no rekishi* (Rochester: The International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House, 1991), 59-60.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 62.

ones that even rivaled the Leica III, such as the Canon II B, which went on the market in 1949 or the Nikon M in 1950. In particular, the Nikon M and its attached lens, which were often sold to photojournalists who went to Korea to report on the Korean War that erupted in June 1950, served as Japan's first opportunity to attain global status as a major camera-producing nation (and with that came the birth of the stereotype of the Japanese national who always carries a camera around).⁹ In October 1949, the SCAP finally withdrew the restriction on selling 120 and 145 mm film to civilians, and, as a consequence, cameras using those formats began to appear in the market again.¹⁰ In relation to *sunappu*, especially important were the inexpensive twin-lens reflex cameras that were put on the market around 1950, such as the Ricohflex III, which sold for 5800 yen.¹¹ In fact, as we can determine from the captions to the illustrations in camera magazines at that time—it was, and still is a custom of those magazines to specify the type of camera and film used for illustrations—twin-lens reflex cameras were often used by amateur photographers to take *sunappu* on the street. For *sunappu* photography in the 1950s, accessibility to the photographic equipment for producing it became the genre's important feature, or indeed, even one of its primary identities.

Helped by the munitions boom triggered by the Korean War, which continued from June 1950 until July 1953, the standard of living among the Japanese rapidly improved, and consequently, cameras began to permeate the homes of a broader public,

⁹ Ibid., 103.

¹⁰ Ibid., 97.

¹¹ According to an advertisement of a camera shop printed in the December 1951 issue of *Camera* (92), the Leica III f with 50mm F1.4 lens was sold for 165,000 yen, whereas the used Baby Pearl, an inexpensive mass market camera, went for 6,000 yen. It is clear that the Leica was utterly beyond the reach of ordinary amateur photographers.

creating the first camera boom in 1953.¹² According to statistics by Japan Cameras and Optical Instruments Inspection Association, approximately 200,000 cameras were manufactured in 1950 in Japan and from that number approximately 80,000 were exported abroad. In 1955, five years later, the number increased five times: 1,000,000 were manufactured and 240,000 exported.¹³

Since before the war, the camera and film manufacturers understood that the creation of a culture of amateur photography was indispensable for the stable increase of their sales. Consequently, they conducted various kinds of promotional activities. As the population of amateur photographers grew, public events organized by the photography industry came to be more large-scale. In the early 1950s, both Konishiroku and Fuji Photo Film, the two largest photographic film manufacturers in Japan, started annual photography contests to which any beginner could submit their photographs, hoping to get a chance to have their work exhibited in public and win a monetary prize.

Photographic magazines published by both major newspaper companies and small publishing companies specializing in photography also benefited from the camera boom, while they also functioned as one of the main actors that created the boom itself. In the Foreword printed in the first postwar issue of *Asahi Camera* in October 1949, the editor acknowledges the importance of the role that amateur photographers played in the development of the history of Japanese photography. He writes:

The reason why *Asahi Camera* revamped itself with a new look after seven years of suspension is that we cannot stay still after witnessing that the revival of the postwar photography industry is now worth paying attention to and photographic technologies receive more social demands as peace comes to us.

¹² Lewis, ed., *The History of the Japanese Camera*, 195.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 107.

It seems to us that the general public's interest in photographic art is finally growing again. We believe that amateurs have always pioneered photographic art, bringing a fresh breeze into it. *Asahi Camera*, a magazine with tradition, would like to advance forward, paying special attention to this aspect.¹⁴

As this statement implies, the existence of photographic magazines depended on the photography industry (which paid for advertising spaces in the magazine) on the one hand and a mass of amateur photographers (who bought the magazines) on the other. It is important to notice that this triad worked as the driving force behind Japanese photographic culture, and most of the masters of Japanese photography were more or less involved in this triad.

It is hard to know how large the photographic community was in the 1950s. Since amateur photography is not a permanent profession, it is impossible and ultimately meaningless to try to count the exact number of amateur photographers working in Japan at this time. However, there is no shortage of contemporary testimonies reporting the boom of amateur photography. In 1952, in a roundtable featuring the photographer Margaret Bourke-White, who was working in Japan at that time, the photo critic Nobuo Ina mentioned that the number of amateur photographers then ranged from 1,000,000 to 1,500,000 and the readership of *Asahi Camera* amounted to 100,000 (Japan's population

¹⁴ “ (...) アサヒカメラが七年の休刊の後に、今回新装をこらして再出発する運びになりました所以は、戦後の写真工業の復興に見るべきものがあり、一面また写真技術が平和来とともに益々その社会的要求を増大して行く大勢を眺めて、じつとしておられなくなったからにほかなりません。／国民大衆の写真芸術に対する関心もまた漸く高まりつつあるように見受けられます。従来も写真芸術は、常にアマチュアによってこそ新生面を拓き、常にこの世界に清風を導き入れつつあつたと信じますが、伝統あるアサヒカメラは特にこの方面に留意して今後も進みたい所存であります。” Anon., “Fukkan no ji” (A Message on the Occasion of the Republishing), *Asahi Camera* (October 1949): unpaginated [the first page of the magazine].

in 1952 was approximately 89,000,000).¹⁵ Because it is not clear to whom Ina actually referred by the term “amateur (amachua)” (is he or she a person who practices photography as a hobby or a person who owns a camera just to take family snapshots?), this number has little statistical value. Yet it at least tells us that by 1952, photography was no longer a hobby limited to the wealthy class.

This shift in the class of people who practiced photography was sometimes noticed in the magazines. For example, in a conversation published in the December 1953 issue of *Camera*, the photographers Hachirô Suzuki and Yôichi Midorikawa (1915-2001) raise this very subject.¹⁶ Midorikawa was a renowned landscape photographer whose primary profession was dentistry. In that sense, he remained an amateur photographer. He suggests that “the class who practices photography changed considerably compared to prewar days,” adding that “before the War, those who practiced photography tended to be affluent people.”¹⁷ Agreeing with Midorikawa, Suzuki says, “recently, many people in such occupations as office worker, factory worker, or public servant, have begun to acquire cameras.”¹⁸

¹⁵ Margaret Bourke-White, Ihei Kimura, Nobuo Ina, Samitarô Uramatsu, Ken Domon, and Jun Miki, “Zadankai: Mâgaretto bâku howaito joshi ni mono o kiku” (A Roundtable: A Conversation with Margaret Bourke-White), *Asahi Camera* (August 1952): 92.

¹⁶ Hachirô Suzuki and Yôichi Midorikawa, “Amachua sakka no tachiba” (The Position of Amateur Photographers), *Camera* (December 1953): 69-74.

¹⁷ “写真をやつてる層が、戦前とずいぶん変つてきたのじやないかと思ひますね。戦前はどちらかといへば、ゆとりの多い人たちがやつておつた。” *Ibid.*, 72.

¹⁸ “最近は、だいぶ会社員、工員とか公務員という職業の人もカメラを持つ人が多くなりましたね。” *Ibid.*

This popularization of photographic apparatuses was not just an economic phenomenon, but also a cultural one. In 1955, the film director Kôzaburô Yoshimura wrote about the “craze for photography” in those days:

There has been a craze for photography and it is probably the largest fad of this kind which is now involving the whole nation. There is no single day when I do not see a person carrying a camera. Even the remotest town has a photographic supply shop. Magazines and books about photography occupy a section of every bookstore. Photographs taken by the members of the camera club of each town are exhibited in widow displays on a town street, on the wall of a restaurant, or in the waiting room of a train station. In Ginza, Tokyo, there is a permanent space for photography exhibitions. It has been more than a while since people in foreign tourist spots began to say “if you see an Oriental person with a camera, guess that he or she is Japanese.” It seems that it is an amusement that matches the penchant of the Japanese very much.¹⁹

This is a rather detached, and thus probably more objective, view held by a person who stood outside of what he called the “photography craze (shashin netsu).” But, the unusual fad was also noticed by the people who belonged to the photographic community. In a 1954 roundtable discussion published in the art magazine *Geijustu Shinchô*, the art critic Sôichi Tominaga said: “It is one of the particularities of Japan that people like photography. Probably Japan is second only to America in the fact that photography became popular among the general public to such an extent.”²⁰ Answering Tominaga, the

¹⁹ “おそらくこれ程、全国民的流行のためしはあるまいと思われる位の写真熱である。写真機を携えた人を見かけぬ日はなく、どんな辺鄙な土地にも写真の材料屋があり、写真に関する雑誌や書籍はどの本屋の一部をも占領し、街角のショオ・ウィンドウ、飲食店の壁、駐車場の待合室などには、その土地土地のカメラ・クラブとやらの写真が展覧に供され、東京の銀座なんかには、常設写真展の会場もある。外国の観光地でも写真機を携えた東洋人は日本人と思へと言われるのはずいぶん以前からだが、余程日本人の好みに合った遊びと見える。” Kôzaburô Yoshimura, “Muzukashii shashin” (Difficult Photography), *Tosho* (February 1956): 22.

²⁰ “まず写真が好きだということが日本の一つの特長性ですよ。これだけ写真が一般の間に盛んになっている事実は、アメリカに次いで日本くらいじゃないですか。” Sôichi Tominaga, Nobuo Ina, and Shigene Kanamaru, “Nihon shashinkai no mondai” (Problems of the Photographic Community in Japan), *Geijutsu Shinchô* (September 1954): 193.

photo critic Ina speculates on the reason for its popularity: “There may be several reasons, but I think it is related to the fact that Japanese like folk art such as *waka* or *haiku*. There are a very large number of Japanese who try to make this kind of art.”²¹ Ina also added that “before the War, [those who practice photography] tended to be elderly people, but after the War, the young population increased very much.”²² These observations by the critics attest to the fact that the affordability of cameras made photography a more popular and less expensive practice compared to the prewar period.

Interestingly, the photography boom in Japan was also mentioned by the photographer Edward Steichen, who visited the country in the fall of 1955. During his stay Steichen attended a roundtable discussion with several photo critics and photographers organized by *Asahi Camera* and published in its November 1955 issue. Asked about the present condition of amateur camera clubs in the United States, Steichen answered:

The movements of amateur camera clubs in the United States are very slow. The number of people who carry cameras in Tokyo is probably ten times or twenty times as many as those in New York. In Kyoto and Nara, people are taking photographs of not just their friends but also very strange scenes of architectures. They are very interested in the artistic side. This rarely happens in the United States. I think it partly owes to the camera magazines in Japan.²³

²¹ “それはいろいろあるのだろうけれども、一つは、和歌、俳句の類の民衆芸術みたいなものが好きだということと一脈通ずるところがあるのじゃないかと思うのです。何かそういう芸術をつくらうという気が日本人は非常に多いのじゃないか。” Ibid., 194. *Waka* and *haiku* are types of Japanese poetry, consisting of only thirty-one and seventeen letters respectively.

²² “戦争前は割合に年配の人が多かつた。戦後になつて非常に若い人が多くなつたのですよ。” Ibid.

²³ “アメリカのアマチュア・クラブの動きは非常ににぶい。カメラを持っている人の数にしても、東京とニューヨークを比べると、日本のほうがおそらく十倍も、二十倍も多いでしょう。京都、奈良などへ行っても、ただ友達の写真を撮っているのではなく、建築物の非常に変わった場面などを撮っていますね。非常に芸術的な面に興味を持ち関心を寄せている。アメリカではそういうことは少ないです。それは一つには日本のカメラ雑誌のおかげではないかと思います。” Edward Steichen, Shigene Kanamaru, Nobuo Ina, Jun Miki, and Yoshio Watanabe,

To consider the relationship between *sunappu* and photojournalism, one must take into account the position that photography occupied in Japanese society at that time. As I have mentioned above, contemporary photo critics often picked up on the similarities and differences between *sunappu* and reportage photography (*hôdô shashin*). Underlying this situation was the popularity of photography permeating the whole nation. The book *Sunappu*, published in 1955 as part of the nine-volume series *Asahi Camera Lectures*, appeared against this cultural backdrop.²⁴ The series *Asahi Camera Lectures* can be regarded as the postwar version of *Extended Lectures on the Practical Techniques of Photography* published by Genkôsha in 1937 in which Yoshio Watanabe's *How to Aim at and Shoot Sunappu Photography*, the book discussed in Chapter One, was included. Until recently, the publishers of several photography magazines, usually in intervals of five to ten years, continued to publish this type of hardcover series to supplement the content of the issues of their regular monthly magazines. *Sunappu* was the second installment of the nine-volume series that included titles such as *Figure Photography*, *Landscape Photography*, *Commercial Photography*, *Special Photography*, and *Color Photography*.

“Zadankai: E. sutaiken shi o kakonde” (A Roundtable: A Conversation with Mr. E. Steichen), *Asahi Camera* (November 1955): 121. The article is printed only in Japanese, and the citation is my English translation from the Japanese text. In this interview Steichen mentions the idiosyncrasy of Japanese photography magazines in their role of promoting photographic art. In the U.S., the photographic film company Eastman Kodak played a similar role, publishing such technical guidebooks as *The Joy of Photography* and answering to, as well as titillating, artistic ambitions of so-called “serious amateurs.” For more on this, see Geoffrey Batchen, “Serious Amateur,” in Piotr Uklansky, *The Joy of Photography* (Strasbourg: Musée d'art contemporain and Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2007), 34-43.

²⁴ Asahi Shimbunsha, ed., *Sunappu (Sunappu)*, vol. 2, *Asahi camera kôza (Asahi Camera Lecture Series)* (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbunsha, 1955).

Juxtaposing “*sunappu*” with “figure photography” and “landscape photography,” the *Asahi Camera Lectures* follows the classification employed in 1937-1938’s *Extended Lectures on the Practical Techniques of Photography*. Unlike Watanabe’s *How to Aim at and Shoot Sunappu Photography*, *Sunappu* is comprised of articles contributed by several different photographers and critics, and it covers a wider range of subjects than its predecessor. The foreword and the introduction entitled “What is *Sunappu*?” are written by Yōnosuke Natori (1910-1962), a photographer and an influential editor whose work will be discussed later. Ihei Kimura, who was known as the “master of *sunappu*,” writes the following chapter entitled “*Sunappu* and Camera,” which explains the technical details of taking *sunappu*, including the choice of the camera and lens and developing film. Natori provides a long chapter, “How to Take *Sunappu*—Twelve Months,” in which he discusses the suitable subjects for *sunappu* from January to December. Interestingly, the last half of *Sunappu* is dedicated to sports photography, news photography, and reportage photography. The inclusion of such genres in a book entitled *Sunappu* was probably due to the fact that they could not fit them into other volumes of the series, but it also explains the affinity between *sunappu* and these kinds of photography. In the introduction, Natori points out the popularity of *sunappu* among amateur photographers, calling it a “new genre (atarashii jyanru)” of Japanese photography.

Once they discovered the appeal of *sunappu*, old-time photographers began to be absorbed into the new genre, and beginners came to be released from the necessity to direct, look for, or think about [the subject]. The word “*sunappu*” spread like a blazing fire in the field. At the same time, news photography or reportage photography in a broad sense of the word came to be recognized both socially and economically. In such a situation, people who are actively involved in these fields

took the initiative in guiding amateurs, replacing the art photographers imitating painting. All started to gather under the flag of *sunappu*.²⁵

The “people who were actively involved in these fields,” though not specifically mentioned, were Ken Domon and Ihei Kimura, who communicated with amateur photographers through the monthly photography contests of the magazine *Camera*.

Natori’s point was not just that amateur photographers began to be interested in *sunappu*, but also that it was the amateurs themselves who had advanced the genre considerably.

He maintains:

Even though it is not given a distinctive name yet in the present categories of photography, *sunappu* is indeed a field that cannot be overlooked. People who are actively involved in the field are amateur photographers. Or, they are those who bought cameras for their everyday lives or documents and arrange [photographs] in albums. Many of them are not especially aware of the significance of *sunappu*. However they are making great works of *sunappu*. Take a look at any of various photography magazines. Apart from [pictorial] salon photographs, a large part of photographic illustrations in photography magazines published by newspaper companies, which allegedly sell a larger number of copies than others, are taken by the technique of *sunappu*. And the majority of so-called monthly content photographs (getsurei shashin) is a work of *sunappu*. Considering the fact that a large part of the readership of these magazines are amateurs, their contribution to *sunappu* is too significant to overlook.²⁶

²⁵ “一度スナップの面白さを発見すると、在来のカメラマンは、その新しいジャンルに没入していった。初歩のアマチュアにとっても、演出したり、探したり、考えたりする必要をさまで感じなくてすむようになった。「スナップ」という言葉が、文字通り燎原に火を放つように、ひろがっていった。同時に、ニュース写真とか広義の報道写真とかいうものが、社会的にも経済的にも認められてきた。この趨勢の中で、これらの場で活躍している人たちが、絵画模倣の芸術派の人々にかわって、アマチュアに対する指導的なイニシアチブをとった。すべてのものが、スナップという旗のもとに結集されだしていった。” Yōnosuke Natori, “Sunappu towa” (What is *Sunappu*?), in Asahi Shimbunsha, ed., *Sunappu (Sunappu)*, 3.

²⁶ “現在の写真分類では、まだはっきりした名を与えられていないが、じつにスナップというのは看過できない分野である。その分野に活躍しているのはアマチュア写真家の人々である。また、自分の生活や記録のために写真機を買って、アルバムに整理している人たちでもある。その多くの人たちは、スナップの意義を改まって意識してはいない。しかし、スナップ写真の雄たるべき仕事をしている。じっさい数多くでている写真雑誌のどれかを開いてみるとよい。サロン写真調のものは別にしても、発行部数が多いといわれる新聞社発行の写真雑誌は、口絵の大部分がスナップによってとられた作品である。そしてまた、月例写真と称するものの大半はスナップの作品である。これらの雑誌を買っている人の大部分がアマチュ

Natori refers to “people who bought cameras for their lives or documents and arrange [photographs] in albums” as the contributors to *sunappu* photography. As he states in the foreword, he believes that “everyone can take photographs” and that there will come “an era when everyone carries a camera, as he or she does a fountain pen, and document various events with photography, instead of with words.”²⁷

Despite his allusion to family albums compiled by amateurs, Natori does not include family snapshots (in the English meaning of the word) in his category of *sunappu*. Rather, he adheres to the orthodox definition of the word at that time, by explaining that *sunappu* was instantaneous photography in the broader sense of the term and candid photography in its narrower sense.²⁸ In fact, most of the photographs reproduced in the book that serve as examples of *sunappu* are not what one would call family snapshots. Aside from sports photography and news photography comprising a part of the book, many of the photographs capture social events in which the photographer participates not as the insider but rather as the outsider (for example, see the spread in which Natori’s photographs entitled “Discharging of Pacific Saury” and “School Bus” are reproduced

アであることを考えれば、スナップに対してアマチュアが果している分野は、とても見逃してすませられるようなものでない。” Ibid., 6-7.

²⁷ “二十数年前から私は、写真は誰にでも撮れる。そして、これは大へん便利なもので、今に誰でもが、万年筆をもつように写真機をもち、文字のかわりに写真でいろいろなことを記録しておく時代が来る、と人にもいい、自分も思っていました。” Yonosuke Natori, “Hajimeni” (Foreword), in Asahi Shimbunsha ed., *Sunappu (Sunappu)*, 1. Natori also states: “It is already a once-upon-a-time story that only people who have acquired special techniques can take photographs. Now even a first-grade pupil at elementary school can photograph and everyone can use a camera” (“写真は、特殊な技術を習得した人たちにだけできるものである、ということは今では昔話になり、小学一年生でも写すことができ、誰でも使える時代になったのです。”)(2). This view that everyone can and should use a camera like a pen is often repeated in his writings, functioning as a guiding principle behind his *Iwanami shashin bunko* (Iwanami Photography Library), about which I will discuss later in this chapter.

²⁸ Natori, “Sunappu towa” (What is *Sunappu*?), 6.

[Fig. 2-1]). Natori even denies the type of composition often found in family snapshots, by suggesting that “it is habitual that commemorative photographs (*kinen shashin*) capture subjects, all facing toward the camera stiffly, but it is not very interesting.”²⁹ To him, as well as to the other photographers who advocated for *sunappu* at that time, the appeal of *sunappu* lay in the fact that it produces a more natural image because the subjects were not aware of the camera. Natori’s negative judgment of the composition in which figures are staring at the camera—a typical configuration in family snapshots—is indeed symptomatic of people’s understanding of *sunappu* in the 1950s.

Then the question arises: why did amateur photographers want to take those kinds of photographs exemplified in the guidebook *Sunappu*, if they did not include family snapshots? In other words, what about *sunappu* attracted amateurs so much that an entire volume from the photographic lecture series was dedicated to this genre? To think about this question, we have to look at the *Riarizumu* Photography movement that swept across the photography magazines in the 1950s.

2-2. Controversy over *Riarizumu* Photography

2-2-1. The Background of *Riarizumu* Photography

The most frequently discussed topic in the 1950s photography magazines was “*Riarizumu* Photography (*riarizumu shashin*).” The English and French word “realism” is sometimes translated as “shajitsu shugi (写実主義),” but the *katakana* word “*Riarizumu* (リアリズム)” is also a part of the common vocabulary. The postwar discussion over

²⁹ Yōnosuke Natori, “Sunappu no utsushikata jūnikagetsu” (How to Take *Sunappu*—Twelve Months), in Asahi Shimbunsha, ed., *Sunappu* (*Sunappu*), 43.

realism in photography began to appear in Japanese photographic discourses around 1951, reached its peak in 1953, and continued to be frequently discussed throughout the 1950s. Although *Riarizumu* Photography has been often mentioned in the writings on the history of postwar photography, its relationship to *sunappu* has not been considered.³⁰ This section discusses the development of *Riarizumu* Photography, paying special attention to the issue of how “realism” in photography was defined in the contemporary discourse. Then, I would like to demonstrate the important role that *sunappu* taken by amateur photographers played in this photographic movement.

According to the photo critic Masao Tanaka’s book *Riarizumu in Photography*, published in 1956, the works that marked the beginning of *Riarizumu* Photography were Ken Domon’s photography series entitled *Machi (Town)* and *Kyô o ikiru (Living Today)*, which were published in *Camera* from 1949 to 1951.³¹ Each work from the six-photograph series *Town* was published in separate issues, spanning more than half a year, indicating that they are meant to be seen individually, rather than as a coherent series. As discussed in Chapter One, Ihei Kimura’s work is characterized by its preference for single independent images rather than a picture story composed of a group of photographs. It is significant that this early example of *Riarizumu* Photography by Domon was also presented as a series of single photographs which are not particularly related to each other, even though they are entitled “a series.” Such a condition was

³⁰ For an English-language reference which includes a brief reference to *Riarizumu* Photography, see Kotaro Iizawa, “The Evolution of Postwar Japanese Photography,” in Anne Wilkes Tucker, ed., *The History of Japanese Photography* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), 211-212.

³¹ Masao Tanaka, *Shashin ni okeru riarizumu: Kindai shashin no michishirube* (*Riarizumu in Photography: A Guidepost for Modern Photography*), vol. 1, *Ponkame Books* (Tokyo: Nippon Camera-sha, 1956), 233.

imposed by photographic magazines: it was customary to publish works by professional photographers in their illustration pages, but because of space limitations, even famous photographers were given no more than a few pages in each issue. Therefore, if a photographer wanted to tell his or her message through a photographic magazine, he or she would have to do it within a limited space.

The series *Town* is worth a closer look. The titles of the six photographs are, in order of appearance, *Setting Sun* (*Shayô*) (October 1949), *Outskirts of a Town* (*Basue*) (November 1949), *Town of Pigeons* (*Hato no machi*) (December 1949), *The Bus is Taking a Long Time to Come* (*Nakanaka konai basu*) (February 1950), *Newspaper Vendor* (*Shinbun uriko*) (March 1950), and *Child Peddler* (*Katsugiya no ko*) (July 1950). All the photographs except for *Town of Pigeons* were taken in the style of *sunappu*. That is, they were photographed using a hand-held camera (in a series, mostly with the twin-lens reflex camera Rolleiflex, as the captions to the photographs indicate) without being noticed by the subject (or subjects).

Unlike typical works of *Riarizumu* Photography that would become popular in the years to come, the series, especially the first four installments, does not particularly emphasize the wretched conditions of lower-class society. Rather, what *Setting Sun* (Fig. 2-2) and *Outskirts of a Town* (Fig. 2-3) depict are, it seems, the peaceful everyday lives of ordinary people, although the neighborhoods where these photographs were taken were obviously not upscale residential areas or fashionable commercial centers, as the title “outskirts of a town” implies. The outfits of the boy and his mother, whose presence is indicated only by her legs, captured in *The Bus is Taking a Long Time to Come* (fig. 2-4) suggests that they did not belong to the lowest level of the society, but rather, were

members of the affluent class of people. In a short comment accompanying this photograph, Domon writes that it was taken at the bus stop in front of the Imperial Garden Theater in Marunouchi, a business district in Tokyo.³² Rather than commenting on the economic situation of Japan at that time, this photograph seems to focus on the expression of the child waiting for the bus. Faces of children were a very important subject for Domon. As I will discuss later, they were often given special meanings which imply the distressing conditions in which the children lived. However, when one sees *The Bus is Taking a Long Time to Come* alone, it is difficult to read such a symbolic meaning from the depiction of the small boy. This is a rather heartwarming scene that seems politically neutral.

However, in the last two photographs of the series published in the subsequent two issues following *The Bus is Taking a Long Time to Come*, Domon chose children as his subjects from a strikingly different perspective. *Newspaper Vendor* (Fig. 2-5) depicts a small girl selling newspapers at a subway station. In the caption, Domon writes that the eight-year-old girl became furious when she noticed that she was having her photograph taken (since Domon used flash to take this photograph, the subject could not help but notice after he clicked the shutter).³³ According to Domon's explanation, what the girl is reading is a cartoon newspaper for children, not the one she is selling to adult passers-by. A small child reading a newspaper so single-mindedly gives some humor to this photograph, inviting smiles from its viewers. The photography clearly illustrates the gap

³² Ken Domon, the caption to *Machi rensaku 4: Nakanaka konai basu* (Town 4: Waiting for a Bus), *Camera* (February 1950): unpaginated.

³³ Ken Domon, the caption to *Machi rensaku 5: Shinbun uriko* (Town 5: Newspaper Vendor), *Camera* (March 1950): unpaginated.

between the girl's apparent young age and her grown-up looking posture of reading a newspaper. But, at the same time, it is difficult for us to see it without feeling some uncomfortable bewilderment. We cannot help but read it as a document of a miserable social situation in which such a young girl finds it necessary to work like an adult.

Child Peddler (Fig. 2-6), which concludes the series *Town* as the sixth installment, is much more blatant than *Newspaper Vendor* in its depiction of social calamity. In a train heading for Tokyo, a girl in stained clothes sleeps, resting her head on the dirty rucksack filled with her merchandise to sell. Domon writes, in the caption accompanying this image: "The impression of heaviness of the rucksack which was packed too large for a child was as if symbolizing the fatigue of the sleeping child. I myself have a girl of this age."³⁴ Unlike *Newspaper Vendor*, *Child Peddler* lacks a sense of humor, which helps to soften the bitterness of the subject in the former. This photograph of a distressed child might remind those who are familiar with the history of photography of Jacob Riis's documents of the slums in New York taken at the turn of the nineteenth century or Weegee's photo reportage of crime scenes in the 1930s. In each case, the flash physically illuminating the subject can be read as a torch light exposing the dark underbelly of the society.

In the subsequent twelve-photograph series *Living Today*, which was published in *Camera* in almost every issue from April 1951 through August 1952, Domon continued to focus on the marginal people of Japanese society. It is significant that most of the photographs used in these series were *sunappu* in the narrower sense of the word. As I

³⁴ “子供にしては大きすぎるほどギッシリ詰めこんだリュックの、見た眼にも重そうな感じは、そのまゝ疲れはてゝ眠る子供のその疲れをシンボライズしている感じでした。この子と同じ年頃の女の子を僕は持つております。” Ken Domon, the caption to *Machi rensaku 6: Katsugiya no ko* (*Town 6: Child Peddler*), *Camera* (July 1950): unpaginated.

will discuss below, Domon would advocate *sunappu* as the only legitimate technique for *Riarizumu* Photography, with his well-known slogan, “zettai hienshutsu no zettai sunappu (the absolute *sunappu* with absolutely no staging).” But, before his theorization, he had already utilized the technique of *sunappu* for his important series that the photo critic Tanaka regarded as the forerunner of *Riarizumu* Photography.

Chapter One discussed the origins of the word “*sunappu*” in Japanese photography in the 1930s and demonstrated that many of the photographers and critics considered that the essence of *sunappu* was not just it being instantaneous photography, but candid photography taken unbeknownst to the subject (or subjects). But, in the 1930s even the proponents for that particular definition of *sunappu* were not very clear as to why it should be so. For example, Yoshio Watanabe, whose book *How to Aim at and Shoot Sunappu Photography* was examined in Chapter One, suggested that the reason he preferred *sunappu* rather than staged photography was that it enabled “an expression that fully demonstrates the objective depiction of photography.”³⁵ However, he never explained why one must pursue “the objective depiction of photography.” In other words, the candidness of *sunappu* at that time was celebrated for its own sake, and readers of Watanabe’s book were encouraged to take candid photographs just to see what candid photographs look like.³⁶ Indeed, it is difficult to read any messages from the examples

³⁵ “寧ろ不用意な、本当の自然の中に飛び込んで、目まぐるしい対象の躍動の中に、美を発見して、それを摘出してこそ写真の客観的描写性を、充分に発揮した表現でありませう。” Yoshio Watanabe, *Sunappu shashin no neraikata utsushikata* (How to Aim at and Shoot *Sunappu* Photography), vol. 4, *Shashin jitsugi dai kôza* (Extended Lectures on the Practical Techniques of Photography) (Tokyo: Genkôsha, 1937), 5-6.

³⁶ Here I am bearing in mind the famous phrase by the American photographer Garry Winogrand, which has usually been understood in light of his characteristic indifference to the *meanings* of his photographs. Winogrand said “I photograph to find out what something will look like photographed.” See Garry Winogrand, “Monkeys Make the Problem More Difficult: A Collective Interview with

provided in Watanabe's book except that they are examples of *sunappu*. This might be understandable if one considers the nature of the book as a guidebook for amateur photography, but it is important to notice that Domon's photographic series was also published in photographic magazines targeted at amateur photographers. As discussed in the third section of Chapter One, Ihei Kimura's celebrated *sunappu* works are also characterized by a similar self-reflexivity. In particular, the "ambiguous" expressions of the subjects often found in his postwar photographs functioned as a sign which helped each photograph to avoid being given an easily understandable meaning. These characteristics of *sunappu* photography, as I have already emphasized, were not unrelated to the fact that *sunappu* developed as a genre of photography practiced by a mass of amateur photographers. As *sunappu* emerged as an independent genre, such self-reflective expressions were made possible.

However, as it is clear from the works discussed above, in Domon's *Town* and *Living Today*, the candidness of *sunappu* assumes a special significance that is generally lacking in the earlier works of *sunappu*. First of all, Domon could not make these images without using the technique of *sunappu*. It is not just because the images have a certain naturalness which they would not have if they had been staged photographs, but also because the subjects would not have agreed to have their photographs taken if they were asked in advance. Domon was, of course, very aware of this aspect of his *sunappu* work, and he even tried to share it with his readers, by recounting in the captions of *Newspaper Vendor* an episode in which the girl became furious with him after she realized that he had secretly taken her photograph.

Garry Winogrand," *Image* (July 1972), as quoted in Carlos Gollonet, "Between the Fleeting and the Infinite," in *Garry Winogrand. The Game of Photography* (Madrid: TF. Editores, 2001), 16.

The second significance of the candidness of *sunappu* in his series is that it attests to, or at least *tries to* attest to, the authenticity of his photographs as visual documents of contemporary society. Of course, that a photograph looks like a candid photograph does not automatically prove that it was not staged. Rather, theoretically speaking, whatever it looks like, a photograph cannot ultimately prove by itself that it was not staged. It inevitably leads to the difficult question about the authenticity of the photographic image. This is not the place to plunge into philosophical argument, although the question continues to resound throughout this dissertation. What is most important in the context of this chapter, however, is that Domon consciously chose the technique of *sunappu* to claim the documentary value of his photographs. Among the various impressions that a *sunappu*-looking photograph gives to the viewer, the most significant one is the photographer's relationship to the subject. That is, when we see photographs like *Outskirts of a Town* (Fig. 2-3), we assume that the photographer did not interact with his subjects, at least before he clicked the shutter of his camera. This separation from the subject helps to produce an impression that the event recorded by the camera occurred independently of the camera as well as of the photographer operating it. And this impression, in turn, contributes to making the image appear to be an objective depiction of the world.³⁷

³⁷ That *sunappu* is not the only method that can produce objective-looking documentary photographs is obvious from the fact that we know a number of photographs in which the subject (or the subjects) stares at the camera and thereby shows a sign of complicity in the photographer's endeavor, yet at the same time striking us with their seeming objectivity. For example, think of portrait photographs by Walker Evans or Diane Arbus. Domon also made a series of portraits of artists and intellectuals in which the models consciously pose for the camera, which he published as a photobook entitled *Fôbo* (*Appearances*). See Ken Domon, *Fûbô* (*Countenances*) (Tokyo: Ars, 1953).

Before proceeding to an analysis of *Riarizumu* Photography, it is worth briefly discussing the biography and professional career of Domon, who remains one of the most famous and popular photographers in Japan. Born in 1909 in Sakata, Yamagata, a small city in the Tōhoku (North East) Region, Domon moved to Tokyo in 1914 with his parents, who sought a job in the capital city.³⁸ Compared to his rival Ihei Kimura, who was eight years older than him, Domon was from a lower-income family, and his childhood experiences certainly had an influence on his later career as a professional photographer. Domon finished his formal education when he graduated from Yokohama Daini Junior High School (now Yokohama Suiran High School) in 1928.³⁹ His start as a photographer was relatively late. In 1932, after doing several odd jobs, Domon became involved with the national peasant movement associated with the Japanese Communist Party and was arrested by the police. He was released after he pledged to break all ties with the communist movement.⁴⁰ This was in the period when the government began to thoroughly crack down on any activities that it considered to be threatening to the regime, and Domon was one of many young people who were briefly engaged with communism in the 1930s. During the War, he converted to a supporter of the state ideology, which, until 1945, continued to justify the invasion of Asian countries under the pretext of opposition to Western domination.

³⁸ For a detailed biography on Domon, see Hiroyuki Abe, *Domon ken: Shōgai to sono jidai* (Ken Domon: His Life and the Era He Lived) (Tokyo: Hosei Daigaku Shuppankyoku, 1997). *The History of Japanese Photography* edited by Anne Tucker also includes a brief English-language biography on Domon. See Tucker, ed., *The History of Japanese Photography*, 335-336.

³⁹ Abe, *Domon ken* (Ken Domon), 26-27.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 30-32.

Unable to find stable employment after this incident, Domon's mother recommended that he apprentice himself to the portrait studio of a photographer named Kôtarô Miyauchi.⁴¹ Therefore, unlike many other important photographers of his generation, Domon started photography purely as a means to make a living. In October 1935, he resigned from Miyauchi's studio and began to work at Nippon Kôbô, a design studio established by the photographer and editor Yônosuke Natori in August 1933 in collaboration with Kimura, the photo critic Nobuo Ina, and others. In the following year, however, all of the members except for Natori seceded from the organization and established Chûo Kôbô. When Domon entered Nippon Kôbô, it was virtually Natori's company. Nippon Kôbô, where he worked until 1939, initiated Domon's subsequent career as a documentary photographer. He was dispatched by Natori to photograph various social events or portraits of celebrities, and his photographs were published not just in *Nippon*, the propaganda magazine published by Nippon Kôbô with the financial support of the government, but also in the American magazine *Life*.⁴²

After having personal conflicts with Natori, Domon left Nippon Kôbô in 1939 and became a commissioned photographer for Kokusai Bunka Shinkôkai (Society for the Promotion of International Culture), a governmental agency dedicated to publicizing Japanese culture to foreign nations. In the same year, he also became a member of Seinen Hôdô Shashin Kenkyukai (Youth Society to Study Reportage Photography), which in the following year developed into Nippon Hôdô Shashin-ka Kyôkai (Japanese Society of Reportage Photographers), in which Domon played a central role. These organizations

⁴¹ Ibid., 34.

⁴² Ibid., 66. Domon's portraits of Foreign Minister Kazunari Ugaki were published in the September 5 1938 issue of *Life*.

were, of course, supportive of the Japanese government and its imperialist policies (otherwise they would have been banned immediately). Unlike Kimura, Domon mostly remained in mainland Japan during the War, and his subjects for photography were not as ostensibly propagandistic as those chosen by Kimura: Domon often photographed Buddhist temples and Japanese traditional folk culture, the types of subjects which were sanctioned by the government insofar as they were viewed as celebrating national culture.⁴³ During this period, Domon contributed essays to photography magazines in which he claimed that photographers needed to serve the nation in that moment of crisis. Domon's staunch allegiance to the state's ideology can be deduced from the fact that he mentioned in 1940 that Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* (*My Struggle*) was one of his favorite books.⁴⁴

After the war ended in 1945, like many of his other colleagues, Domon returned to the photographic community without having been accused of collaboration with the imperialist government. Domon, like Kimura, emerged as an influential leader of amateur photography. Invited in 1950 by Kineo Kuwabara, the editor-in-chief of the magazine *Camera*, he began to serve as a judge for the monthly photography contest.⁴⁵ Although in 1951 he judged only the December issue of the magazine, from 1952 through 1955 he

⁴³ The Buddhist temples and sculptures that Domon started photographing during the war would become his favored subject, which he pursued throughout his life. However, his photographs of Japanese traditional cultural objects, which he took with a large-format view camera, is not *sunappu* photography, and is thus beyond the scope of this study.

⁴⁴ For Domon's career and his words during the Second World War, see Aki Kusumoto, "'Hôdô shashin' ni matsuwaru akuryô no kigen" (The Origin of the Evil Spirit Haunting 'Hôdô Shashin'), *Photographers' Gallery Press* (Tokyo), no. 5 (2006): 109-122, esp. 112-114.

⁴⁵ For details about how Domon became a judge of monthly photographic contests, see Teruko Okai, *Domon ken no kakutô: Riarizumu shashin kara kojijunrei e no michi* (Ken Domon's Struggles: From *Riarizumu* Photography to the Pilgrimage to Old Temples) (Tokyo: Seiko Shobo, 2005), 35-47.

continued to serve as a judge of the photography contest, together with Kimura. Domon reached Kuwabara's expectations by writing enthusiastic comments on selected photographs, many of which can be also read as independent essays and were later reprinted in his anthologies.⁴⁶

When he started to serve as a judge for the monthly photography contest of *Camera* in 1950, he was already using the term "*Riarizumu*" to describe the photographs he highly regarded.⁴⁷ However, it was not until 1952 that *Riarizumu* Photography emerged as a movement that involved the entire photographic community in Japan. To examine its historical significance, it is necessary to consider not only the works by professional photographers such as Domon but also the activities of a mass of now anonymous amateur photographers who communicated with the professionals through the medium of the photography magazine. First, however, we need to see how *Riarizumu* Photography, a term which sounds particularly tautological in Japanese, was defined in the discourse of Japanese photography.

The December 1951 issue of *Camera* published a conversation between Kimura and Domon entitled "What is *Riarizumu* in Photography?," which became one of the earliest occasions in which both Domon and Kimura declared that *Riarizumu* is the most

⁴⁶ For the anthology of his judge's comments, see Ken Domon, *Shashin hihyô* (Photography Criticism) (Tokyo: David-sha, 1978).

⁴⁷ In the comment for the contest of the January 1950 issue, Domon, describing a photograph of a house painted with coal tar, writes that the work follows "the right path of *Riarizumu*." In the February issue he quotes the writer Rintaro Takeda's words that he was struck by "the weakness of the Japanese photographers' *Riarizumu*." See Ken Domon, "Shin shashin sakuga kôza" (New Lectures on Picture Making of Photography), *Camera* (January 1950): 124; Ken Domon, "Shin shashin sakuga kôza" (New Lectures on Picture Making of Photography), *Camera* (February 1950): 78.

important feature of photographic art.⁴⁸ In the conversation, Domon explains that, “conceptually, realism pursues only objective truth about the motif of the subject, and it is not the world in which the photographer pursues his subjective image or fantasy,” and characterizes it with his well-known phrase, “a direct connection between the camera and the motif (*kamera to mochifu no chokketsu*).”⁴⁹ However, Domon does not talk about the nature of the photographic medium in general. Rather, he designates only a particular type of photography as a work of realism. It is this selective attitude that caused controversies that would stir the photographic community for years to come. Responding to Kimura’s comment that the camera always captures the truth in front of it, Domon claims that “*Riarizumu* is not mechanical truth, but social truth.”⁵⁰ For him, realism in photography is not just about a matter of the choice of pictorial style or subject matter, but also about the position of the photographer in the society. He says that “as journalists, we cannot stand in the position of the bourgeoisie” and what he and Kimura pursue is

⁴⁸ Ihei Kimura and Ken Domon, “Shashin ni okeru *riarizumu* to wa nanika ?” (What is *Riarizumu* in Photography?), *Camera* (December 1951): 56-63. It is important to note that, even though it was not as widespread as it would become in the postwar period, the word “*riarizumu*” already appeared in the prewar literature on photography, especially in texts that discussed modern photography introduced from the West. See, for example, Masao Horino, “Kikaibi to shashin” (Mechanical Beauty and Photography), *Photo Times* (December 1930): 97-108; Ihei Kimura, *Kogata kamera shashin jutsu* (Taking Photography with a Small Camera) (Tokyo: Seibundo Shinkosha, 1936; reprint, Tokyo: Asahi Sonorama, 2002), 8.

⁴⁹ “だからリアリズムというものを概念的にいつてしまえば、あくまで対象のモチーフに対する客観的な真実だけを追求するもので、作者の主観的なイメージやファンタジイを追求する世界じゃないということですね。” Kimura and Domon, “Shashin ni okeru *riarizumu* to wa nanika ?” (What is *Riarizumu* in Photography?), 56, 57.

⁵⁰ “リアリズムは機械的真実でなしに、社会的真実なんだ。” *Ibid.*, 59.

“popular (shomin teki) *Riarizumu*” rather than bourgeois *Riarizumu*.⁵¹ This attitude was already apparent in Domon’s 1949 series *Town*, in which he paid attention to the ordinary life of the lower middle class as well as the misery of the lower class.

Although scholars of Japanese photography have rarely pointed this out, the postwar controversy over *Riarizumu* was, in fact, not peculiar to the photographic arts, but originally occurred in the fields of literature and the fine arts a few years earlier. Here it is worthwhile to summarize the “Controversy over *Riarizumu*” that occurred in Japanese art criticism in the last half of the 1940s. Even though Domon never referred to the “Controversy over *Riarizumu*” in his discussion of *Riarizumu* Photography, which was then generally excluded from fine arts institutions and discourses, the two controversies, although occurring in separate fields, shared certain similarities. In November 1946, a young art critic named Fumio Hayashi published an essay entitled “Regarding the Return of Modernism” in the established art magazine *Mizue*.⁵² In the essay Hayashi claimed that “modernism,” which was in his view beneficial only for the bourgeoisie, afflicted works of visual art, especially paintings produced after World War II. He maintains:

To summarize the opinions of the people who try to restore modernism today, they end up claiming that fine art originally has had two kinds, namely, modernism and academism, and because the latter collapsed completely in the war propaganda art, the only innovative way which is now possible is modernism. . . . Obviously, those people negate the great bourgeois and bureaucratic style of art. But, on the other hand, they deliberately take *Riarizumu*, which is a truly critical

⁵¹ “われわれは決して写真家としてブルジョアジーじゃないですよ。ブルジョアジーそのものの立場には、ジャーナリストとして立てないと思うんですよ。そこでヒューマニスティックなリアリズムというか、庶民的リアリズムですね。” Ibid., 60-61.

⁵² Fumio Hayashi, “Kindaishugi no kaerizaki ni tsuite” (Regarding the Return of Modernism), *Mizue* 495 (November 1946): 33-49.

method, to be vulgar, and by doing so, evidence their own usual hatred for popular (minsyû teki) *Riarizumu*.⁵³

The work which Hayashi considered responsible for resuscitating modernism was, in short, abstract painting, whereas, for him, the only acceptable style of art was popular realism. Hayashi criticizes works by the painter Tôki Okamoto because they try, he believes, to “let [us] forget the miseries of the workers by the entrancing spectacle [of his painting].” Hayashi’s essay is a typical Marxist criticism of abstract art and advocacy of realism, the pictorial style which he believed could communicate with the proletariat.⁵⁴ In this period, the Japan Communist Party, which had been banned during the War, enjoyed a resurgence, and a large number of intellectuals were associated with the party.⁵⁵

Tei’ichi Hijikata, one of the art critics blamed by Hayashi for supporting bourgeois modernism, opposed him in an essay published in the August 1947 issue of the same magazine. Hijikata writes:

What I am afraid of is, by confusing or replacing a historical significance or a significance in the history of ideas with a pictorial significance, it will make art meager in the future, in the same way that the theory of socialist *Riarizumu* once

⁵³ “ところで今日モデルニズムを復興させようとしてゐる人々の見解を要約すると——美術には元来モデルニズムとアカデミズムの二種しか無く、後者は戦争美術において完全に破綻したから、今ではモデルニズム以外に革新的な道はない——といふ主張に帰着する。（…中略…）明らかに彼らは大ブルジョア的・官僚的な芸術様式の否定者である。しかし一方彼らは、真に批判的な制作方法としてのレアリスムを故意に卑俗に理解し、さうすることによつて民衆的レアリスムに対する相も変らぬ憎悪を証明してゐる。” *Ibid.*, 41.

⁵⁴ The Marxist appraisal of realist art can be traced back to 1930s Germany when Georg Lukács advocated realism, repudiating abstract art. See Georg Lukács, “Expressionism: Its Significance and Decline” (1934), translated by David Temback, in Rose-Carol Washton Long, ed. *German Expressionism: Documents from the End of the Wilhelmine Empire to the Rise of National Socialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 313-317.

⁵⁵ For the influence of the Japan Communist Party and its relationship to intellectuals, see, for example, Eiji Oguma, *Minshu to aikoku: Sengo nippon no nashonarizumu to kôkyôsei* (‘Democracy’ and ‘Patriotism’: Nationalism and Publicness in Postwar Japan) (Tokyo: Shinyo-sha, 2002), 175-208.

advocated the political orientation of subject matters and led art into the dead end of ideological art.⁵⁶

What Hijikata refers to here is the proletarian art of the 1930s. But Hijikata's reply remained inarticulate because he, consciously or not, avoided responding to the crux of Hayashi's inquiry: "how can modern art engage with the common people?" Thus, in reply to Hijikata's repudiation of his preference for socialist realism, Hayashi claims that we need to establish "*Riarizumu* required by today's new democracy, *Riarizumu* that should be created by all laboring people including the lower-middle class (*shôshimin*)."⁵⁷

Because Hijikata avoided discussing issues of class, the controversy circled around a rather inaccurate dichotomy between realism and modernism.⁵⁸ In his 1949 summary of the controversy, the art critic Takachiyo Uemura, whose preference for abstract art over the work of socialist realism was obvious, suggested:

In our country, too, during the wartime, renowned painters who stressed a technique of imitation depicted soldiers and scenes of increased production [in a way that satisfied the government]. Now they are painting prostitutes for GIs (*panpan gâru*) and postwar street scenes with the same mastery of technique and energy. This, in fact, amounts to an indifference to politics and ideologies.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ “ (...) 歴史的な思想史的な意味附与と絵画的な意味附与とを混同、あるいはすり替えることによつて、嘗つての社会主義リアリズム論が主題の政治的積極性を唱え、テーマ美術の袋小路に追いやつたように、将来美術を貧困なものにすることを恐れるのである。” Tei'ichi Hijikata, “Kindaishugi to riarizumu” (Modernism and *Riarizumu*), *Mizue* 503 (August 1947): 7-8.

⁵⁷ “今日の新しい民主主義の要求するリアリズム、小市民を含む全勤労人民の創造すべきリアリズム (...)。” Fumio Hayashi, “Kaigateki kachi to shakaiteki kachi: Hijikata tei'ichi shi ni kotaeru” (Pictorial Value and Social Value: An Answer to Mr. Tei'ichi Hijikata), *Atelier* 256 (April 1948): 49.

⁵⁸ For more on the “Controversy over *Riarizumu*”, see Yuri Mitsuda, “*Riarizumu ronsô sengo bijutsu e no syuppatsu*” (Controversy over *Riarizumu*: Departure for Postwar Art), in Kôji Taki and Teruo Fujieda, eds., *Nihon kingendai bijutsushi jiten* (Dictionary of the History of Modern and Contemporary Art in Japan) (Japan: Tokyo Shoseki, 2007), 364-365.

⁵⁹ “わが国においても、模写的技術主義の大家たちは、戦争中は、戦士を描き生産増強の風俗を描いたが、いまは、それと同じ力量と熱意をもってパンパンガールを描き戦後の街頭風景を描いている。これは実際的には政治や思想への無関心ということに均しいのである。”

Thus, Uemura defends the political relevance of “avant-garde painting (avangyarudo kaiga)”:

Realists repudiate avant-garde painting for the reason that it is an art which attaches too much importance to sensibility. However, they do not correctly understand the fact that the distinctive character of the avant-garde lies in its eagerness to deny the fixation of sensibility. The avant-garde lays emphasis on the consciousness that creates a new sensibility, constructs it, and then negates it.⁶⁰

In Uemura’s view, imitative realism was less critical of society because it did not doubt the “fixation of sensibility.” He also pointed out that some of the painters who were then making realistic works with leftist or communist beliefs had been, in fact, producing propagandistic paintings that were supposed to inspire patriotism among Japan’s citizens.⁶¹ Uemura questioned the realists’ ideological inconsistency and what he regarded as an opportunistic attitude. This suggestion is not irrelevant to our argument, because Domon, who stood on the side of the state during the war, could hardly escape the same criticism.

It is significant to note that there was a certain similarity between the controversy over realism in painting and the controversy over realism in photography. But one has to be attentive to the fact there was also a significant difference in the arguments, a

Takachiyo Uemura, “Rearite to riarizumu: Rearizumu rongi e no hitotsu no teian” (Reality and *Riarizumu*: A suggestion to the Controversy over *Riarizumu*), *Atelier* 266 (March 1949): 30.

⁶⁰ “アヴァンギャルド絵画を非難するリアリストは、それが感覚偏重の芸術であることを理由にするが、アヴァンギャルドの本領は、むしろ感覚の固定を拒否しこれを否定しようとする意欲にあることを正しく理解していないようである。アヴァンギャルドは新しい感覚を創造し、組み立て、さらにそれを否定する意識に重点があるのである。” *Ibid.*, 31-32.

⁶¹ This type of propagandistic work has been called *sensôga* (war paintings) and has recently received scholarly attention. The *sensôga* typically depicts battle scenes in which Japanese soldiers are beautified. Tsuguharu Frujita was one of those painters who actively collaborated with the Army by making such paintings and was later accused after the war ended. For more on this, see Ichiro Haryû, ed., *Sensô to bijutsu: 1937-1945* (Art in Wartime Japan) (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankokai, 2007).

difference originating in the natures of the two media. Whereas realism in painting is a pictorial style consciously chosen by the painter (especially in twentieth century art), realism in photography can be hardly called a *style* of photography. Rather, it is predetermined by the nature of the medium, which produces images that have indexical relationships to the objects before the camera. This characteristic is beyond the control of the photographer, unless he or she consciously tries to repress it, as the photographers of Pictorialism did at the turn of the nineteenth century. Therefore, in order for such a concept as *Riarizumu* Photography to make sense, rather than falling into tautology, the term “realism” must carry certain implications. It is important to consider what those implications consisted of when Domon advocated for realism in photography.

When Domon began to promote realism in photography, he associated it with the technique of *sunappu*. In October 1953 Domon wrote that “the basic method of photography of *Riarizumu* is *sunappu* photography, based on absolute unstagedness.”⁶² Domon believed that only *sunappu* photographs, which were devoid of the photographer’s intervention into the scene or the subject, could capture the “social reality” as it really was.⁶³ He had already practiced this credo with such works as *Town* and *Living Today*. However, Domon also suggested what he famously called the “absolute

⁶² “とにかく、リアリズムの写真は、絶対非演出を前提としたスナップ撮影を基本的な方法とする。” Ken Domon, “*Riarizumu* shashin to saron pikuchâ” (*Riarizumu* Photography and Salon Picture), *Camera* (October 1953), as reprinted in Ken Domon, *Shashin sappô* (*Manners of Photography*), 38. An English translation of this essay is included in *Setting Sun: Writings by Japanese Photographers*, edited by Ivan Vartaninan and others. However, the text misleadingly translates “sunappu” into “snapshot.” Moreover, the text completely mistranslates the quoted sentence; it writes, “In essence, Realism in photography is a basic method of snapshot photography, the primary requisite of which that it be ‘absolutely unstaged’.” See Ken Domon, “Photographic Realism and the Salon Picture,” in Ivan Vartaninan, Akihiro Hatanaka, and Yutaka Kambayashi, eds., *Setting Sun: Writings by Japanese Photographers* (New York: Aperture, 2006), 22-27.

⁶³ Domon, “*Riarizumu* shashin to saron pikuchâ” (*Riarizumu* Photography and Salon Picture), 39.

sunappu with absolutely no staging (zettai hiensyutsu no zettai sunappu)” was not the same as the *sunappu* of the prewar period. In this vein, he also criticized those who confused *sunappu* with *Riarizumu* Photography. A year before, in a different essay, he had explained the difference as follows:

Riarizumu was the fundamental principle of the invention of photography. It was the fundamental principle and the technique of such early geniuses as Daguerre, Niépce, and Nadar. The awareness of *Riarizumu* in Japanese photography was now finally raised. . . . A while ago, there was only a branch of technique called “*sunappu* photography.” This is obvious if one sees old works by Ihei Kimura and Yoshio Watanabe, two leading stars at that time. There was never an awareness of *Riarizumu* as we call it now.⁶⁴

In Domon’s view, *sunappu* of the 1930s could not be categorized as *Riarizumu*.⁶⁵ Later, he offered another reservation about the affinity between *sunappu* and *Riarizumu*. In an essay entitled “*Riarizumu* is not Naturalism,” Domon distinguished *Riarizumu* from “naturalism (shizensyugi)” and claimed that certain types of *sunappu* did not reach the level of *Riarizumu* but instead retained a level of naturalism.⁶⁶ In this essay, he called that type of *sunappu* “*choro-suna*,” a pejorative term that roughly means “*sunappu* taken

⁶⁴ “リアリズムこそは、写真術発明の根本精神だった。ダゲール、ニエプス、ナダールなどの創生期の天才たちの根本精神であり、技法だった。日本の写真におけるリアリズムの自覚は、今漸く開始されたばかりなのである。（…中略…）一昔前はただ「スナップ写真」という技法一部門があっただけである。それは当時の花形たる木村伊兵衛、渡辺義雄両氏の古い作品を見れば一目瞭然である。今日言うところのリアリズムの自覚は決してなかつたのである。” Ken Domon, “Dai rokujūni kai getsurei daiichibu syūsensaku hyō” (Judge’s Comment on the Selected Works of the First Section of the sixty-second Monthly Photography Contest), *Camera* (January 1952): 101.

⁶⁵ He reiterates this point several times. For example, see below his judge’s comment in the October 1950 issue, quoted in Okai, *Domon ken no kakutō* (Ken Domon’s Struggles), 71-73.

⁶⁶ Ken Domon, “Riarizumu ha shizensyugi de wa nai” (*Riarizumu* is not Naturalism), *Camera* (December 1953): 175-176. Three years earlier, in the judge’s comment in the March 1950 issue of *Camera*, Domon had made a similar distinction between realism and naturalism in passing.

thoughtlessly.”⁶⁷ Domon wrote, “*choro-suna* is naturalism, and it is similar but different from *Riarizumu*.”⁶⁸ But he did not clearly explain what he meant exactly by the terms “*Riarizumu*” and “naturalism,” and even insisted that he never defined the term “*Riarizumu*” and would never do so, because “*Riarizumu* is a practical task.”

Domon’s commentary on *Riarizumu* Photography gave the impression to the photographic community at that time that he was offering no more than an arbitrary definition of the word, and, even worse, taking advantage of this vaguely defined term to justify his own work and criticize that of others.⁶⁹ It was one of the reasons that *Riarizumu* Photography caused such a heated and confused debate. In a December 1952 roundtable, a bewildered critic asked Domon, “Do you regard a photographer’s attitude toward the subject matter, that is, an attitude to look at the subject matter objectively, as *Riarizumu*?” he answered, “Yes, I do.”⁷⁰ Domon’s remark that realism in photography is ultimately about the photographer’s “attitude (*taido*),” a remark he repeated several times on different occasions, confused the discussions on *Riarizumu* Photography.⁷¹ It also

⁶⁷ “*Choro-suna* (チョロスナ)” is Domon’s neologism, and it is difficult to define its meaning strictly. “Choro” probably comes from the adverb “chorori” which means an act of doing something thoughtlessly or casually. The sound of the word “choro” also implies something shallow. The important point here is that by making up this word, Domon aptly suggests a casualness which began to be more and more obvious in *sunappu* photography.

⁶⁸ “チョロスナは自然主義である。リアリズムとは似て非なるものである。” Domon, “*Riarizumu wa shizensyugi de wa nai*” (*Riarizumu* is not Naturalism), 175.

⁶⁹ For a summary of criticisms against Domon, see Okai, *Domon ken no kakutô* (Ken Domon’s Struggles), 202-214.

⁷⁰ “浦松 では、対象に対する写す人の態度、つまり対象を客観的に見る態度をリアリズムと言うの？／土門 そう。” Nobuo Ina, Yoshio Watanabe, Samitarô Uramatsu, Ken Domon, and Nyozeckan Hasegawa, “Shashi no riarizumu ni tsuite (On *Riarizumu* of Photography),” *Asahi Camera* (December 1952): 98.

⁷¹ See, for example, Yûsaku Kamekura, Fujio Matsugi, Ken Domon, Nobuo Ina, and Ihei Kimura, “Zadankai: Shashin no geijutsusei” (Roundtable: The Artistic Quality of Photography), in Ars, ed., *1953 Arusu shashin nenkan* (1953 Ars Photography Almanac) (Tokyo: Ars, 1953), 141.

revealed that the controversy remained fundamentally arbitrary and subjective, because in general it is difficult to *see* the photographer's "attitude" in the finished photograph. Note that this is one of the qualities that distinguishes realistic photography from realistic painting. In the latter, the very choice of the realistic style, especially for a painter of the twentieth century, already involved the painter's attitude, that is, his or her conscious adoption of a particular style of painting. But, as I have pointed out above, regarding realistic photography, if there is such a thing, realistic depiction is not simply a matter of the photographer's choice, but rather an intrinsic characteristic of the medium. Thus, his or her "attitude" (if there is one) must be found elsewhere, such as in the choice of subject matter or in the composition of the picture.⁷²

Indeed, Domon was rather eclectic about subject matter and the techniques that he thought were characteristic of *Riarizumu* Photography. He did not even limit *Riarizumu* Photography to *sunappu* in the broader meaning of the word—namely, instantaneous photographs taken with a hand-held camera. There might have been several reasons for associating *Riarizumu* Photography with such an inclusiveness in terms of subject matter and style, but the most important one was that Domon himself was producing works that could not be categorized as *sunappu*. He had been making a series of portraits of distinguished people entitled *Fûbo* (*Appearances*) which he shot in staged settings with a medium-format camera and usually with flash lights, as well as photographs of Buddhist

⁷² In this regard, the discourse of *Riarizumu* Photography has a certain similarity with the discourse of "Straight Photography," the concept first advocated by Alfred Stieglitz (though he did not coin this specific term, but only used the adjective "straight" to describe his photographs in a rather metaphorical way). This was then incorporated into the discourse of the history of photography by the photo-historian Beaumont Newhall. Since then, the term "straight photography" has been sometimes treated as a synonym for modern photography. However, John Szarkowski has aptly pointed out the elusiveness of this meaning of the term. See John Szarkowski, *Alfred Stieglitz at Lake George* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1995), 15-16.

temples and sculptures published in 1954 as a photobook entitled *Murôji* (*The Murôji Temple*). The broadness of Domon's own subjects made the concept of *Riarizumu* Photography even more esoteric, and it is not easy to find one single apparent "attitude" from these groups of photographs. To make matters worse, Domon's words sometimes revealed apparent contradictions. For example, in July 1953 he insisted that "[The work of Edward] Weston is, of course, *Riarizumu*," suggesting that even a photograph of a rock could be a work of *Riarizumu*.⁷³ But, in October of the same year he made the opposite claim.⁷⁴ Therefore, except for the fact that Domon associated *Riarizumu* Photography with the technique of *sunappu* with some reservations, it would be ultimately futile to discuss the concept of *Riarizumu* Photography with the aim of articulating its essence. An important but often neglected point of *Riarizumu* Photography, given the elusiveness of the concept, is that Domon's ideas on *Riarizumu* Photography were developed not just by reflecting on his own work, but also by encountering large amounts of photography submissions by amateur photographers for the monthly photography contests. Although some have suggested that the failure of the *Riarizumu* Photography movement was due to its amateurism, the movement, in fact, could not have been born had it not been for amateur photographers' participation.⁷⁵

2-2-2. Monthly Photography Contests as a Social Movement

⁷³ “ウエストンはもちろんリアリズムだよ。” Kamekura, Matsugi, Domon, Ina, and Kimura, “Zadankai: Shashin no geijutsusei (Roundtable: The Artistic Quality of Photography),” 135.

⁷⁴ See Okai, *Domon ken no kakutô* (Ken Domon's Struggles), 199.

⁷⁵ For example, see Tetsuo Kishi, *Sengo shashinshi* (The History of Postwar Photography) (Tokyo: David-sha, 1974), 14.

The first section of this chapter examined the popularity of *sunappu* among amateur photographers of the 1950s as well as the contemporary critics' remarks on the transformation of the term's meaning. They noticed that *sunappu* had come to be associated with reportage photography and found this association to be confusing because *sunappu* originally signified not the content of photography but only its technique. But, as discussed in the second section, for Domon the technique of *sunappu* was indispensable for the objective depiction of society. Therefore, it was not groundless that *sunappu* came to be associated with photojournalism. However, this was not the only reason that *sunappu* mattered so much to Domon. Another important characteristic of *sunappu* was its accessibility to a wider class of amateur photographers. The fact that *sunappu* was a genre defined by a technique and a type of camera opened it to a variety of subject matters, including those that can be found in one's own neighborhood. This was especially so after cameras suitable for taking *sunappu* photographs became affordable in the first half of the 1950s. This accessibility, in turn, helped *sunappu* to become established as a genre of photography.

In fact, Domon was not alone in advocating *sunappu*. Monthly photography magazines also recommended their readers take *sunappu* photographs and submit the results to their monthly photography contests, which constituted an important feature of their publications. In 1949, one year before Domon would take on the position, judges of the photo contests in *Camera* were the editor Kineo Kuwabara and the photographer Fujio Matsugi, who already advocated for the genre of *sunappu* photography. In the January issue Kuwabara maintains:

Amateur photography until today has been occupied too much by photographs that imitate painting or those that pursue a state of *sumie* (Japanese-style India-ink drawing) or *haiku* (Japanese short poem consisting of seventeen characters). Those kinds of photographs can exist, but there should be more photographs brimming with the feel of human lives.⁷⁶

The two judges agree on the point that they must challenge this limited conception of photography whereby the only type of work suitable for the monthly photography competition is pictorial photography that elegantly captures the beauty of nature.⁷⁷ This statement is a manifestation of their aesthetic belief, but it is also undeniable that it was a kind of commercial calculation. By recommending that amateur photographers shoot “subject matter closely related to one’s life” and assuring them that those kinds of subjects could be worth submitting to photography contests, the magazine aimed at widening the population of amateur photographers, on which the continuance of the magazine depended.

Therefore, the editor of *Asahi Camera*, a rival magazine of *Camera*, also mentioned in November 1950 that he was consciously selecting photographs that “showed lives of the common people” for its monthly photography contests (note that in *Asahi Camera*, unlike *Camera*, photographs were still selected by the editor of the magazine, not by a professional photographer), and the photo critic Masao Tanaka

⁷⁶ “今までのアマチュアの写真は絵画の模倣であり墨絵の境地や俳句のような写真が多すぎた。そういう写真もあつていいが、もつとこれからは生活の溢れた写真が生まれていい。” Kineo Kuwabara and Fujio Matsugi, “Getsurei shashin gappyôkai” (Joint Review of Selected Works of the Monthly Photography Contest), *Camera* (January 1949): 41.

⁷⁷ One might have the impression that such a declaration is similar to the belief held by the Photo Secession, a group led by Alfred Stieglitz at the beginning of the twentieth century, in their repudiations of pictorial photography. But, it would be misleading to emphasize the similarity too much, because, above all, Western modern photography had already been introduced in Japan in the 1930s and was practiced by avant-garde photographers before the war. Thus, a more important point of the reformation of monthly photography contests in the 1950s lay in the popularization of some aspects of modern photography among a wide range of amateur photographers, which provided a counterpoint to the elitism characteristic of some modern photography movements.

approved of the decision.⁷⁸ In a roundtable discussion published in the December 1951 issue of the same magazine, the editor reiterates the point, using the word “*sunappu*” specifically:

Since its republication [in 1949] *Asahi Camera* has made an effort to promote daily-life-photography-like *sunappu*-type works (seikatsu shashin teki na sunappusei no mono), and recently, a great deal of interesting works have come to appear, especially among those that captured the lives of the provinces.⁷⁹

Agreeing with the editor, the critic Samitarô Uramatsu maintained that amateur photographers should pursue subjects closely related to their own lives because otherwise their photographs could not match the quality of those of the professionals.⁸⁰

Nevertheless, the photographs selected for monthly photography contests in 1950 were not yet dominated by candid photography that captured the lives of common people, but rather, were characterized by a diversity of subject matter, including nature photographs, still life photographs, and staged portraits. If one surveys the issues of *Camera*, it becomes clear that when Domon served as the judge for *Camera*'s photography contests for the first time in 1950, his selections were not that different from those in 1949 for which Kuwabara and Matsugi served as judges, as well as those in 1951 for which twelve different photographers, including Domon, served each month. This

⁷⁸ “月例写真でもなるべく庶民生活のよく出たものを採用してるんですけども、それがだんだん判つたと見えて、最近そういうのはポツポツ現われて来たんです。” Nobuo Ina, Ihei Kimura, Shûzô Takiguchi, Masao Tanaka, and Jun Miki, “Sakuga seishin o kataru 2” (A Talk on the Philosophy of Picture Making 2), *Asahi Camera* (November 1950): 72.

⁷⁹ “ (...) 「アサヒカメラ」は復刊以来いわゆる生活写真的なスナップ性のものを努めて奨励しているんですけども、最近は大分面白いものが出るようになりました。殊に地方の生活をとつたもので、なかなか面白いものが出てきております。” Samitarô Uramatsu, Nobuo Ina, Shigene Kanamaru, and Kiyoshi Nishiyama, “Zadankai: Amachua shashin wa shinpo shitaka” (Roundtable: Has Amateur Photography Advanced?), *Asahi Camera* (December 1951): 79.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

suggests that when Domon started out as a judge, he followed precedents set by previous photography contests.

For example, in the March 1950 issue—the issue in which Domon's *Newspaper Vendor*, a *sunappu* work, was published—nine awarded photographs are reproduced in three successive spreads (Figs. 2-7, 2-8, 2-9). Among the nine photographs only two, *Old Woman Waiting for a Bus* (*Basu matsu rôba*) by Kei'ichi Mejima on the upper right of the first spread and *Newspaper Vendors* (*Shinbunuriko tachi*) by Kenji Suda on the lower left of the third spread, can be called *sunappu* that depict human figures as their subject matter. Although every photograph captures, more or less, a trace of human intervention (as seen in the photograph of the scene of a quarry or that of a row of timbers), thereby hinting at human lives, they are not as coherent or direct as Domon's own series *Town* in their focus on the conditions of contemporary society. Rather, some of them look like examples of prewar modern photography, which had been introduced to Japan by the mid-1930s, mostly via the works of German photographers such as Albert Renger-Patsch. Photography contests in other issues of 1950 *Camera* are also characterized by a similar eclecticism in their photograph selections. Their subject matter is rather moderate in the sense that it does not particularly emphasize disparate economic conditions.⁸¹

Therefore, until Domon resumed the position of judge in December 1951 and continued until 1955 at *Camera*, his advocacy of *sunappu* and *Riarizumu* Photography was manifested not in the amateur photographs he selected for photography contests, but

⁸¹ In each issue of *Camera* from the year 1950, one *tokusen* (the first prize) and about eight *nyûsen* (the second prize), and about fifteen *junnyûsen* (the third prize) were selected and most of the *tokusen* and *nyûsen* works were published in the pages of the magazine. The prize money for *tokusen* was 1,000 yen, and that for *nyûsen* was 500 yen (in 1953 the amount went up to 3,000 yen for *tokusen* and 1,000 yen for *nyûsen*). The fact that all the prize winners were male photographers suggests that amateur photography in Japan was basically a hobby for men.

in his own work and writings.⁸² In 1951 he did not serve as judge for *Camera* except for the December issue, but continued his series *Living Today* and his serial conversation with Kimura was published continuously from July through December. It was here that Domon developed his theory on *Riarizumu* in photography. It is interesting to note that even before Domon resumed the position of judge in December 1951, a change in the submitted photographs was noticed by one judge, the photographer Hiroshi Hamaya, who criticized this change.⁸³ In the judge's comment section in the September issue, Hamaya writes:

I am surprised. It is like an aggressive selling of *Riarizumu*. I witness a great amount of simplistic photographs which suppose that a dirty thing equals realism. I have been calling such photographs crude-*Riarizumu* (*kuso-Riarizumu*), and it is now proved with examples. Submitted works include a photograph of the outskirts of the city in which diapers are hung, a photograph of a back door with an opening for scooping up night-soil, and a photograph of a street scene with a cart full of night-soil buckets. The world is literally overflowing with crude-*Riarizumu*.⁸⁴

In Hamaya's eyes, the abundance of imagery capturing the dirty side of society seemed no more than a fleeting trend and thus evidenced the lack of independent thinking among amateur photographers. He continues:

⁸² *Camera* was discontinued in August 1956. From 1956 through 1958 Domon served as judge for another photography magazine *Photo Art*, and again, and for the last time, in 1963.

⁸³ Although Hiroshi Hamaya (1915-1999) is a very important photographer and his work was comparable with that of Kimura and Domon, I do not discuss him in detail for the simple reason that he was not as engaged with amateur photography as Kimura and Domon.

⁸⁴ “おどろきました。リアリズムの押し売りみたいです。キタナイモノ、イコオル、リアリズムと解するアンチョコな写真が一パイ集りました。私はそういう写真を、クソリアリズムと呼んでいたのですが、正しくそれが実証されたのです。オシメの干してある場末写真、便所のクミトリ口のある裏口写真、荷車にオワイオケの満載された街頭写真などが応募されました。世は正にクソリアリズムのハンランです。” Hiroshi Hamaya, “Hayarimono ni mayowazu kosei o ikashite kudasai” (Please Don't be Misled by the Fashionable Objects and, Instead, Make the Most of Your Individuality), *Camera* (September 1951): 108. “Kuso” in “kuso *Riarizumu*” literally means “crap,” but it also suggests crudeness or crassness.

It is very stupid that many photographers without self-consciousness are jumping at a fashion not to miss it. How many people are taking photographs of bums and disabled veterans with convictions? I am afraid that what many of them actually have are no more than desires which were stimulated by the fashionable objects. Certainly, it would be fun to take *sunappu* on the street secretly because it accompanies a thrill and pleasure. But, if that is all, it is too sinful a hobby. It is a social evil of photography.⁸⁵

Hamaya's selection of awarded photographs is not particularly different from that of the others and it is rather eclectic, including a few *sunappu* photographs taken in the outskirts of a town. Thus, the emergence of what would be called "*kojiki shashin* (beggar photographs)," meaning photographs depicting the homeless on the street, is not apparently visible in the pages of the photography magazine. It was, rather, a phenomenon noticed by judges who had to look at a stack of submitted photographs.⁸⁶ In the October 1951 issue, the judge Fujio Matsugi makes a similar criticism of the fact that among submitted photographs, which totaled 1,000, too many of them chose homeless people on the streets as their subject matter.⁸⁷

There might have been several reasons for the increase in these kinds of photographs, but at least two can be easily pointed out. First, Domon and Kimura, who had great influence on amateur photographers, often photographed the homeless and other kinds of people considered to belong to the lowest stratum of society. Above I have

⁸⁵ “自覚なき多くの写真家はワレオクレジと流行にトビツクことは大そうオロカシイことです。何人の人が信念をもつて浮浪者や傷衣（ママ）軍人を撮っているのでしょうか。その多くはハヤリモノに刺激されての写欲といった程度ではないかと心配します。たしかに人知れず、コソソリと街頭でスナップするのは、スリルと快感みたいなものをもなつて面白いかもしれません。それだけではあまりに罪深いお道楽です。写真の社会悪です。” *Ibid.*, 109.

⁸⁶ As far as I noticed, the earliest use of the word "*kojiki shashin*" can be found in the April 1952 issue of *Camera*, in which the editor suggests that "recently a part of the photographic community has produced a vogue word *kojiki shashin*" (20).

⁸⁷ Fujio Matsugi, "Daiichibu sengo hyô" (Judge's Comment of the First Section), *Camera* (October 1951): 125.

discussed Domon's series *Town* (1949-50) and pointed out that his attention was placed on people who suffered from social inequality. In his subsequent series *Living Today* (1951-52) he pushed forward in this direction and showed such photographs as *Hashi no ue* (*On the Bridge*) (June 1951) (Fig. 2-10). Although Kimura did not thematically pursue the subject as Domon did, he also sometimes depicted the homeless in his *sunappu* works taken in Tokyo. Secondly, the homeless were a relatively easy subject for the amateur photographers to shoot, because they often led a passive and vulnerable existence on the street, available for the gazes of intruding cameras. To borrow Hamaya's apt phrase, the homeless satisfied the "thrill and pleasure" of voyeuristic amateur photographers who lacked the courage to confront their human subjects. Obviously it was a negative side of amateur photography.

The photography contest in the December 1951 issue for which Domon served as judge shows a distinct change from the earlier issues in their selections of awarded photographs. It is apparent that the selection has given priority to *sunappu* taken on the street. Among the twenty-four photographs reproduced in the pages of the magazine, twenty-two capture the human figure (or figures) and most of them look like *sunappu* in the narrow sense of the word (Figs. 2-11, 2-12). The selection does not include a photograph of the homeless, but most of the subjects appear to belong to the lower-middle class or feature people engaging in marginal jobs such as circus performers or gamblers. This deliberate preference for *sunappu*, which had not been so conspicuous in 1950, would characterize the contests in *Camera* for the next couple of years, whenever

Domon and Kimura served together as judges. Their advocacy of *sunappu* sparked the controversy over *Riarizumu* Photography in the photographic community.⁸⁸

The second section of this chapter discussed Domon's logic behind associating *sunappu* with realism. In his view, the candidness and unstagedness of *sunappu* was indispensable for the truthful depiction of the subject. But *sunappu* had another special significance for him. In short, this significance stemmed from the availability of *sunappu* as a genre for a wider range of amateur photographers. Domon deliberately contrasted *sunappu* with what he called "Salon Pictures (saron pikuchâ)" which he defined as a bourgeois category of amateur photography. "Salon" was a generic name used for exhibitions of art photography in Japan, which probably came from the name of the exhibitions held by the Linked Ring, a British photographic club active at the turn of the nineteenth century. Domon dubbed the type of photographs exhibited in those exhibitions as "Salon Pictures" rather pejoratively. In the judge's comment of January 1952, Domon writes:

Some time ago, amateurs who enjoyed photography were typically middle-aged affluent gentlemen. The cameras they used were box cameras for cabinet-sized or tefuda-sized plate, or, for example, the foreign-made Graflex with tefuda-sized plate. They travelled to places like Nikko or Ikaho [renowned resorts], carrying big, heavy cameras and paying large sums in travel expenses, and made *haiku*-like or Japanese-style-painting-like Salon Pictures. They tended to despise photographs that depicted motifs related to daily life, calling them commemorative photographs (kinen shashin) or *sunappu* and regarding them as inartistic. . . .

A distinct phenomenon of the photographic community in the era of postwar cultural restoration which did not exist before the war is that junior high school students and high school students began to enjoy photography. Even elementary school pupils are now taking souvenir photographs of their friends or

⁸⁸ In 1952 Domon and Kimura co-judged the twelve monthly photography contests and the judges' comment was recorded in dialogue style. In 1953, the two judges alternated each month, Kimura taking charge of odd-numbered months. Contests in 1954 went back to the style of 1952, but on some occasions Domon wrote the judge's comment instead of the dialogue between him and Kimura.

shooting animals with little cameras. The average age of people who enjoy photography has lowered incredibly, and their number appears to be larger than one expects. I think that this is a healthy cultural phenomenon which is gratifying for us, the people of the photographic community. Such a phenomenon is, in short, the rise of *Riarizumu*.⁸⁹

As discussed above, the postwar popularization of amateur photography was noticed by many critics at that time, but Domon's idiosyncrasy was that he connected this popularization to a change in the photographic expression of postwar Japan. He defined the change with the concepts of *sunappu* and *Riarizumu* Photography. One might find a jump of logic in the last sentence, "such a phenomenon is, in short, the rise of *Riarizumu*." But for Domon this claim could be supported for two reasons.

First, those young and less well-to-do amateur photographers basically dealt with the "motifs related to daily life" through the technique of *sunappu*. By using an inexpensive camera, works of *Riarizumu* Photography could be produced by amateur photographers. Second, because amateur photography was no longer limited to the affluent class of people, it could now become a form of expression utilized by the masses. In other words, the change of its participants helped postwar amateur photography to approach realism. As I have pointed out above, the concept of *Riarizumu* Photography articulated by Domon was not unrelated to the advocacy of realism by critics who were

⁸⁹ “昔、写真を楽しむアマチュアといえば、中年のお金持の旦那衆だった。カメラはカビネや手札の組立カメラでなければ、外国製の手札版グフレックスなどで、大きな重いカメラを下げて、高い旅費を費つて日光や伊香保へ旅行しては、俳句的乃至は日本画的なサロン・ピクチュアを作つていたものだった。生活的なモチーフを撮つたものは、すべて記念撮影とか、スナップと云つて、非芸術的なものと頭から軽蔑していたものだった。（...中略...）／戦後の文化復興の写真界における戦前にない際立つた現象は、中学生や高等学校の学生が写真を楽しむようになったことだ。小学生すら可愛いカメラを持つて、仲間同志（ママ）の記念撮影や動物を撮つたりしている。写真を楽しむ年齢層がまるで低くなり、しかもその数は予想以上に大きいらしいのである。これは僕たち写真界の人間にとっては実に喜ばしい、そして健康な文化現象だと思つている。そういう現象は、一言でいえばリアリズムの台頭である。” Domon, “Dai rokujūni kai getsurei ichibu nyūsensaku hyō” (Comments on the Selected Works of the First Section of the 62nd Monthly Photography Contest), 101.

close to (if not members of) the Japanese Communist Party at that time. According to their views on the relationship between art and the masses, visual art and literature must be addressed to the proletariat. But the active participation of this class was also sought.⁹⁰ In this respect, photography, as a branch of visual arts, is far more open to a larger cross-section of the public, because photography requires mastery of fewer special techniques than traditional forms of arts such as sculpture or painting. Therefore, Domon believed that *sunappu* taken by amateur photographers could become an expression of ordinary people.

However, it is important to notice that these two aspects of the relationship between *sunappu* and realism could contradict each other on some occasions. From the former perspective, the amateur *sunappu* photographs are important as objective documents of the society and in this respect the authorship of a given photograph does not particularly matter. Whether a photograph was shot by an anonymous amateur photographer or a master of art photography is essentially irrelevant to the documentary value of the photographic image. In a conversation with Kimura in September 1951, Domon remarked:

If there is a tendency of aiming a camera at the postwar social classes such as beggars or juvenile vagrants, professional photographers including Mr. Kimura and I are partly responsible for it. But, [suppose a situation in which] a photographer named Ken Domon lived in a very terrible era after the war, but he was taking only photographs of smiling girls as sweet as honey. If every photographer was like that, [people in the future would ask] what the heck were the photographers around 1950 doing? We will have nothing from which we can know the state of the era.⁹¹

⁹⁰ For more on the Marxist scholars' engagement with the masses, see Oguma, *Minshu to aikoku* ('Democracy' and 'Patriotism'), 307-353.

⁹¹ “乞食や浮浪児という戦後的の時代層にカメラを向ける風潮があれば、木村さんや僕らプロの責任もある。しかし土門拳という写真家が敗戦後の非常にひどい時代におつた。それが、女の子がぼつちやり笑った蜜みたいに甘い写真ばかり撮つておつた。全部の写真家がもしそ

Certainly, for us living at the beginning of the twenty-first century, photographs printed in the pages of a 1950s photography magazine are intriguing in terms of their subject matter, irrespective of the artistic intention behind the images. Signs on the street, the clothing attire of contemporaries, and even their faces look so unfamiliar and foreign to this author who grew up in Japan in the 1980s and 1990s. As other monthly magazines at that time were not overflowing with photographs as they are now, if one needs to see visual records of the early 1950s, photography magazines would be the type of publication one would go to first.

However, one contemporary example that utilized the documentary value of amateur *sunappu* in an inventive way was not produced by Domon, but by his former boss and then-antagonist Yonosuke Natori. In June 1950 Iwanami Shoten, a major publishing company, commissioned Natori to edit *Iwawami Photography Library*, a series of small booklets which amounted to 286 volumes over the course of eight and half years. Each booklet, consisting of about 60-70 pages full of photographs and accompanying texts, picks up one theme. The series as a whole covers a wide range of subjects, such as science, history, and the arts. The series includes an issue entitled *Japan*,

うだつたということになると、一九五〇年前後の時代に生きた写真家は、一体何をしておつたかということになるでしょう。その時代の様子を知るべき何物も持っていない。” Ihei Kimura and Ken Domon, “Rensai taidan dai san kai: Mochifu ni tsuite” (Serial Conversations 3: On Motif), *Camera* (September 1951): 91. In 1957 Domon made a similar remark, emphasizing the importance of *sunappu* as documents of the era to be inherited by future generations. In an essay in which he conjectures about the original condition of an old Buddhist sculpture made 1200 years ago, he writes: “Even if photography had existed in the ancient era of Suiko Tenpyo [around A.D.600], if it was an art photograph of lotus leaves with dewdrops or a Salon Picture playing with light and shadow with a soft focused image, it would not possess interest or power that excites our hearts.” (“しかし、どんなに写真が推古天皇の昔からあったとしても、それが蓮の葉に露が溜っている芸術写真だったり、光や影をソフト・フォーカスでもてあそんだサロン・ピクチュアだったら、僕たちの胸をわくわくさせるような興味も力もないであろう。”) See Ken Domon, “Shin-yakushiji yakushi nyorai no medama (The Eyes of Yakushi at Shin-yakushiji Temple)” (1957), reprinted in *Shashin zuihitsu* (Essays on Photography) (Tokyo: David-sha, 1979), 241-242.

October 8, 1955 published in February 1956.⁹² It is a rather exceptional issue within the series, and it consists of a selection of amateur photographs submitted to the photography contest sponsored by Iwanami Shoten. The only condition was that one must submit a photograph (or photographs) taken on October 8, 1955, a date that does not have a special symbolic meaning but was just an ordinary day. By setting this condition, Natori expected that submitted photographs as a whole would form a nation-wide document of Japan on one single day, and it remains (or should I say, it has become) an interesting visual record of the nation at that time (figs. 2-13, 2-14).⁹³ This book may not be called a work of photojournalism because the word usually denotes a photographic story with a specific perspective, but the book certainly evokes the state of Japan in 1955. The photographs are now valuable, not for their aesthetic achievement, but rather for their significance as historical and sociological records.

Two hundred and fifty selected photographs are arranged not by subject matter but by the place where a photograph was shot. It is difficult to read each photographers' thoughts or artistic intention, if any, from the constellation of small photographs taken on the same day all around Japan. The photographs include a submission by Motoichi Kumagai (1909-2010) (the middle picture in the right row of the spread of fig. 2-14), a well-known advanced amateur photographer whose primary occupation was a teacher at an elementary school in Nagano Prefecture. He had already published a few photography books, one of which was published as an independent issue of *Iwawami Photography*

⁹² Iwanami Shashin Bunko, ed., *Nippon senkyûhyaku kojûgonen jûgatsu yôka* (Japan, October 8, 1955) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1956; reprint, 2007).

⁹³ According to Natori, 3,000 photographs were submitted to the contest. See Yônosuke Natori, "Shinsa o owatte" (A Comment on the Judging), *Tosho* (February 1956): 19.

Library in 1955. But in *Japan, October 8, 1955*, Kumagai's submission is treated on equal footing with two hundred and forty-nine other photographs, and it is virtually impossible to detect his work among them, unless one sees a list of contributing photographers' names printed in the last pages of the book. However, such an apparent slighting of the authorship, or of the authorial traces in the images so to speak, of selected photographs does not necessarily diminish the interest and significance of this book.⁹⁴ To the contrary, if each photographer's subjective vision or point of view had been too conspicuous in these photographs, we would not be able to look at them as objective documents of the society. In other words, the more the photographer recedes back, the more the photographic depiction comes forward to the viewer. Given that these photographs are already old for twenty-first century viewers, the passage of time may add documentary value that did not exist when they were first made. As Natori wrote in his book *How to Read Photographs*, "even though it was very personal and distinctive when it was taken, it would become a mere photographic record after a certain period of time. It would become a thing that records a certain condition at a certain time of our world on the surface of photosensitive material."⁹⁵

It is important to note that this book would not have been born had it not been for the boom of amateur *sunappu* photography. Today, thanks to the Internet and the

⁹⁴ Mari Shirayama has pointed out that many of the submitted photographs were trimmed down when they were published in the book, in a way that ignores their original compositions and therefore the artistic intentions of the photographers. See Mari Shirayama, "Kemara bûmu to amachua shashinka" (Camera Boom and Amateur Photographers), in Iwanami Shashin Bunko, ed., *Nippon senkyûhyaku kojûgonen jûgatsu yôka* (Japan, October 8, 1955), unpaginated.

⁹⁵ "写す時はひじょうに個人的、個性的でも、ある時間が過ぎるとたんなる記録写真になる。私たちの世界の、ある時のある状態を、感光材料の上に留めて、記録したものになってしまうのです。" Yonosuke Natori, *Shashin no yomikata* (How to Read Photographs) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1963), 7.

digitalization of photographic processes, astronomical numbers of photographs are being produced every day. One could easily compile a modern-day version of a book like *Japan, October 8, 1955*, simply by searching through Flickr or other similar image-storage websites. But, back in the 1950s, photographs were still something that one would make with clear purposes and intentions. Indeed, it was the vogue of *sunappu* in amateur photography and the photography contests connected to that vogue that gave amateur photographers a chance as well as a rationale to aim their cameras at subject matter other than their own family and friends.

Domon believed in the value of amateur *sunappu* to capture the poverty and confusion of the postwar Japan as a visual testimony for the future generations. At the same time, as pointed out above, in 1953 he began to repudiate what he called *chorosuna* and claimed that the technique of *sunappu* was not a sufficient condition of *Riarizumu* Photography. Even though Domon opposed Hamaya's negation of "beggar photographs," he would have agreed with Hamaya's suggestion that a lot of amateurs were photographing the homeless on the street just because it was a fashionable subject matter and it satisfied their voyeurism. Criticizing the amateurs' blind following of fashion, Domon maintains in the judge's comment published in February 1954:

In the judging of the monthly contests of this magazine, we strictly demand something that lies in the depth of the photographer's mind, in other words, his independent identity (*shutaisei*) or proper self-assertion. We reject photographs that cannot be responsible for the society. As the direction of a photographer-creator's development, we can hardly agree with photographs in which we cannot recognize the photographer's strong emotions toward the motif, so-called *chorosuna* which snapped [the subject] only with superficial interest, and photographs which capture ugly or creepy motifs with vulgar spirits.⁹⁶

⁹⁶ “本誌月例審査においてもこの作者の内奥にあるもの、つまり作者の主体性、あるいは正しい自己主張をきびしく要求する。社会に対して責任を持つことの出来ない写真は否定するのである。モチーフに対する作者の感動の認められないもの、表面的な興味だけでスナップするいわゆるチョロスナ、醜悪であつたり不気味に感じられるモチーフを卑俗な精神で写真

If Domon considered amateur photography contests as something like a social movement engaging with the masses, it is natural that he demanded the “independent identity (shutaisei)” of the photographers who participated in the movement.⁹⁷ But as I have pointed out above, an anonymously made photograph or even a *choro-suna* which lacks “the photographer’s strong emotions toward the motif” can also sufficiently serve for the purpose of visual documents of society.

In fact, it is almost impossible to read such “strong emotions” from the selected photographs of monthly contests published in the photography magazines. This is partly owed to the structure of the contest itself; submitted photographs were usually judged one by one, and each amateur photographer could only publish one photograph per issue. As Hamaya has pointed out, under these conditions it was very difficult for him to express his opinion and bring about any kind of societal impact, even if his work was published in mass-circulated magazines.⁹⁸ The medium of photography magazines enabled

化したものなどは、写真作家の成長の方向としては賛成し難いのである。” Ihei Kimura and Ken Domon, “Getsurei sakka no shutaisei” (The Independent Identity of the Monthly-Contest Photographer), *Camera* (February 1954): 173. The comment is co-signed by Kimura and Domon, but it is most likely that it was Domon who actually wrote the text.

⁹⁷ According to the sociologist Eiji Oguma, “shutaisei” was a key word of the period, which symbolized the attitude one was required to acquire in the democratic social climate brought to postwar Japan. See Oguma, *Minshu to aikoku* (‘Democracy’ and ‘Patriotism’), 100.

⁹⁸ Hamaya mentioned: “In Japan they publish one photograph per issue each at one time in the photography magazines which are rather a much specialized world of hobby or a field of art photography targeted at amateur photographers. In this situation, I think it might be easily taken by amateur photographers that they may as well take just photographs of beggars and prostitutes (pan pan)” (“とくに強調したいのは、日本の場合、写真雑誌というごく専門的なアマチュア写真家を対象としたどちらかと云えば趣味の世界、芸術写真の分野でコマギレ的に一枚々々発表していく場合のことを考えると、アマチュアカメラマンにはただ乞食やパンパンを撮ればいいという浅薄な受け取られ方をされやすいのじゃないかと思う。”)。See Hiroshi Hamaya and Masao Tanaka, “Taidan: Hihyōka to sakka” (Conversation: Critic and Photographer), *Camera* (August 1952): 83.

engagement of a mass of amateur photographers, but at the same time, it inevitably imposed restrictions on their expression and the level of exposure they were able to attain.

Domon was well aware of this limitation. After 1953 he began to seek places to publish his reportage work outside the small circle of photography magazines whose readership consisted mostly of amateur photographers. After occasionally working with general-interest magazines for several years, in 1958 he published a monumental work of photojournalism entitled *Hiroshima* and in 1960 an inexpensive paperback entitled *Chikuhô no kodomotachi* (*The Children of Chikuhô*). These photobooks form two summits of Domon's career as a *sunappu* photographer, because, after his stroke in 1960, a lingering paralysis would make it difficult for him to work on the street with a hand-held camera with the same precision and energy as before.

2-2-3. *Hôdô Shashin* and Domon's Photojournalistic Works

Before concluding Chapter Two, I would like to discuss Domon's photojournalistic works made between 1953 and 1960, particularly his 1960 photobook *Chikuhô no kodomotachi* (*The Children of Chikuhô*), with the purpose of examining another aspect of the relationship between *sunappu* and photojournalism. But, first, a few words should be spent on the term "*hôdô shashin*." As pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, photography critics in the 1950s sometimes noticed that the meaning of the word "*sunappu*" was beginning to converge with that of *hôdô shashin*, but the difference was still too significant to ignore. It has been said that *hôdô shashin* (報道写真) is a Chinese character compound created by the photo critic Nobuo Ina around 1934 as a

Japanese equivalent to the German word “Reportage Foto.”⁹⁹ “Hôdô” is a common word signifying a media report; namely, an act which conveys the news to the public, usually accompanying the sender’s interpretations of the event rather than a mere transmission of raw facts.

Thus, *hôdô shashin* was originally a neutral word meaning reportage photography. However, during the Second World War this word was given political implications, because what was then called *hôdô shashin* was in fact propaganda photography.¹⁰⁰ In 1941, as an enforcement of the policy to bring the entire publishing business under state control, the government merged two photography magazines, *Photo Times* and *Camera Art*, and renamed the new conglomerate publication *Hôdô Shashin*.¹⁰¹ This name change suggests that *hôdô shashin* was the genre of photography sanctioned by the imperial state. In a similar way, the name of a pro-government photographers’ group established in 1942, of which Domon was a member, was “Nippon hôdô shashin-ka kyôkai (Japanese Society of Reportage Photographers).” The photo editor and critic Tetsuo Kishi, who belonged to the same generation as Domon, writes in 1969 that the reason why Domon preferred to use the phrase “*Riarizumu* in photography” instead of “*hôdô shashin*” was probably that “he disliked the militaristic color the word *hôdô shashin* contains.” Kishi also adds, “not

⁹⁹ Nobuo Ina, *Shashin shôwa gojûnen shi* (The History of Photography in Fifty Years of Shôwa) (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbunsha, 1978), 52. Also see Tetsuo Kishi, *Shashin Jânarizumu* (Photojournalism) (Tokyo: David-sha, 1969), 10.

¹⁰⁰ For the genealogy of “hôdô shashin” in the 1930s, see Kusumoto, “‘Hôdô shashin’ ni matsuwaru akuryô no kigen” (The Origin of the Evil Spirit Haunting ‘Hôdô Shashin’), 109-122.

¹⁰¹ Kishi, *Shashin Jânarizumu* (Photojournalism), 16.

only Domon but many other photographers who worked during the War would feel pain in their hearts, just by hearing the word ‘*hōdō shashin*.’”¹⁰²

In a December 1952 roundtable Domon stated: “It is a few years ago that I began to think about realism. Before I was pursuing the methodology of *hōdō shashin*. Whether *hōdō shashin* is immediately realism or not is a very significant problem, and I can not still figure out what *hōdō shashin* is. . . .”¹⁰³ The reason why it was “a very significant problem” for him was, of course, because he remembered that the propaganda photography during the war was disseminated under the name of *hōdō shashin*. In his 1954 conversation with the Communist Party leader Kenji Miyamoto, Domon said:

When the Information Agency was publishing *Shashin shūhō* (*Photographic Weekly Magazine*), that was never *Riarizumu*, but was all “it seems (rashii).” Families fighting at the front seem to be doing well. Airplanes seem to be being produced fast. The Imperial Army seems to keep winning the battles. Everything was unified under “it seems.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² “土門拳が、写真とは〈けっきょく客観的事実のカメラによる記録伝達〉と戦前からいっていたのに、なぜ報道写真といわないで〈写真におけるリアリズム〉といったのか、おそらく戦時中の報道写真ということばにふくまれる軍事色をきらったからであろう。土門拳のみならず、〈報道写真〉と聞くだけで、心に痛みをおぼえる戦中写真家は多いはずである。” Kishi, *Shashin Jānarizumu* (Photojournalism), 16.

¹⁰³ “写真家としての私の心構えとして、リアリズムを考えるようになったのはさつきも申した通りこの二、三年のことであつて、その前は報道写真という形式から、その方法論を追求しておつたわけです。その報道写真というものが、いきなりリアリズムかどうかは非常に問題になるわけですが、とにかく報道写真とは何かという点につき自分でも悩んでおり、その悩みの中には、今、自分が考えているような意味でのリアリズムという概念は一度も出て来なかったといえます。” Ina, Watanabe, Uramatsu, Domon, and Hasegawa, “Shashin no riarizumu ni tsuite” (On *Riarizumu* in Photography), 98.

¹⁰⁴ “これは昔、情報局が『写真週報』を出したとき、これは決してリアリズムでなく、全部が「らしい」だったんですよ。出征家族は元気らしい、飛行機はどんどんできていくらしい。皇軍はどんどん勝っているらしい。全部が「らしい」で統一されておつたんですね。” Ken Domon and Kenji Miyamoto, “Shashi no naiyo ni tsuite: tēmasei no mondai” (On the Content of Photography: The Problem Concerning the Theme), *Camera* (August-September, 1954): 158. In this conversation Domon talks with Kenji Miyamoto (1908-2007), a member of the Japan Communist Party who came into an influential position after the War because he was one of the few who did not abandon his ideology in his jail time from 1934 through 1945. In the conversation, Miyamoto insists on the importance of grasping the “tenkei (typicality)” of the subject, and Domon finally agrees with

It is clear from Domon's words that his doubt was targeted not so much at the idea of photojournalism itself as at its potential to tell false stories. His postwar skepticism against photojournalism during the War corresponded with his advocacy of *Riarizumu* Photography and "the absolute *sunappu* with absolutely no staging" which were developed in amateur photography magazines. For, including Domon's own work published in them, photographs in the photography magazines were characterized by their preference for single photographs, which were treated independently from each other, rather than photo-stories consisting of multiple photographs. In photography magazines, photographs are necessarily cut loose from a sequence of images that would produce a certain story. In other words, they exist something like a "fragment" of the reality, devoid of stories, or as incomplete stories at best. Such a quality guarantees that a status of raw documents accrues to the photographs, transcending any external contexts that could be misleading and falsify the truth.

However, after 1953 Domon began to approach a more traditional style of photojournalism; traditional in the sense that it tries to tell a specific story from a certain perspective. This is the most significant difference between Domon and Kimura, both of whom attained great popularity among amateur photographers as the "masters of *sunappu*." As it happened, 1953 was the year in which NHK (Japan Broadcasting Association) began a regular TV broadcast, followed by several commercial broadcasting companies. Since then, television has continued to spread among the general public, but it was not until 1959 that the diffusion rate of television drastically increased, stimulated by

him. Miyamoto's theory was obviously indebted to Georg Lukács's advocacy of Realism in the 1930s. Domon's writings after 1954 would often discuss "tenkei (typicality)" depicted in photographs.

the live broadcast of the wedding of the Crown Prince.¹⁰⁵ Thus, Domon's photojournalistic work culminated in this rather short period of time that saw the initial development of television broadcasting, which would soon occupy the primary position within the mass media. In 1953 he published a photo essay entitled "Uchinada" in the September issue of the monthly magazine *Sekai (The World)*.¹⁰⁶ *The World* is a magazine published by Iwanami Shoten, one of the most established publishing companies in Japan. Known for its left-leaning stance, *The World* targeted the intellectual class with serious and thought-provoking articles. Although there are no available statistics, one can easily assume that the readership of *Asahi Camera* and *The World* was very different at that time. In the 1950s other similar upscale monthly general-interest magazines, such as *Chûo Kôron*, also included a select number of gravure pictures in each issue.¹⁰⁷ Thus, to publish a photographic work in those magazines must have been a special event for professional photographers who wished to be connected to serious journalism.

Uchinada is the name of a sea shore in Ishikawa Prefecture which became a center of national attention in June 1953. After the Korean War erupted in 1950, the munitions industries that supplied the US army prospered, helping to quickly restore the Japanese economy. As the US army required a regular trial-firing of shells made by Japanese factories, the government had to secure a trial-firing site. Uchinada, a stretch of sea shore that had been used by local fishermen, was selected as a temporary site for this purpose.

¹⁰⁵ According to the Yomiuri Yearbook, the diffusion rate of television in March 1960 was 23.1% in the whole nation and 44.2% in Tokyo. See Yomiuri Shimbunsha, *Yomiuri nenkan showa sanjûroku nen ban* (Yomiuri Yearbook. Showa 36) (Tokyo: Yomiuri Shimbunsha, 1960), 314.

¹⁰⁶ Ken Domon, "Uchinada" (Uchinada), *Sekai (The World)* (September 1953), unpaginated.

¹⁰⁷ In the 1950s, there were also graphic journals such as *Asahi Grafu* or *Mainichi Grafu* published by major newspaper companies. But, the photographs in those magazines were usually supplied by the companies' staff photographers.

But when the government changed its original plan and decided to keep the site permanently (otherwise the factories could not produce more shells), the local community voiced strong opposition. Some residents staged a sit-in in the field so that the test-firing could not be continued.¹⁰⁸

Domon's photographs (figs. 2-15, 2-16), spanning eight pages, are a part of the special feature on the Uchinada incident, in which two long articles written by Seiji Nakamura and Ikutaro Shimizu, a renowned social critic, are published. In this feature Domon's work functions as an illustration to the article rather than an independent series of photographs. This is not just because the articles provide more specific information than photographs alone can provide, but also because his photographs correspond to the standpoint of the authors of the articles. That is, they are common in their sympathetic attitudes toward the local protesters. It is clear that Domon's photographs were taken with their cooperation. In some of his photographs, the protesters pose for the camera, some of them even smiling (lower right photograph in the spread of fig. 2-15). In order to show his friendly relationship with his subjects as well as his sympathy for them, Domon deliberately abandons his *sunappu* technique in these photographs. Suggestive in this regard is that the photographs capturing the people working for the trial-firing site, who were accused by the protesters as traitors, were taken with the technique of *sunappu* in the narrow sense of the word (left photograph in the spread of fig. 2-15).

From 1953 through 1955, Domon published about ten photo stories in the magazine *The World*, most of which were accompanied by essays written by other writers

¹⁰⁸ For more on the Uchinada incident, see Ariyuki Fukushima, "'Uchinada tōsō' to teikō no koe" ('Uchinada Conflict' and the 'Voice' of Resistance), in Tadahide Hirokawa and Takao Yamada, eds., *Sengo shakai undōshi ron* (Essays on the History of Postwar Social Movements) (Tokyo: Otsuki Shoten, 2006), 134-155.

on related topics. The subjects of the photo stories include the National Diet (October 1953), domestic piecework (February 1954), May Day (July 1954), and gambling activities such as horse racing (August 1954). It seems that through these magazine works, Domon gained a sense of confidence, not just in telling stories with photographs, but also in taking a certain stance on social issues, providing him with a platform for speaking for the socially disadvantaged. In 1958 he published *Hiroshima*, his third major photobook, which documents the disastrous aftermath of the atomic bomb dropped on the city of Hiroshima. As *Hiroshima* will be discussed in Chapter Three in relation to Shômei Tômatsu's *Nagasaki*, I will here focus on his subsequent book, *The Children of Chikuhô* published in 1960.

The Children of Chikuhô is a photobook addressing the wretched living conditions and economic distress suffered by the coal miners and their families in the Chikuhô area of Kyusyu. It consists of 96 pages with 82 photographs (Fig. 2-17).¹⁰⁹ One of the characteristics of this book is its unusually inexpensive price—100 yen for a copy, approximately the same price for a paperback novel at that time. To realize this price, Domon had to sacrifice the quality of paper and printing, but it was a deliberate choice so that the book would circulate as widely as the monthly magazines he had been working for.¹¹⁰ Since around 1955, coal mining throughout Japan had been rapidly declining because of imported oil, which became a primary energy source in Japan. As the large scale firing of coal miners was already a widely reported problem, his attention to this

¹⁰⁹ Ken Domon, *Chikuhô no kodomotachi* (The Children of Chikuhô), with preface by Hiroshi Noma (Tokyo: Patoria Shoten, 1960).

¹¹⁰ For more on the format of this photobook, see Ryûichi Kaneko, "Ken Domon, *The Children of Chikuhô*, 1960," in Ryûichi Kaneko and Ivan Vartanian, *Japanese Photobooks of the 1960s and '70s* (New York: Aperture, 2009), 56-61.

issue itself was not particularly original. In the afterword to the book, Domon admits that when he was approached by the publisher Patoria Shoten to report on the Chikuhô coal mines, he was rather indifferent to the problem.

The Children of Chikuhô consists of nine sections and in the margin at the bottom of each page Domon writes a short caption explaining the photographs. The first few sections depict a huge heap of coal waste, desolate coal mines and people working there (fig. 2-18). The middle part focuses on the children living in the neighboring coal towns. As the book title and the cover photograph suggest, the children, especially the young sisters Rumie and Sayuri Niimura, occupy the focal point of the book (fig. 2-19). The book concludes with photographs depicting workers protesting against unreasonable layoffs (fig. 2-20). It is clear that Domon made *The Children of Chikuhô* as an advocacy tool; in the afterword he writes, “I am happy if this little photobook will contribute, in some ways, to poor coal miners and their children in Chikuhô.”¹¹¹

In a similar way to his 1953 photo story *Uchinada* published in *The World*, Domon chose not to stick to the technique of *sunappu* for the photographs used in this book. Certainly, on a superficial level, a large part of the photographs look candid and *sunappu*-like, having been taken unbeknownst to the subjects. But, if one considers the settings in which these photographs were taken—in an elementary school classroom or inside the house of the Niimura sisters, for example—it is difficult to believe that the subjects were unaware of the presence of the photographer. That these photographs exist as a sequence in which the same people appear more than once in different shots also

¹¹¹ “このささやかな写真集が貧しい筑豊の炭坑失業者やその子どもたちのために何らかのかたちで生きるならば、幸である。” Domon, “Atogaki” (Afterword), in *Chikuhô no kodomotachi* (The Children of Chikuhô), 96.

gives the impression that the photographer had a continuous relationship with his subjects, a type of photographer-subject relationship antithetical to *sunappu* photography on the street (fig. 2-21). Therefore, in this book, even those photographs in which subjects do not look toward the camera do not strike a viewer with their candidness. Rather, those photographs appear to capture the moments in which the subjects disregard the existence of the camera only momentarily, pretending to be unaware of the camera. In some photographs, the subjects apparently pose for the photographer, staring at the camera. They do not fit into the category of *sunappu* but rather are closer to his portrait series, which he usually made after prolonged interactions with his subjects.

This partial abandonment of *sunappu* entails the risk of producing staged photographs for political ends – which is ironic, given that Domon had advocated for “the absolute *sunappu* with absolutely no staging” precisely because of his experience of photojournalism during the war. In this context, photojournalistic photographs only conveyed messages convenient for the government; staged scenes were an everyday occurrence. If the miserable living conditions of the coal-mining towns were the reality (as surely they were), then Domon could have taken only *sunappu* photographs, maintaining a certain distance from his subjects. To report on the condition of the towns was the primary aim of the book and *sunappu* photographs alone would have accomplished that aim. However, Domon chose not to do so. He instead took an empathic approach to his subjects, an approach which is symbolically represented in his focus on a lovable small girl named Rumie. In the context of this study, Domon’s decision is important because it shows both the merits and limitations of *sunappu* photography at that time. In *The Children of Chikuhô*, in which Domon avowedly stood

for the coal miners and their children, he deliberately abandoned *sunappu*, because it was not appropriate for a subject toward which the photographer felt sympathetic. Despite Domon's claim that *sunappu* helps the photographer obtain an objective representation of the subject, the photographer-subject relationship in a *sunappu* photograph is hardly neutral. It is important to remember that contemporary critics blamed amateur photographers for thoughtlessly shooting the homeless, taking advantage of their vulnerable social position. It is also suggestive that in his *Uchinada*, Domon took candid photographs of the workers for the trial-firing site whereas the protesters occasionally smiled at the camera. These examples show that the putative objectivity of *sunappu* often involves an aggressive attitude toward the subject. It is no wonder, then, that Domon's *The Children of Chikuhô* included non-*sunappu* photographs of Rumie, i.e., photographs in which she is apparently cooperating with Domon's shooting.

This 1960 photography book thus revealed both the potential and the limits of the doctrine of *sunappu* photography advocated by Domon himself. However, it would be wrong to consider such aggressiveness as a defect of *sunappu* photography in general, given that Shômei Tômatsu and Daido Moriyama applied it effectively to their 1960s works focused on the American political and cultural presence in postwar Japan. This topic will be explored further in the next chapter.

Chapter Three

Targeting America:

The Work of Shômei Tômatsu and Daido Moriyama in the 1960s

3-1. *Sunappu* in the 1960s

This chapter examines the work from the 1960s of Shômei Tômatsu (1930-) and Daido Moriyama (1938-), two Japanese photographers whose names are now recognized internationally through recent retrospective exhibitions in major U.S museums.¹

Although a number of exhibitions and writings have been devoted to the works of these two photographers, their relations to *sunappu* have escaped critical attention. In this chapter I discuss how Tômatsu and Moriyama used *sunappu* in their work that dealt with the political and cultural presence of America in postwar Japan. I argue that, unlike Ken Domon, they did not turn away from the aggressiveness inherent in this photographic technique, which entails “shooting” people without their consent. Instead, they applied it to confront the overwhelming American presence in Japan.

But first I would like to mention the changes in the concepts of *sunappu* and the usages of the term in the 1960s. Compared to the 1950s, *sunappu* received less special attention in photography writings. This change was mainly due to the accelerated popularization of cameras and photography, which had already begun in the mid-1950s.²

¹ Sandra Phillips and Alexandra Munroe, eds., *Daidô Moriyama: Stray Dog* (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1999); Leo Rubinfien, ed., *Shômei Tômatsu: Skin of the Nation* (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2004).

² For the technical development of photographic apparatuses, especially the introduction of automatic exposure cameras, and the popularization of photography in the 1960s, see Gordon Lewis, ed., *The History of the Japanese Camera*, from a translation by William and Amy Fujimura of *Nihon camera no rekishi* (Rochester: The International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House, 1991), 104-105.

This popularization made *sunappu* more elusive than ever before, for two reasons. As I pointed out in the preceding chapter, the photo critic Tsutomu Watanabe was already claiming in the mid-1950s that the term *sunappu* was no longer as useful as before, because now nearly every photograph could be taken instantaneously with hand-held cameras. It follows, then, that as more inexpensive hand-held cameras were disseminated among amateur photographers, the term *sunappu* began to lose some of its categorical specificity.

Another important factor that increased the elusiveness of the term “*sunappu*” is the fact that around this period it seems that the term began to be used outside the photographic community. In other words, *sunappu* was no longer a word exclusively defined and used by professional photographers and serious amateurs who followed them, but also by amateur photographers who did not have the slightest artistic ambitions: the latter were content with taking photographs of their families and friends or, at best, picturesque landscapes they encountered during holiday trips. They were the equivalent of “snapshooters,” as they are termed in English, and obviously did not aspire to submit their works to the monthly contests of photography magazines. It is difficult to demonstrate exactly when this use of the term “*sunappu*” emerged in the Japanese language. In general terms, it occurred when family snapshots (in the English sense of the word) began to be called “*sunappu*” in Japanese by those who had never read photography magazines and therefore were unfamiliar with critical debates in photography. Therefore, from the time when *sunappu* came to also refer to casual snapshots, there has been some discrepancy in the understanding of *sunappu* within and outside of the photographic community. This discrepancy became increasingly apparent

when the term “*sunappu*” spread beyond the photographic community to the general public.

In *Sunappu Photography*, published in 1966 as a volume of the latest edition of the *Asahi Camera* lecture series, Watanabe explained the concept of *sunappu* as follows:

In the dictionary in which I looked it up, *sunappu shotto* is defined as a quickly taken photograph (*hayadori shashin*), or a photograph that captures a topical figure or event in an improvisational manner. In general, this is certainly correct. However, for today’s photographers, this word includes a more complex and significant meaning. For, the characteristics and excellent capacities of the functions inherent in this technique are shaping a *sunappu* aesthetic (*sunappu bigaku*) and they have become an effective method of modern photography.³

Here Watanabe distinguishes what the term *sunappu* means to photographers from its general use. To point to a photographer who perfected what he calls a “*sunappu* aesthetic (*sunappu bigaku*),” he names the French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson (we have already noted in Chapter One that this aesthetic is very different from the so-called “snapshot aesthetic” as used in English). In Japan, the work of Cartier-Bresson has been customarily described as *sunappu*, and this fact alone attests to the significant difference between snapshot and *sunappu* as a Japanese photographic term. What is important here is that Watanabe also acknowledges that “generally, it is certainly correct” to regard *sunappu* as an “improvisational (*sokkyô-teki*)” photograph. In other words, at this time, the meanings of the word *sunappu* already began to include casual family snapshots, at least for those who were not professional or advanced amateur photographers.

³ “試みに辞典をひいてみると、スナップ・ショットとは早取写真、時事的な人物や事件を即興的に撮影した写真のことであると説明されている。一般的には、確かにそれでまちがいない。しかし、今日の写真家たちにとっては、この言葉はもっと複雑で重要な意味を含んでいる。いわばこのようなテクニックがそなえている機能の特質とそのすぐれた能力は、スナップ美学を形成していて、近代写真の有力な方法論となっているからである。” Tsutomu Watanabe, “Seikatsu to sunappu shashin” (Daily Life and *Sunappu* Photography), in Asashi Shimbunsha, ed., *Sunappu Shashin (Sunappu Photography)*, vol. 3, *Asashi camera kyôshitsu* (Asahi Camera Lectures) (Tokyo: Asashi Shimbunsha, 1966), 7.

In the introduction to the 1970 edition of *Sunappu Photography of Asahi Camera Lectures*, the photographer Shigeichi Nagano refers to this gap more explicitly:

In the genre of photography, there are dictions that have currency only in that world. There are peculiar technical terms about mechanisms and techniques of photography, but it also uses common words with certain special meanings. “*Sunappu shashin*” is one of those words. *Sunappu shotto*, a word meaning a quickly taken photograph (*hayadori shashin*) or a photograph taken in an improvisational manner, is juxtaposed with such words as landscape, human figure, or still life, and *sunappu shashin* is used as a word which signifies a genre of the styles of photographic expression.⁴

As it happens, both Tômatsu and Moriyama contributed their photographs to this 1970 edition of *Sunappu Photography* as examples of *sunappu*, along with short essays. The essays, however, did not particularly discuss the concept of *sunappu*. Their photographs (*Sunappu* by Tômatsu and *Town* by Moriyama) (figs. 3-1, 3-2) can hardly be considered serious work, but their participation in a book exclusively dedicated to *sunappu* suggests that Tômatsu and Moriyama were well aware of the existence of *sunappu* as a genre of Japanese photography.

It is important to notice that the diffusion of the meaning of the term “*sunappu*” is not contingent on, but rather a logical consequence of this photographic technique. For the quickness and candidness of *sunappu* had contained, from the start, casualness and thus snapshot-ness, so to speak, embedded in the concept. When the mechanism of hand-held 35mm cameras still remained primitive, requiring photographers to have a certain

⁴ “写真のジャンルでは、その世界だけにしか通用しない特別な言葉使いがある。それも、写真のメカニズムやテクニックに関する特別な専門用語だけでなく、普通に使われる言葉に、ある特別な意味をこめて使用している。“スナップ写真”という言葉もその一つである。スナップ・ショットという、早取り写真とか即興的に撮影した写真という意味の言葉を、風景とか人物とか静物などという言葉と並列的にあつかい、写真の表現形式の一つのジャンルをあらわす言葉として、このスナップ写真という言葉が使われている。” Shigeichi Nagano, “Sunappu shashin towa” (What is *Sunappu* Photography?), in Asahi Shimbunsha, ed., *Sunappu Shashin* (*Sunappu* Photography), vol. 3, *Asashi camera kyôshitsu* (*Asahi Camera Lectures*) (Tokyo: Asashi Shimbunsha, 1970), 5.

level of skill to handle the camera, the casualness of candid photographs was not yet so apparent. To the contrary, a successful *sunappu* in the 1950s was regarded as proof of the photographer's skill. However, the more automated cameras became, the less effectively a *sunappu* photograph allowed a photographer to demonstrate his or her technique, or the seriousness with which he or she acquired such a technique. In short, as the technology of photography advanced, the boundary between a candid *sunappu* and a banal snapshot became increasingly blurred, at least as far as their techniques were concerned. It is not until the late 1960s, however, that in the Japanese photographic community, the technical and aesthetic banality of family snapshots began to be appreciated by photographers such as Nobuyoshi Araki and deliberately applied to their works (this will be the topic of Chapter Four). Therefore, the disappearance of the boundary between professional *sunappu* and the amateur snapshot was generally taken as a threat to professional photographers.

Regarding the technological development of photographic apparatuses, an important event occurred in the late 1950s: the appearance of single-lens reflex (SLR) cameras. After the first Japanese-made SLR camera was put on the market in 1955, major camera manufacturing companies turned to developing this type of camera, because they thought it would be difficult to compete with the German Leica M3 range-finder camera that appeared in 1953.⁵ In 1959, Nihon Kogaku announced a flagship SLR camera, the Nikon F, which gained great popularity among professional photographers and continued

⁵ Lewis, ed., *The History of the Japanese Camera*, 94. Leica M3 surpassed Leica III f, the earlier version of Leitz's flagship camera, in a number of features, most importantly, a larger and clearer viewfinder.

to be sold until 1973.⁶ Other Japanese companies such as Canon or Asahi Kogaku, known for its Pentax brand, also concentrated their resources on producing SLR cameras. It was these SLR cameras that gave Japan its reputation as a camera manufacturing country. The SLR camera had some advantages over the range-finder camera, including the Leica M3. First, through the viewfinder of an SLR camera, a photographer can get a closer image to the final photograph before he or she clicks the shutter. This is because the SLR contains a mirror, a pentaprism, and a screen on which the photographer can see the actual image that will be exposed on the film. On the other hand, the image seen in the viewfinder of a range-finder camera possesses only an approximate likeness to the final image exposed on the film. This mechanism helps the photographer to visualize the final outcome to a greater extent than one can expect from a range-finder camera. In other words, with a SLR camera, the unpredictability involved with every photographic act was somewhat reduced (now that every digital camera has an LCD monitor, these matters no longer make sense, but it was a significant difference at that time). Second, thanks to this viewfinder system, a telephoto lens became much easier to handle, especially in bringing the subject into focus. For example, a 200mm lens was hardly practical before SLR cameras appeared. At the same time, SLR cameras have some disadvantages compared to range-finder cameras. Most importantly, they tend to be heavier and bulkier than the latter. This means that an SLR camera inevitably becomes conspicuous in the public space, giving the impression to passersby that the person who carries it might be a professional photographer, or, at least, a serious amateur, especially at a time when SLR cameras were not as common and disseminated as they are now. In contrast, one of the

⁶ Ibid., 100.

greatest merits of the Leica M3 is that, even though it is an expensive professional-use camera, it is not as obtrusive as, for example, the Nikon F, thus making it easier for a photographer to work in certain situations.

One might think that these technical features of SLR cameras belong to the history of the camera rather than to the history of photographic expressions. In fact, they cannot be separated from the development of *sunappu* photography, in the same way that the work of Jeff Wall or Andreas Gursky cannot be fully discussed without taking into account the digitalization of photography.⁷ Whereas Ihei Kimura continued to use the Leica throughout his long professional career, both Tômatsu and Moriyama used newly available SLR cameras as well as domestic range-finder cameras.⁸ The SLR camera brought new aspects to the genre of *sunappu*, which are all related to the above-mentioned characteristics of this type of camera. Most importantly, it made it possible to take *sunappu* with a long-focus lens. Tômatsu and Moriyama, for example, often utilized a 135mm or 105mm long-focus lens, which would produce considerably different images than a 50mm or 35mm lens. Compared to a standard lens, a long-focus lens not only enables the photographer to capture his subject from a greater distance but it also produces photographs with what is known as the “perspective compression effect” in which the distance between the main subject and the background appears to be closer than it actually is. It is also significant that the type of viewfinder characteristic of an

⁷ Interestingly, whereas the appearance of the Leica in 1925 has often been mentioned in the standard histories of photography, the spread of SLR cameras in the first half of the 1960s has rarely been discussed in relation to the development of photographic expressions.

⁸ It has been customary for illustrations in Japanese photography magazines to be accompanied by information about the type of the camera and the lens with which they were taken; thus we can know what kinds of equipment the photographers used for their magazine works.

SLR camera helped the photographers to carefully compose the picture, pre-visualizing the result, even though Tômatsu and Moriyama's works often appear to be lacking in composition, sometimes verging on formlessness (that Tômatsu had great skills in composing a picture is nevertheless apparent from his earlier *sunappu* works, like *Sound of Sea Waves 10, Kami-jima, Mie* [fig. 3-3]).⁹

The SLR camera also exhibits a number of shortcomings, however, as an apparatus for taking *sunappu*. First of all, the conspicuousness of the photographer holding an SLR camera had to be compensated with a larger distance from the subject, a distance only permitted by a telephoto lens. It is not difficult to imagine, then, that the use of the SLR camera changed the physical as well as psychological relationships between the subject and the photographer taking *sunappu*. However, the SLR camera also contributed to restoring *sunappu* to its original status. As I have pointed out above, the spread of inexpensive hand-held cameras began to blur the boundaries between a skillful *sunappu* and a casually taken instantaneous photograph, namely, a snapshot. But, newly marketed SLR cameras, as well as the kinds of photographs that only SLR cameras could produce, re-introduced the boundary, not just because proper handling of an SLR camera required a certain set of skills but also because the SLR camera itself became an emblem of seriousness and professionalism.

These are important technological innovations in the history of photography that happened around 1960. But one must also notice the major change in photographic expressions occurring around the same period, a change that cannot necessarily be

⁹ *Sound of Sea Waves 10, Kami-jima, Mie* is reproduced in Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art, ed., *Aichi Mandara: The Early Works of Shomei Tomatsu* (Nagoya: Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art, 2006), 136.

attributed to the development of photographic apparatuses. One of the most significant events in the Japanese photographic community in the late 1950s, especially in relation to Tōmatsu and Moriyama, was the introduction and reception of works by William Klein and Robert Frank. After the war ended in 1945, Japanese photographers enthusiastically received the latest trends in Western art photography. As discussed in Chapter One, in the earlier 1950s the work of Henri-Cartier Bresson was often published in Japanese photography magazines, inspiring such *sunappu* photographers as Ihei Kimura. Klein and Frank were introduced as the next generation of the most talented international photographers and, like Cartier-Bresson, their works were often received and explained as excellent models of *sunappu*. In the February 1958 issue of *Asahi Camera*, the distinguished photo critic Nobuo Ina discusses Klein's 1956 photography book *Life is Good and Good for You in New York: Trance Witness Revel* (hereafter *New York*) and Robert Frank's series *The Americans* published in the *U.S. Camera Annual 1958*, as recent works that merit attention.¹⁰ Indeed, Frank was already being followed by the Japanese photographic community even before the first edition of his *The Americans* was published in France later in the same year. However, Ina's text hardly succeeds in explaining the idiosyncrasy of his and Klein's photographs, because in his review he mostly quotes other foreign critics' words on them and concludes with a hackneyed statement that the two photographers pursue a "photographic vision."

¹⁰ William Klein, *Life is Good & Good for You in New York: trance witness revel* (London: Photography Magazine, 1956); Nobuo Ina, "Kaigai shashin kai no dôkô senkyûhyaku gojûnana nen: Dorai na hyôgen no hutari no sakka" (The Trend of Foreign Photographic Communities in 1957: Two Photographers of Dry Expressions), *Asahi Camera* (February 1958): 125-127. Two years later Ina publishes a review on the photography book *The Americans*. See Nobuo Ina, "Robâtô furanku to amerika-jin" (Robert Frank and *The Americans*), *Asahi Camera* (June 1960): 177-179.

Rather, it was a younger generation of photo critics and photographers who could intuit the real significance of the new trend of Western photography embodied in the work of Klein and Frank. They belonged to the same generation (Frank was born in 1924, Klein in 1928, and Tômatsu in 1930) and even though they came from very different backgrounds, they seemed to share a common attitude toward the works of earlier generations of photographers. Klein's *New York* exercised great stylistic influence on the work of Tômatsu and Moriyama. In February 1960, the photo critic Kôen Shigemori (1926-1992), who later became an influential educator of photography at Tokyo College of Photography, wrote on Klein's *New York*:

Certainly these works went beyond the common ideas of [photographic] expression. They are extremely blurred, have coarse grains as far as they get, and their focuses are not careful at all. The so-called Subjective Photography sometimes used these techniques. But, they appeared like experiments for experiments, were formally fixed, and did not let the viewer to feel the spirit of the photographer in the real sense. They, as it were, only followed the Modernist form, but were not avant-garde work supported by intense self-negation. Therefore, when I saw [Klein's] work for the first time, I felt something like a shiver running down my spine, as if I discovered the avant-garde in photography for the first time.¹¹

¹¹ “確かにこれらの作品は、それまでの表現常識を超えたものがあつた。激しくブレて、粒子は荒れ放題に荒れ、ピントはおかまいなしという代物なのである。いわゆる主観写真に、こういった技法がないではなかつた。けれども、それらはあまりに実験のための実験臭く、形式的に固定したものであり、作者のエスプリをほんとうの意味で感じさせるものでなかつた。いわばモダニズム的な形式を踏襲したものに過ぎず、強烈な自己否定に支えられたアバンギャルドでなかつた。／したがって、わたしはかれの作品をみたとき、はじめて写真におけるアバンギャルドを発見したような、戦リツに似たものが背筋に走るのをおぼえたものである。” Kôen Shigemori, “Wiriaumu kurain ni tsuite no oboegaki” (Notes on William Klein), *Asahi Camera* (February 1960): 144. “Subjective Photography” mentioned in Shigemori's essay refers to German exhibitions and their accompanying catalogues edited by Otto Steinert. The exhibitions were introduced in photography magazines in 1954 and the word and the concept “Subjective Photography (shukan-shugi shashin)” enjoyed some popularity as an antithesis to *Riarizumu* Photography, which was dominant at that time. For an early article discussing Subjective Photography, see Yûsaku Kamekura, “Shukanshugi shahsin” (Subjective Photography), *Asahi Camera* (May 1954): 31-40.

It is significant that Shigemori defined Klein's work as "the avant-garde in photography." In Shigemori's celebration of the avant-garde spirit and repudiation of lukewarm Modernist aesthetics, one might sense a leftist, if not Communist, rhetoric of art criticism popular at that time.¹² In his eyes, the blurred and out-of-focus imagery in *New York* signified not just a negation of conventional norms and aesthetics of art photography, but also the photographer's attitude toward the world he confronts.

Shigemori maintains:

Where did the basis of the necessity of his techniques lie? I think that these pictures were produced in order to take absolute preference over the best moment for taking a photograph (*shattâ chansu*), based on his idea that he can obtain the most vivid actuality in his encounter with the subject, in other words, in the contact moment with the subject.¹³

Shigemori also suggests that Klein's idiosyncratic pictorial style shows a respect for contingency, which is in his view "the strongest point of *sunappu* photography."¹⁴

Therefore, Klein's work involves two characteristics; on the one hand the photographer clicks the shutter of his camera as a sort of existential act, and on the other hand the resulting photographs would contain an unpredictability beyond one's expectation. In his essay Shigemori even compares Klein's style with the Action Painting of Jackson Pollock, which had been well known in the Japanese art scene since the early 1950s. Interestingly,

¹² Elsewhere Shigemori quotes the French Communist poet Louis Aragon, who was widely read in Japan at that time by left-leaning critics and artists. See Kôen Shigemori, *Shashin no shisô* (The Philosophy of Photography) (Tokyo: Ushio Shuppansha, 1972), 16.

¹³ “かれのこのような技法の必然性は、一体どこに根拠があったのだろうか。わたしの思うところでは、かれは対象への出会い、つまり対象との触発的な瞬間にこそ、もっともなまなましいアクチュアリティ（現実性）が得られるのだという観点から、シャッター・チャンスに絶対に優先させるために、こうした画面が必然的に招来されたわけなのであろう。” Shigemori, “Wiriaumu kurain ni tsuite no obogaki” (Notes on William Klein), 144.

¹⁴ “偶然的な要素といえば、作者の計算せぬ、あるいは意識せぬものがフレームの中に入っているというのが、スナップ写真のもっとも強みなのだ、とわたしは思っている。” *Ibid.*

his suggestion that blurred photographs signify the photographer's direct contact with reality anticipates the works and discourses of so-called *buré boké* (blurred and out-of-focus) photography, the photographic style that became popular in the late 1960s (which I will discuss in the following section on Moriyama).

3-2. Tômatsu's Confrontation with America

3-2-1. Occupation and the Renewal of Reportage Photography

Shômei Tômatsu was born in 1930 in Aichi Prefecture, a region that lies in the geographical center of the main island of Honshu. While he was a student at Aichi University he began practicing photography and soon became a frequent contributor to monthly photography contests for the magazine *Camera*, then judged by Ken Domon and Ihei Kimura.¹⁵ In 1954 Tômatsu became a staff photographer for *Iwanami Photography Library*, working there until 1956. His early career suggests that Tômatsu emerged from a background in which he was well acquainted with Japanese photography at that time, and the critical discussion around it. And, indeed, as many have pointed out, his early work made in his early twenties had a close affinity with *Riarizumu* Photography advocated by Domon and others.¹⁶

Although Tômatsu had gained recognition in the photographic community by 1958, when he was awarded the prestigious Newcomer's Award from the Japan Photo

¹⁵ For more detailed accounts on the background and career of Tômatsu, see Leo Rubinfien, "Shômei Tômatsu: The Skin of the Nation," in Rubinfien, ed., *Shômei Tômatsu*, 12-41; Atsuyuki Nakahara, "Tomatsu Shomei—Fifty Years of Innovation," in Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, ed., *Traces—50 Years of Tômatsu's Works* (Tokyo: Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, 1999), 188-196.

¹⁶ See, for example, Sandra Phillips "Currents in Photography in Postwar Japan," in Rubinfien, ed., *Shômei Tômatsu*, 46.

Critics Association, it was not until 1960 that his work began to receive praise for its originality. A comparison of two magazine contributions which were published in *Asahi Camera* in April 1959 and January 1960, both dealing with the U.S. base in Yokosuka, show the drastic change that Tômatsu's work underwent in this period. The former, *Kichi: Yokosuka (Naval Base: Yokosuka)* (figs. 3-4, 3-5), an example of the color photography that he rarely used before the 1970s, consists of three spreads and was the first photographic essay in which he chose a U.S. base and its neighboring town as his subject matter.¹⁷ Yokosuka is a town in Kanagawa Prefecture whose naval port was seized by the U.S. Navy in 1945, which continues to be stationed there to this day. For *Naval Base: Yokosuka* Tômatsu chose to utilize the technique and style of *sunappu*, as popularized by such photographers as Kimura and Domon and frequently appearing in the photography magazines at that time. The subjects were apparently shot while unaware of the camera, and it is clear that Tômatsu pays attention to the composition of each picture. In particular, the two photographs in the first spread give the impression that they are carefully composed. In short, it is difficult to find in this work the stylistic influence of Klein or Frank's photographs, even though they had already been introduced to a Japanese audience.

What is rather idiosyncratic about *Naval Base: Yokosuka* are the captions written by Tômatsu, printed at the bottom of each spread. They read: "A culture has come from abroad, riding on the mushroom cloud. People call it 'occupation'"; "Hey, small distorted Japanese town. You once had clean skin. Why do you hasten to 'paint it over'? Do you think it is necessary to pander to the uninvited guest coming from abroad like a

¹⁷ Shômei Tômatsu, "Kichi: Yokosuka" (Naval Base: Yokosuka), *Asahi Camera* (April 1959): 40-45.

clown?” In a photograph of a souvenir shop selling Japanese flags (fig. 3-5), Tômatsu adds the caption, “ ‘The symbol of Japan’ on sale.”¹⁸ The cynical tone of the captions and their unabashed anti-Americanism create a discord with the photographs’ rather orthodox pictorial style, making *Naval Base: Yokosuka* conspicuous among articles in the photography magazines at a time in which the American presence in Japan had never been dealt with in such a critical manner.

In most of Tômatsu’s photography books, texts—whether written by him or others—are given an important role. For example, what makes his highly praised 1966 photobook “11:02” *Nagasaki* such a powerful and heart-wrenching document of the aftermath of the atomic bomb dropping in Nagasaki is not just the force of his photographs but also the testimonies contributed by a-bomb survivors which the photographer decided to include in his book.¹⁹ A reader of a Tômatsu photobook is often required to engage not only with images but also with texts—unfortunately this aspect of Tômatsu’s work is often overlooked when it is shown in the context of art museum exhibitions. It is significant, then, that *Naval Base: Yokosuka* is characterized by a *discordance* between photographs and captions, because it is difficult to read such a strong anti-American message from the photographs themselves. The subsequent development of Tômatsu’s work was a process in which the photographer tried to reconcile this discrepancy. It was an attempt to express in photographic images what he

¹⁸ “文化が きのこ雲に乗って 海のむこうからやって来た 人は〈進駐〉と呼ぶ／ ねじれた小さな日本の街よ おまえには清潔な素肌があったはずだ なぜ いそいで〈塗りかえる〉のか 海のむこうの招かれざる客に 媚びる必要があるとでもいうのか 道化役者のように／ 売りに出された日本の〈象徴〉／ あれから十三年 招かれざる客の豪華な振舞に ねじれた小さな〈日本人〉は 次第に魅了されていったのだ” *Ibid.*, 41, 42, 44.

¹⁹ Shômei Tômatsu, “*Jûichi-ji ni-fun*” *Nagasaki* (“11:02” Nagasaki) (Tokyo: Shashin Dôjinsha, 1966).

stated in his captions accompanying his first work dealing with the U.S. bases in Japan; namely: “Hey, small distorted Japanese town. You once had clean skin. Why do you hasten to ‘paint it over’?”

From January to April of 1960, Tômatsu published a three-installment series on the U.S. bases in *Asahi Camera* and an eighteen-page photo essay in *Chûô Kôron*, the general-interest magazine to which Domon also contributed his photographs in the early 1950s.²⁰ Each of the four installments was shot in a different location, but all of them featured towns situated next to U.S. bases: Yokosuka, Chitose, Misawa, and Iwakuni. Although they have different titles, and are published in two different magazines, it is clear that they belong to the same series. They are each accompanied, after all, by the same aphorism conceived by Tômatsu, which reads: “A strange reality given to us suddenly, which I call ‘occupation.’”²¹ With additional photographs Tômatsu took in the surroundings of other U.S. bases between 1961 and 1964, these installments were later reassembled and republished in the last section of *Japan*, his major 1967 photobook which surveyed his work since 1955.²² Some of the photographs from the *Occupation*

²⁰ Shômei Tômatsu, “Kokujuingai: Kanagawa ken yokosuka” (A Harlem: Yokosuka, Kanagawa), *Asahi Camera* (January 1960): 83-87; Shômei Tômatsu, “Shisen: Hokkaido chitose kichi” (Gaze: Chitose Base in Hokkaido), *Asahi Camera* (February 1960): 67-71; Shômei Tômatsu, “Shûhen no kodomo tachi: Aomori ken misawa kichi” (Children in the Neighborhood: Misawa Base in Aomori), *Asahi Camera* (March 1960): 67-71; Shômei Tômatsu, “Iwakuni” (Iwakuni), *Chûô Kôron* (April 1960): 7-25. The works published in *Asahi Camera* were accompanied by English titles (as were other works published in the same magazine), but since they are not exact translations of the Japanese titles, I newly translated the Japanese titles into English.

²¹ “とつぜん 与えられた 奇妙な現実 それをぼくは〈占領〉と呼ぶ” Tômatsu, “Kokujuingai: Kanagawa ken yokosuka” (A Harlem: Yokosuka, Kanagawa), 83.

²² Shômei Tômatsu, *Nippon* (Japan) (Tokyo: Shaken, 1967). For more on this book, see Ryûichi Kaneko, “Shômei Tômatsu *Japan* 1967,” in Ryûichi Kaneko and Ivan Vartanian, *Japanese Photobooks of the 1960s and '70s* (New York: Aperture, 2009), 94-101. As Ryûichi Kaneko suggests in the abovementioned reference, Tômatsu continuously changed titles of his earlier works and *Occupation* was later shown with a new title *Chewing Gum and Chocolate*, as in his 1999

series have been considered not just as his most representative work but also as milestones in the history of postwar Japanese photography.²³

The first installment, *A Harlem: Yokosuka, Kanagawa* (figs. 3-6, 3-7, 3-8), published in the January 1960 issue of *Asahi Camera*, turned out to feature a considerably different style of photograph than that found in *Naval Base: Yokosuka*, despite the fact that both of them were shot in the same town of Yokosuka. Four black-and-white photographs in *A Harlem* are informed with high contrast and grainy images reminiscent of Klein's *New York*. In this work, the physical, if not psychological, distance between the photographer and his subject—namely, African American soldiers stationed at the naval base—became closer, at least compared to *Naval Base: Yokosuka*, in which the photographer kept a certain distance from his subject. Tōmatsu's deliberate use of a 25mm wide-angle lens necessitated physical proximity to his subjects (otherwise the subject would have looked too small in the frame). Moreover, it produced a surreal effect deriving from the exaggerated perspective typical of wide-angle lenses. The images verge on giving an impression that they are staged, traditionally anathema for *sunappu* photography as discussed in Chapter Two. For instance, the first photograph (fig. 3-6), in which soldiers appear to step on the photographer lying on the ground, would have been impossible without the soldiers' voluntary participation in the shooting.²⁴ Such a

retrospective at Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography. See Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, ed., *Traces—50 Years of Tōmatsu's Works*.

²³ For example, the cover of *Japanese Photobooks of the 1960s and '70s* published by Aperture in 2009 uses Tōmatsu's well-known photograph of a U. S. combat plane, originally published in *Iwakuni*.

²⁴ Interestingly, Tōmatsu restages a similar scene in *Iwakuni* (see plate 32 in Rubinfiën, ed., *Shōmei Tōmatsu: The Skin of the Nation*). Writing about this photograph, Leo Rubinfiën suggests that it is an outcome of a "collaboration" between the photographer and the soldiers. See Rubinfiën, "Shōmei Tōmatsu: The Skin of the Nation," 22-23.

theatrical effect produced by staged scenes is also characteristic of Klein's photographs in New York, as in fig. 3-9 in which a boy with a toy pistol acts like a gangster.

Tômatu must have worried that the pictorial style of *A Harlem* might have looked too imitative of Klein's, because in its sequels, *Gaze: Chitose Base in Hokkaido* published in the February issue and *Children in the Neighborhood: Misawa Base in Aomori* in the March issue of the same magazine, he avoided grainy high contrast photographs à la Klein and returned to a more traditional style of reportage photography. That is, traditional in the sense that it conveys an easily understandable symbolic meaning of the picture with a carefully arranged composition. For example, see the fourth photograph of *Children in the Neighborhood* (fig. 3-10) where the message of the photograph—the psychological distance between Japanese and Americans—might appear too overt and thus almost falls into a clichéd expression. Nevertheless, the layout in the second spread of *Gaze* (fig. 3-11), which juxtaposes an oblong photograph of a runway with a close-up of a Japanese woman, demonstrates some influence from the unusual book design of *New York*, which gives priority to stunning graphic effects in each spread rather than inviting the viewer to contemplate individual photographs (fig. 3-12). In these early works from the *Occupation* series, one can notice that Tômatu was wavering over an appropriate photographic style with which to represent such a politically and culturally-charged subject as the U.S. bases in Japan.

Both *Iwakuni*, a photo-essay published in the April 1960 issue of *Chûo Kôron*, and the *Occupation* section of his 1967 photobook *Japan* are composed of a larger number of pictures (the former are made up of seventeen photographs, the latter of fifty-three) than the installments published in *Asahi Camera*. In these works Tômatu

deliberately combines the different pictorial styles that distinguished the three *Asahi Camera* installments from each other. In the *Occupation* section of *Japan*, he even mixes photographs taken in different U.S. base towns, deliberately confusing the locality of each town. It is significant that after seeking an adequate visual language to express his subject matter, Tômatsu decided *not* to choose one; rather, he employed multiple techniques and styles and then mixed them together in a single sequence, giving the work a chaotic and unnerving effect. *Iwakuni*, presumably his most ambitious work up to then, includes high contrast photographs of American soldiers taken with a wide-angle lens (fig. 3-13), a double-exposure photograph in which a *sunappu* photo of Japanese citizens living in the neighborhood of the U.S. base is overlapped with a picture of a concrete wall (fig. 3-14), and a rather straightforward portrait of a *konketsuji*, a child of mixed Japanese and American parentage (fig. 3-15). Such heterogeneity is also noticeable in the *Occupation* section of *Japan*. The hybridity of different photographic styles within a single photographic essay carries two significant implications for his work. Firstly, by employing this format, Tômatsu rejects a stable association between the photographer and a distinctive pictorial style, thereby countering criticism that his work is derivative of William Klein. Secondly, this hybridity of styles can be interpreted as a metaphor for the hybridity that characterized U.S. base towns as well as postwar Japanese culture as a whole. As quoted above, Tômatsu considered the American presence in Japan as no less than an “invasion” of Japanese land. In his view, *konketsuji* depicted in fig. 3-15 was emblematic of the hybridity caused by this political situation. Therefore, the reason why Tômatsu mixed photographs reminiscent of the work of Klein, such as fig. 3-13, with those that look more straightforward is not just because he did not want to be considered

too imitative of the American photographer but also because he was trying to prevent his documentation of the U.S. base towns from appearing too ‘American.’ As this photographic essay suggests, one of the innovations of Tômatsu’s 1960s work lies in his acute understanding of the symbolic meanings that different photographic styles can have.

Tômatsu’s *Occupation* series attracted the attention of the photographic community at that time, but not everyone was impressed. In the October 1960 issue of *Asahi Camera*, the photographer and editor Yônosuke Natori, mentioned in Chapter Two in relation to the *Iwanami Photo Library*, published an essay entitled “The Birth of New Photography” in which he criticized Tômatsu harshly.²⁵ Natori’s text was written as a response to the photo critic Tsutomu Watanabe’s article “New Trends in Photographic Expression” published in the same magazine one month earlier.²⁶ In the article Watanabe pointed out that young emerging photographers were distancing themselves from the doctrine of *Riarizumu* Photography and, instead, turning to the “expressive power of *eizô*.” *Eizô* (映像) is a word which literally means “projected image,” but since the 1960s it has also become a widely used term in the field of visual arts. In this context, *eizô* signifies artworks that make creative use of projected images. For example, the term “video art” in English is sometimes categorized as “*eizô sakuhin*” (*sakuhin* meaning “work”) in Japanese artistic terminology. Today the art-related term *eizô* is usually used for moving images and not for static images such as photographs, but back in the 1960s it was

²⁵ Yônosuke Natori, “Atarashii shashin no tanjô” (The Birth of New Photography), *Asahi Camera* (October 1960): 147-149.

²⁶ Tsutomu Watanabe, “Atarashii shashin hyôgen no keikô” (New Trends in Photographic Expression), *Asahi Camera* (September 1960): 148-149.

applied to some types of photographic works. Summarizing what he considered the new trends of photography, Watanabe writes:

In recent photography exhibitions focusing on specific themes, photographers do not attach much importance to composing each scene and the entire montage with a story [here Watanabe uses the word “montage (*montāju*)” not in the meaning of photo-montage, but in the meaning that is used in the context of film theory: Note by Y. Kai]. Rather, there appeared more than a few photography exhibitions in which montages are used not as a technique to give a narrative to the pictures, but as a method to heighten the effect of *eizō* itself.²⁷

Watanabe names Ikko Narahara, Eikoh Hosoe, Shigeichi Nagano, and Tōmatsu as part of a new generation of photographers, although he does not specifically discuss Tōmatsu’s *Occupation* series. Countering Watanabe’s rather optimistic evaluation of the work of young photographers, Natori maintains that even though their photographs may be different from the dominant trend of Japanese photography after the War, they are in fact very similar to European commercial and fashion photography of the 1930s.²⁸ If there is some newness in their works, Natori suggests, it consists in their “aiming at creating a synthesized effect of multiple photographs.” Such a tendency, he says, bears “a possibility of expressing what photography could not have done before, by arranging not single but multiple photographs.”²⁹ According to Natori, it is meaningless to pick up one

²⁷ “また最近のテーマ主義による写真展などをながめても、個々の場面の表現や全体のモンタージュは、ストーリーでつづるということをあまり重要に考えなくなっている。モンタージュは画面に物語性を与える手法としてではなく、映像それ自体の効果を高めるための手段として使われている写真展が少なくない。これなども映像というものをいつのまにか重視するようになった現われといえよう。” Ibid., 148-149.

²⁸ Natori, “Atarashii shashin no tanjō” (The Birth of New Photography), 147. This suggestion, however, remains vague because he does not mention the names of specific photographers.

²⁹ “こうして考えてみると、今の「新しい写真」と、かつてのヨーロッパの写真との大きなちがいは、一枚ごとのテクニックではなく、何枚かの写真の総合された効果をねらっているか、あるいは一枚で完結しているかの差にあるように私は思う。数枚の写真を使うか、一枚写真か。これを単に形式だけのことという人もあろう。だが一枚の報道写真と、組み写真形式の報道写真は、形だけでなく、発想法からちがっている。同様に「新しい写真」も、テク

shot from their work and discuss whether it is new or not, good or bad, because their work makes sense only when considered as a group of multiple photographs. This is indeed an acute observation; it is one of the earliest articles that foresaw Japanese photographers' gradual emphasis on the book form as a medium of photographic expression. However, Natori's evaluation of Tômatsu, especially of his *Occupation* series, is strangely harsh. In Natori's view, Tômatsu's work is a combination of the photographic style of European commercial photography from the 1930s with the socially-oriented themes characteristic of reportage photography (*hôdô shashin*). He claims that people are misguided in their consideration of his work as innovative because of their unfamiliarity with this combination. But, Tômatsu's work, Natori insists, cannot be categorized as reportage photography, or if it is still regarded as reportage photography, it is a failed example. This is because:

Reportage photography respects specific facts and specific times. . . . Tômatsu abandoned such respect for specific facts in reportage photography. He has directed himself toward the point where he is not confined to [specific] times and places. To take this conversely, he has broken a connection with reportage photography, by disregarding time and place. It is the case with the series *Occupation*, and also with *Ie (House)*.³⁰

In the caption accompanying a reproduction of *Gaze*, the second installment of the *Occupation* series published in *Asahi Camera*, Natori writes:

These are photographs which are barely more than an impression. Almost no effort was done to make them understood by others. For some people, they do not

ニックは三十年前と同じでも、一枚でなく、何枚もの写真を配列することで、今までに写真が表現できなかったことを、表現し得る可能性を含んでいる。” Ibid., 149.

³⁰ “報道写真は特定な事実、特定な時間を尊重する。前にも書いた通り東松はこの報道写真の、特定の事実尊重を捨てた。時とか場所とかに制限されない方向に進もうとした。逆にいえば、報道写真とは、時間、場所にとらわれないことによって絶縁してしまったのだ。「占領」のシリーズもそうだし、「家」もそうである。” Ibid.

make sense at all. Whereas [Shigeichi] Nagano's photographs are skillful commentaries, this is a poem drawn with photographs.³¹

Although Natori condemns Tômatsu for ignoring “specific facts and times,” the source of his dissatisfaction seems to have been Tômatsu's deliberate disregard for the conventional style of storytelling afforded by the medium of photography, a disregard which was already pointed out by Watanabe as the common thread among the works of young photographers. Natori maintained that traditional reportage photography, which was born in Germany and then developed in the United States by such graphic magazines as *Life*, has always “handled stories with care” and let the photographs be understood in conjunction with stories.³² As he reiterates the point in his posthumously published *How to Read Photographs*, Natori believed that readability is the one of the most important characteristics of reportage photography, and claimed that it is obtained by arranging photographs based on a coherent story.³³ As discussed in Chapters One and Two, Kimura and Domon's cautious attitudes towards storytelling through photography reflected their experiences as propaganda photographers. Natori, who was also engaged with propaganda media funded by the state, seems to have been more nonchalant about the risk of reportage photography falling into the category of propaganda photography. In his reply printed in the following issue of *Asahi Camera*, Tômatsu insisted that he had never

³¹ “これはもっぱら印象だけの写真だ。他人にわからせるという努力はほとんどなされていない。人によっては何が何だかわからないだろう。長野の写真を巧みな解説記事とすればこれは写真で描いた詩といえよう。” Ibid.

³² “だから当然ストーリーを尊重するタイプとなり、これによって撮られる写真は、内容も、構図も、画面の調子も、ストーリーがもっとも理解しやすいように、それを優先して決められる。” Ibid., 147.

³³ Yônosuke Natori, *Shashi no yomi kata* (How to Read Photographs) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1963), 46-74.

“abandoned respect for facts” and what he rejected was reportage photography *according to* Natori.³⁴ Tômatsu did not discuss the narrativity of reportage photography in this reply, and unfortunately their exchanges did not develop further.

Although it has not been previously pointed out, as far as I can tell, it seems that Natori’s criticism was not just a response to Watanabe’s “New Trends in Photographic Expression,” but also related to a roundtable in which Watanabe, Tômatsu, and the film critic Susumu Okada participated a few months earlier. The roundtable, entitled “A New Wave of Camera Art,” was published in the July 1960 issue of *Kamera Geijutsu*. As Natori’s essay on his trip to Europe was published in the same issue, following the pages of the roundtable, it is unlikely that he did not notice the roundtable. In it the participants discuss the recent attention to *eizô* across different genres of visual arts.³⁵ Responding to Okada’s remark that “theories on *eizô* began from the point where the story-first policy was negated,” Watanabe maintains:

In the field of photography, it emerged with such works as William Klein’s *New York*. Reportage photography until today has had similar faults with those in films. It [reportage photography] emphasized a story very much, being a montage that develops itself visually, keeping the coherence of the story. And I am negative about this. Although it may explain an event, it is no more than an explanation and cannot get to the heart of the issue. Nor does it show the photographer’s point of view, opinion, or his or her way of thinking.³⁶

³⁴ Shômei Tômatsu, “Boku wa natori-shi ni hanron suru” (I refute Mr. Natori), *Asahi Camera* (November 1960): 156-157. Natori did not answer Tômatsu’s reply and their exchanges ended. In the writings on the history of Japanese photography, these two articles by Natori and Tômatsu have been customarily called “Natori tōmatsu ronsō (Natori-Tōmatsu Dispute),” but it is obvious that their exchanges were too undeveloped to be called a “dispute.” When the term began to be used is unclear, but it is already used in Tetsuo Kishi’s 1974 book *Shashin jânarizumu* (Photojournalism). See Tetsuo Kishi, *Shashin Jânarizumu* (Photojournalism) (Tokyo: David-sha, 1969), 79-83.

³⁵ Tsutomu Watanabe, Susumu Okada, and Shômei Tômatsu, “Zadankai: Kamera geijutsu no atarashii nami (Roundtable: A New Wave of Camera Art), *Kamera Geijutsu* (July 1960): 176-180.

³⁶ “写真の場合は、[ストーリー主義の否定が]ウィリアム・クラインの「ニューヨーク」の仕事あたりから出てきている。いままでのルポルタージュ写真は、映画と同じような欠点を持っていた。ストーリーを非常に重要に考えていた。だから話のつじつまを合わせて視覚的に

Agreeing with Watanabe, Tômatsu suggests that the “story-first policy (sutôri shugi)” cannot help but fail in reportage photography because it “unreasonably tries to fit itself to the inconsistent reality.” He then concludes, “the old-style theory on combined-photographs (*kumi-shashin*) was somewhat impossible from the start.”³⁷ Although his name was not mentioned in the conversations between Watanabe and Tômatsu, Natori must have felt as if he was being criticized. After all, he was the one who had introduced the concept of reportage photography to Japan from Germany, where he lived in the early 1930s, and was known as an advocate for what had been called combined-photographs (*kumi-shashin*), a type of photographic essay consisting of several photographs.³⁸ If so, Natori’s antipathy toward Tômatsu’s work must have come not just from his observation of *Occupation*, but also from Tômatsu’s outspoken rejection of Natori’s theory of combined-photographs and story-first policy.

展開していくというモンタージュだったわけでしょう。ぼくなんかかなりそれに対しては否定的なんです。それは一つの事柄を説明することはできるかもしれないが、しかしそれは説明であって、その問題のあり方をえぐることはできないし、テーマに対する作者の見方というか、主張というか、考え方というものは出てこない。” *Ibid.*, 176.

³⁷ “渡辺さんのおっしゃったいままでのルポルタージュが、ストーリー中心に構成されたということ。しかしこれは写真の場合は初めから無理だったのではないのでしょうか。つじつまの合わない現実を無理に合わせようとするところに、ストーリー主義の欠陥があるのではないのでしょうか。古い型の組写真論は初めから何か無理だったということですね。ああいうやり方では現実がすべて浮いてしまう。” *Ibid.*

³⁸ In photojournalism’s use of photographs it is usual to arrange multiple photographs, but in the photography magazines, in which individual pictures were often treated like a tableaux, a group of photographs presented as a single work were given the special term of “*kumi-shashin* (combined-photographs)” In 1956 Natori published a book entitled *Kumi-shashin no tsukurikata* (How to Make Combined-Photographs). See Yônosuke Natori, *Kumi-shashin no tsukurikata* (How to Make Combined-Photographs) (Tokyo: Keiyû-sha, 1956).

3-2-2. Visualizing the Mood of Americanization

Skepticism about telling stories with photographs is certainly found in Tômatsu's socially-oriented work. However, it would be misleading to claim that Tômatsu denied the significance of a story completely. What he rejected instead was a coherent linear story as the guiding force of his photographic essays. This will be clear if one compares Tômatsu's work with that of Domon. For example, even though it can be hardly said that Domon's *The Children of Chikuhô* has a framework of conventional narrative cinema or that it is an illustration of a written storyline, it is still meant to be read or looked at sequentially. The book ends with photographs of miners going on strike, giving an uplifting feeling to the tragic mood overshadowing the entire book. In contrast, Tômatsu's work typically lacks an introduction and/or conclusion, producing an impression that the images are repetitive and reiterating the same message. Such a structure, however, does not necessarily mean that his work is devoid of any story. It would be more exact to say that Tômatsu tried to tell stories which could not be told in a coherent linear narrative. His ideas about the narrativity of reportage photography is shown in his explanation of what he called "group-photographs (*gun-shashin*).” In his essay "From Combined-Photographs to Group-Photographs" published in 1970, Tômatsu again took issue with the theory of combined-photographs by Natori, who had already died in 1962. After quoting Natori's words that "combining photographs is an elliptical method in order to stop the [unwanted] chatter of photographs" and to tell what the photographer intended exactly, Tômatsu maintains:

However we combine photographs, we cannot limit the meanings of them. It is the role of texts that limits the meanings.

The purpose of combining photographs is not stopping the chatter of photographs but instead letting photographs have a louder chatter. If one presents

multiple photographs with a clear intention, it amplifies the volume of a single photograph. I would like to call such photographs-as-group “group-photographs (*gun shashin*)” to distinguish it from what Mr. Natori called combined-photographs (*kumi shashin*).

Group-photographs are the condition in which photographs are presented as a mass, as a nebula-like lump. Therefore, in group-photographs which do not have a story, neither Five Ws [Who, What, When, Where, and Why] nor a logical development of the story (*kisyôtenketsu*) are important [as in Natori’s combined-photographs]. Group-photographs are thrown out in front of the viewer as an equivalent of diverse realities which are not named yet. Group-photographs show their general direction, but only words can attach a meaning to the photographs.³⁹

While Tômatsu’s photographs are “presented as a mass, as a nebula-like lump,” they still do not completely dispense with a story, despite his antagonism towards the story-first policy of reportage photography. His claim that words are necessary to “attach a meaning to photographs” suggests that his work is also based on, or aligned with, a certain textual context, as were more conventional works of reportage photography which Natori advocated.⁴⁰ The difference lies, therefore, not so much in the existence or nonexistence of a story but in the relationships between photographs and texts.

³⁹ “つまり、いかに写真だけを組合わせても、写真の意味を限定することはできない。意味を限定するのは、やはり文章の役割なのである。／写真と写真を組合わせるのは、単写真のおしゃべりを止めさせるためではなく、逆にさらに多くのおしゃべりをさせるためだ。はっきりとした意図を持って、写真を複数で提示すれば、それは単写真の持つ音量をさらに増幅する。このような群としての写真を、ぼくは、名取氏のいう組写真と区別するために、“群写真”とよびたい。／群写真は写真をマッスとして、星雲状の塊として提示した状態をいう。したがって、ストーリーをもたぬ群写真では、五Wも起承転結も問題とはならない。群写真は、名付けられる以前のさまざまな現実の対応物として、見るものの前に投げだされる。群写真は、自ら全体の方向性を示しはする。だが、写真の意味付けはやはり文字によるしかない。” Shômei Tômatsu, “Kumishashin kara gunshashin e” (From Combined-Photographs to Group-Photographs), *Sunappu shashin (Sunnapu Photography)*, vol. 3, *Asahi kamera kyôishitsu (Asahi Camera Lectures)* (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1970), 147.

⁴⁰ For Natori, *Life* served as an exemplary model of photojournalism. In *How to Read Photographs*, he refers to *Country Doctor*, a well-known photo-essay by Eugene Smith published in the October 11, 1948 issue of *Life*, as “the most successful example” of “the American-type human interest reportage photography (*hôdô shashin*).” (“アメリカ式のヒューマン・インタレストに訴える報道写真”). See Natori, *Shashi no yomi kata (How to Read Photographs)*, 28-30.

As suggested above, the first photographic essay in which Tômatsu dealt with the U.S. base in Japan was accompanied by captions stating the contamination of postwar Japanese culture by an ongoing Americanization. The idiosyncrasy of Tômatsu's mature work is found in its attempt to visually express the *mood* of such a contamination. In this sense his work may be psychological, but is not particularly subjective as Natori claimed it to be. For, as I will discuss below, the mood of Americanization was something that was felt by a large population of Japanese citizens, artists and novelists included. To fully understand the shock that Tômatsu's *Occupation* gave to the photographic community at that time, it is important to remember that there had been no precedent for the kind of unequivocally anti-American attitude that his work conveyed.⁴¹ In fact, postwar Japanese photography until 1960 was characterized by its *lack* of works that tackled America as its subject matter. Photographers generally turned their heads away from the American presence in Japan, because during the occupation period, that lasted from August 1945 until April 1952, any criticisms of the SCAP (Supreme Commander for Allied Powers) and the occupying forces were strictly censored in the mass media. Therefore it was practically impossible for such photography magazines as *Camera* and *Asahi Camera* to publish photographic essays dealing with the U.S. military bases during this period. Yet even after the occupation ended and censorship was lifted, Japanese photographers were

⁴¹ When the *Occupation* series was published in *Asahi Camera* in 1960, most photo critics showed dismay, while not hesitating to admit its significance. It is symptomatic that critics did not discuss its subject matter but mention only its formal characteristics; they seem to be cautious about showing their own opinions about Tômatsu's anti-American attitude. See Tatsuo Fukushima et al., "Watashi no besuto faibu: Shashin zasshi ichi gatsu gô no kuchie kara" (My Best Five: From the Illustrations of the January Issues of Photography Magazines), *Asahi Camera* (February 1960): 147-149; Tatsuo Fukushima et al., "Watashi no besuto faibu: Shashin zasshi ni gatsu gô no kuchie kara" (My Best Five: From the Illustrations of the February Issues of Photography Magazines), *Asahi Camera* (March 1960): 153-155; Tatsuo Fukushima et al., "Watashi no besuto faibu: Shashin zasshi san gatsu gô no kuchie kara" (My Best Five: From the Illustrations of the March Issues of Photography Magazines), *Asahi Camera* (April 1960): 145-147.

still reluctant to confront the American military presence in their country. Such a reluctance largely corresponded to Japanese society's ambivalent stance toward America. In postwar Japan, which accepted the Potsdam Declaration, the United States was often regarded as a "liberating army." Once the war ended with Japan's defeat, conservative politicians, who had desperately pushed forward the imperial war, quickly switched to a pro-American attitude, proclaiming the renewal of the nation in partnership with the United States; it was the communists and socialists who instead criticized the United States and its militarism, especially after the Cold War began and the U.S.'s confrontational stance against communism became clear.⁴² As mentioned in earlier chapters, both Kimura and Domon had a history of working as state-funded propaganda photographers, but they were never, at least in the 1950s, accused of having had an active role in the war, and remained in influential positions in the postwar photographic community. In this regard, Kimura and Domon were in a circumstance similar to that of Japan's conservative politicians, despite Domon's avowed antipathy for authorities; if they openly criticized the United States, which was defined as a democratic country in the official rhetoric, they would run the risk of evoking their past as imperialists.

Therefore, a general lack of photographs depicting motifs related to the U.S. military—it was stationed everywhere in Japan at that time and thus could not have been missed—may be seen as proof of Kimura and Domon's precarious political status, as well as a sign of their own ambivalence toward America. The absence of American themes is particularly evident in some of Domon's reportage photography. For example, in *Uchinada*, a 1953 photo story reporting the local residents' opposition to the

⁴² Eiji Oguma, *Minshu to aikoku: Sengo nippon no nashonatrizumu to kokyôsei* ('Democracy' and 'Patriotism': Nationalism and Publicness in Postwar Japan) (Tokyo: Shinyo-sha, 2002), 273-287.

construction of the test-firing site (see the last section of Chapter Two), there are no photographs that even indirectly suggest American military intervention in the Korean Peninsula as the original cause of the problem. In a similar way, in his *Hiroshima* published in 1958 Domon decided not to include any photograph that suggests the cause of the tragedy; he deliberately left open the question that continues to be asked to this day—whether it was the United States or the Japanese government that was ultimately responsible for the sufferings of people in Hiroshima. Domon’s efforts to avoid depicting the American presence in Japan in his *Hiroshima* becomes all the more conspicuous when one compares it to Tômatsu’s 1966 book, “11:02” *Nagasaki*, which concludes with photographs of U.S. soldiers walking down the street (fig. 3-16) and a U.S. aircraft carrier.

However, it goes without saying that the American presence in Japan was one of the primary concerns of Japanese people after the War and, in fact, the theme had been already explored in the fields of literature, film, and art.⁴³ For example, in his 1954 novel *The American School*, the writer Nobuo Kojima (1915-2006) describes an observation trip undertaken by several English teachers to the American school newly built after the War by the order of the SCAP.⁴⁴ One female teacher takes the visit as a good opportunity to practice her English, but her male colleague gets into a panic once they enter the American school. For the Japanese teachers, the imposing building of the American school symbolizes the power and wealth of their former enemy, and was experienced as

⁴³ For more on what Michael S. Molasky calls “occupation literature,” see his *The American Occupation of Japan and Okinawa: Literature and Memory* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999).

⁴⁴ Nobuo Kojima, “The American School,” translated by William Sibley, in Howard Hibbett, ed., *Contemporary Japanese Literature* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), 120-144.

an intrusion into Japanese territory. Younger writers such as Kenzaburo Ôe (1935-), a Nobel laureate, and Akiyuki Nosaka (1930-), who are part of the same generation as Tômatsu, also responded to the American presence in postwar Japan, dealing with the contact between U.S. soldiers and Japanese citizens.⁴⁵ Ôe, Nosaka, and Tômatsu were all too young to be mobilized in the war but old enough to remember Japan under the occupation period.

Ôe's 1958 novel *Prize Stock* narrates a boy's encounter with an African American soldier captured in a small village in Japan during the end of the war. In this short story located in an imaginary setting, the boy was struck by the alterity of the soldier's body and its erotic appeal.⁴⁶ As the critic Michael Molasky suggests, it cannot be denied that there is a stereotypical view of African Americans in Ôe's description, but it also reveals a general attitude among the Japanese toward American soldiers, with whom they had no direct contact until the War ended.⁴⁷ In literature and film at that time, American soldiers, regardless of their race, were often depicted as violent, full of carnal desire, yet generous and kind at the same time. In short, the soldiers—the type of people ordinary Japanese encountered in their daily lives—embodied the alterity of America.

In Tômatsu's work on the U.S. bases, it is not difficult to find a similar representation of otherness symbolically expressed through the bodies of American soldiers (figs. 3-6, 3-8). As Tômatsu stated in the caption of his 1959 photographic essay

⁴⁵ Molasky, *The American Occupation of Japan and Okinawa*, 157-177.

⁴⁶ Kenzaburo Ôe, "Prize Stock," in *Teach Us to Outgrow Our Madness: Four Short Novels by Kenzaburô Ôe*, translated by John Nathan (New York: Grove Press, 1977), 111-168.

⁴⁷ Molasky, *The American Occupation of Japan and Okinawa*, 75-81.

Naval Base: Yokosuka, America was, for him, “the uninvited guest from abroad.” Such a view underscores his 1960s works on this theme; in 1975 he wrote:

If I am asked to define the postwar history of Japan with one word, I would answer “Americanization” without hesitation.

I have a solid sense that Americanization started from the U.S. military bases. I have an image that America leaked through the wire net surrounding the bases and then permeated all over Japan.

In 1945, the towns of almost completely beaten-up Japan were full of soldiers of the Allied Powers. They scattered chocolate and chewing gum over the heads of us who were starving. That was America. For better or worse, this is how I met America.

Since then, I have an obsession with “occupation.” I cannot look away from America that occupies a major part in me, the invisible country about which I can say nothing but a fateful encounter, the foreign country that appeared in the concrete form of the military, and the “occupation” by the U.S. forces.⁴⁸

Tômatsumi's artistic ambition was to visualize his “solid sense” of Americanization in postwar Japan, an impression that was hardly subjective, given that it was shared by the majority of Japanese. It is notable that he rejected the traditional style of reportage photography characterized by a linear coherent narrative. Instead, as I discussed above, he arranged his images into what he called “group-photographs,” as opposed to “combined-photographs” advocated by Natori. His distrust of photo essays that speak a linear story consisting of an introduction, body, and conclusion was perhaps because he

⁴⁸ “日本の戦後史を一口で特長づけよ、と問われれば、ぼくはためらいなく、アメリカニゼーションと答えるだろう。／アメリカニゼーションは米軍基地から始まった、という実感がぼくにはある。アメリカが、基地に張りめぐらされた金網の網目から、じわじわとはみ出して、やがて日本全土に染みとおっていったというイメージだ。／1945年、ほとんど決定的に打ちのめされた日本の町には、連合軍の将兵が満ちあふれていた。彼らは、餓え切ったぼくらの頭上に、チョコレートとチューインガムをばらまいた。それがアメリカだった。幸か不幸か、ぼくはこのようにしてアメリカと出会ったのだった。／以来ぼくは、『占領』にこだわりをもちつづけている。ぼくの中で大きく比重を占めるアメリカ、運命的な出会いとしか言いようのない不過視の国家、軍隊という具体的なかたちで立ち現れた異国、米軍による『占領』からぼくは目を外らすわけにはいかないのだ。” Shômei Tômatsumi, *Taiyô no enpitsu* (The Pencil of the Sun) (Tokyo: Mainichi Shimbunsha, 1975), unpaginated (the page following plate 58).

felt that his subject matter could not be adequately grasped within this framework. His photographic essays about U.S. bases, as well as the 1966 photography book “11:02” *Nagasaki*, do not propose any solution or hint at a potentially bright future. Rather, Tômatsu’s photo essays and books in the 1960s seem to repeat the same pessimistic message throughout. Certainly this is a result of deliberate artistic decision, but it is also related to the nature of the subjects; that is, their difficulty as social issues: indeed, the insufficient treatment of atomic bomb victims in Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the burdens imposed by U.S. bases in Japan are two major issues that continue to be debated.

As I have suggested above, his 1960s work is often characterized by the coexistence of different photographic styles, producing an impression of heterogeneity, confusion, and chaos. Despite the lack of a single pictorial style, they are coherent in their ominous mood, reflecting Tômatsu’s (and other people’s) view on the ongoing Americanization of Japan. It is worthwhile to note that a psychological mood is often lacking in the work of reportage photography. Of course, they can be heart wrenching, as are a number of photographs taken on the battlefields of the Vietnam War, for example. But the visceral reactions those photographs evoke are usually owed to their subject matter rather than to their pictorial styles.⁴⁹

In contrast, Tômatsu’s work is carefully crafted to produce a certain mood among a sequence of photographs, by paying attention to the choice of photographic style.⁵⁰ In

⁴⁹ A rare exception is probably Robert Capa’s iconic photographs documenting the invasion of Normandy, the blurred images of which successfully convey the tension of the operation. But, as is well known, this effect was a by-product of the poor development process, and not an intended one.

⁵⁰ Apart from the photographic style, the choice of subjects also determines the overall psychological effect of the work. Indeed, Tômatsu’s work is often characterized by its surrealistic treatment of static objects, such as the well-known photograph of a beer bottle distorted by the heat of the atomic bomb explosion. Critics often have pointed out that Tômatsu’s work gives a visceral impression to the viewer. Shirôyasu Suzuki aptly observes that the tactility of the objects captured in his photographs

this regard, it is suggestive that the earlier work in his *Occupation* series was greatly influenced by William Klein's *New York*. This photography book became an important inspiration for Japanese photographers, not just because it was a work taken in New York by an American-born photographer, but also because, as the photo critic Kôen Shigemori noted in the above-quoted review, it struck the Japanese viewer with its pessimistic—if not hateful—view of the American metropolis.⁵¹ Although the influence on Tômatsu is less explicit, Robert Frank's *The Americans*, which was introduced in Japan during this same period, is also permeated by a similar gloomy sentiment toward America. Tômatsu's originality lies in the fact that he utilized their photographic techniques, such as blurred images and elliptical descriptions, for the purpose of documenting the conditions of contemporary Japanese society. By combining such images with explanatory texts (notice that in both *New York* and *The American*, texts are given no more than a minor role), Tômatsu attempted to represent mood as a fact of Japanese society, rather than as a reflection of his own psychological state.

But Tômatsu's method was not flawless. In fact, in some instances it turned out to be a double-edged sword. This seems particularly evident in his *Okinawa Okinawa Okinawa*, a 1969 work concluding a prolific decade of his photographic production. At that time Okinawa, a subtropical island to the south of Kyushu, was still under the administration of the United States, which governed the region from 1945 until 1972; Tômatsu had to obtain a passport to enter the island. Okinawa was the only place in the territory of Japan where, during the Second World War, land battles took place between

contributes to such an impression. See Shirôyasu Suzuki, "Tômatsu shômei ron" (Notes on Shômei Tômatsu), *Kikan shashin eizo (Photo Image)* 2 (February 1969): 91-94.

⁵¹ Shigemori, "Wiriaumu kurain ni tsuite no oboegaki" (Notes on William Klein), 144-146.

Japanese and American armies, costing the lives of almost a hundred thousand civilians. After the war, the U.S military occupied the island and no small part of the land was turned into U.S. military bases. Tômatsu's photo reportage on Okinawa first appeared in the June and July 1969 issues of *Asahi Camera*, and then it was published as an independent book, *Okinawa, Okinawa, Okinawa*.⁵² The photographs—which offer visual records of both the inside and outside of the bases—are stylistically similar to his earlier work on the U.S bases and Nagasaki. In his avoidance of making images that are too descriptive, he succeeds in conveying an ominous mood that seems to overshadow Okinawa. In one spread of the book *Okinawa, Okinawa, Okinawa*, Tômatsu juxtaposes a blurred photograph of a B-52 bomber with helmeted protestors squatting down on the ground (fig. 3-17). Technically speaking, it must have been possible to take a sharply focused picture of this flying bomber. Tômatsu, however, decided to blur the image in order to produce a certain visual effect. The blur, first of all, hints at the speed of the bomber. But the silhouetted and blurred image of the airplane also gives the impression that it is a sinister object that is too elusive to be clearly seen. Note that what is blurred in the picture is not just the bomber but also the foliage occupying the lower right of the composition. This suggests that the blur was caused not just by the fast movement of the bomber but also by the shaking of Tômatsu's hand when he clicked the shutter (because the foliage itself is immobile). Thus, the blurred foliage implies the excitement of the photographer (even if it was concocted). But it can also be considered a means by which

⁵² Shômei Tômatsu, "Okinawa Okinawa Okinawa" (Okinawa, Okinawa, Okinawa), *Asahi Camera* (June 1969): 74-106, 228-231; Shômei Tômatsu, "Nihon-koku okinawa-ken" (Okinawa Prefecture, Japan), *Asahi Camera* (July 1969): 122-138, 275-277; Shômei Tômatsu, *Okinawa Okinawa Okinawa* (Okinawa, Okinawa, Okinawa) (Tokyo: Shaken, 1969).

the photographer emphasizes the physical impact of the bomber on its surroundings, as if it were so powerful and destructive that it caused the foliage to shake.

To supplement the photographs, Tômatsu writes a long commentary that explains the current political and economic situation surrounding Okinawa. Citing facts and numbers which show how seriously the U.S military is damaging the lives of Okinawan people, Tômatsu accuses both the United States and the Japanese government, which endorsed the U.S.'s military intervention in Vietnam. Imbued with righteous sympathy for the oppressed, his writing reflects the climate of the period, during which the New Left movement and dissident cultures reached their peak in Japan. Unlike most of his earlier works, in the book version of *Okinawa, Okinawa, Okinawa*, Tômatsu lays out photographs and texts on the same pages, rather than separating them into different sections of the book. In so doing, he must have tried to unify the photographs and the texts, giving equal importance to both. However, one cannot help but notice that the photographs and the text seem to form somewhat of an odd pair. That is, the more the message in the text becomes informational and didactic, the more the photographs strike the viewer with their abstractness and arbitrariness.⁵³ For example, in the caption accompanying the photograph of the B-52 bomber discussed above, Tômatsu writes about its deafening noise that tormented the residents of Kadena Village adjacent to the U.S. Air Base. Once one reads the caption, he or she is struck by Tômatsu's skillfulness in rendering the image of the bomber so that it expresses sound. As I suggested above, the technique employed in the making of this photograph can be detected from the image

⁵³ One contemporary critic noticed this. Commenting on a photograph of the sea in *Okinawa, Okinawa Okinawa*, the critic Shirôyasu Suzuki stated that he "[could] not help but doubt the abstractness of this *eizô*" ("だが、私はこの映像の抽象性を疑わざるを得ないし (...)"). See Suzuki, "Tômatsu shomei ron" (Notes on Shômei Tômatsu), 94.

itself. But the association of this image with its associated text, in which the photographer emphasizes the noise of the bomber, makes the technique even more arbitrary. Such an impression inevitably impedes Tômatsu's goal of presenting photographs as "an equivalent of diverse realities which are not named yet." That is, once the photographs are perceived as abstract images that efficiently convey his messages, they begin to resemble artificial "works" rather than objective documents.

As the reader might have noticed, the word *sunappu* has been mentioned in this section only a few times. In fact, as far as I can tell, Tômatsu has never defined his work in relationship to *sunappu*—the word rarely appears in his writings and interviews. One can speculate a few reasons for this. Firstly, we have to remember the ambiguity of the concept of *sunappu* in the 1960s. As discussed in the first section of this chapter, when small hand-held cameras became an affordable commodity for everyone, *sunappu* as a genre came to be increasingly associated with amateurism. In addition, after *Riarizumu* Photography, a photographic movement involving amateur photographers, came to an end around 1960, the social aspect of *sunappu*—namely, *sunappu*'s affinity with reportage photography—was no longer apparent. Given that Tômatsu's work was opposed to amateurism in every respect, it is unsurprising that he did not use the word *sunappu* to describe his photographs.

Nevertheless, the significance of Tômatsu's reportage photography cannot be understood without considering its relationship to the works and theories of senior photographers who advocated *sunappu* photography, such as Natori and Domon. For Domon, *sunappu* was a technique that guaranteed the unstagedness of the image, thereby leading the photographer to what he called *Riarizumu* Photography. But, when Domon

tackled subjects with whom he had sympathy, such as small girls in a desolate coal-mining town, he was forced to abandon the candidness of *sunappu*, assuming the risk of jeopardizing the doctrine of *Riarizumu* Photography. In Tômatsu's work, one can find a similar application and abandonment of *sunappu*; among his photographs taken with a hand-held camera, some subjects are taken unbeknownst to the camera and others, especially the victims of the atomic bomb in Nagasaki, are apparently posed. But there is a significant difference between Tômatsu's and Domon's use of *sunappu*. For the latter, its unstagedness was the most important characteristic. Tômatsu, on the other hand, often used *sunappu* to emphasize his antagonistic relationships with his subjects. In the concluding pictures of "11:02" *Nagasaki* discussed above (fig. 3-16), Tômatsu inserted a candid shot of American soldiers, as if he had been a sniper aiming at the enemy sneaking into his country. As I pointed out in the concluding section of Chapter Two, *sunappu* can be an aggressive way of taking photographs of people, regardless of the photographer's intention. While Domon and other photographers of his generation tried to conceal the aggressiveness of *sunappu* in their works, Tômatsu applied it to his photographic representations of the American presence in Japan, a subject so overwhelming that one could not fully confront it without an aggressive attitude. Tômatsu's 1960s photographs thus expanded the possibilities of *sunappu* photography, despite his reticence on the subject.

3-3. Moriyama and the American Sensibility

3-3-1. *Sunappu* according to Moriyama

Daido Moriyama was born in 1938 in Osaka Prefecture. Unlike Tômatsu, who was once an amateur photographer contributing to photography magazines, Moriyama began his photographic career by apprenticing himself to Takeji Iwamiya, a commercial photographer based in Osaka, when he was twenty-one years old. Moriyama then moved to Tokyo, where he worked at the studio of Eikoh Hosoe for three years. He began to show his photographs in photography magazines around 1963, attracting attention with his works published in *Camera Mainichi* in 1965, such as *Yokosuka* (fig. 3-18). In the late 1960s, he developed a unique photographic style that has been dubbed “*burê bokê* (blurred and out-of-focus),” causing heated controversies in the photographic community. Since then, Moriyama has remained one of the most popular and admired photographers in Japan, despite a relatively inactive period in the second half of the 1970s and a change in his photographic style and subjects in the early 1980s.⁵⁴

Compared to Tômatsu, Moriyama’s connection with *sunappu* appears more conspicuous. In his essays and interviews, he has often used the word “*sunappu*” to describe his work and the photographic act. As mentioned in the Introduction, in 2010 he published a small book entitled *An Exhortation to Street-Sunappu* consisting of his photographs and interviews with the editor Takeshi Nakamoto. In the book Moriyama states that he “liked very much to wander around the town since [he] was a child” and “because a person who had such a basic inclination took a camera in his hand, naturally he arrived at street-*sunappu*.”⁵⁵ His usage of the term “*sunappu*” was in accordance with

⁵⁴ For Moriyama’s career through the 1990s, see Sandra Phillips, “*Daidô Moriyama: Stray Dog*,” in Phillips and Munroe, eds., *Daidô Moriyama: Stray Dog*, 9-30.

⁵⁵ “子供のころから、学校にもろくすっぽ行かず、街をウロウロするのがいちばん好きだったから。そういう基本的な性癖が下地にある人間がカメラを手にしたわけだから、自然と路

the mainstream discourse of Japanese photography; namely, the definition of *sunappu* as candid photographs taken with a hand-held camera. For example, he wrote in 1987:

When you take instantaneous *sunappu* in the town, you cannot check everything you see in the viewfinder. [You would take *sunappu*] with a highly physical impulse or judgment. So, it is likely that even those who proudly call themselves photographers do not take photographs discerning everything. On the contrary, it is what makes candid *sunappu shotto* interesting.⁵⁶

For Moriyama, like many other photographers in Japan, *sunappu* as a technique was defined as candid photographs taken instantaneously. But there is also a uniqueness in Moriyama's understanding of *sunappu*. When *sunappu* became a popular photographic genre in the 1950s, its subjects were mostly human beings and therefore it mattered if the photograph was a "candid" shot of the subject (it is almost nonsensical to discuss whether a photograph of, say, a tree is candid or not). For example, in the 1966 edition of *Sunappu Shashin (Sunappu Photography)* by *Asahi Shimbunsha*, almost all of the photographs printed as examples of *sunappu* were images of people.⁵⁷ In contrast, human beings are not always the subjects of photographs that Moriyama defined as *sunappu*. To consider the meaning of *sunappu* for Moriyama, we have to take into consideration changes in his work during his long career since the mid-1960s: generally, humans

上スナップに行き着いたんだよ。” Daido Moriyama and Takeshi Nakamoto, *Rojô sunappu no susume (An Exhortation to Street-Sunappu)* (Tokyo: Kobunsha, 2010), 7.

⁵⁶ “いったいに、街なかで瞬間的なスナップをするときに、そういちいちファインダーに映る視野の隅々まで確認できるものではない。あくまでも瞬時の印象とか、とっさの感応とか、きわめて生理的な衝動や判断によるものであろう。だから、意外に、写真家などとえらそうに言ったところで、じつはそれほどなにもかもを見極めて撮っているわけではないはずだ。ただそれが逆に、キャンディッドなスナップ・ショットの面白いところでもある。” Daido Moriyama, “Utsukushii shashin no tsukurikata 4: Ichimai no shashin kara” (How to Make Beautiful Photographs 4: From One Photograph) (March 1987), reprinted in *Shashin to no taiwa soshite shashin kara shashin e (A Dialogue with Photography and From Photography/To Photography)* (Tokyo: Seikyusha, 2006), 412.

⁵⁷ Asahi Shimbunsha, ed., *Sunappu shashin (Sunappu Photography)* (1966).

appear more often in his earlier photographs. But, from a color photograph he contributed to the 1970 edition of *Sunappu Photography* (fig. 3-2), it is clear that by 1970 he understood that *sunappu* was not bound to the human subject.⁵⁸ In a similar way, only a small part of the photographs used in the 2010 *An Exhortation to Street-Sunappu* depict human subjects. One can say, therefore, that for Moriyama, *sunappu* is characterized by its instantaneousness, and did not necessarily include depictions of human beings. In other words, Moriyama separated the historical connection between *sunappu* as a technique and its focus on representations of human beings. Today *sunappu* may include photographs of *objects* one encounters on the street, probably because of the great popularity and influence of Moriyama's work among amateur photographers. In other words, he contributed to a transformation of the concept of *sunappu*, by applying the term to types of photograph which had not been usually called *sunappu* before him.

In terms of photographic technique, Moriyama's *sunappu* echoed the earlier incarnations of this genre. Like the works of his predecessors, his photographs were also characterized by a spontaneous way of shooting. On the streets Moriyama indiscriminately photographed whatever attracted his attention, whether human beings or objects. Consequently, in Moriyama's *sunappu* the 'street' itself came to the fore as an important subject of his work. Since its birth in the mid-1930s, *sunappu* has been a type of photograph taken in public spaces. However, for earlier *sunappu* photographers such as Kimura and Domon, the streets usually signified no more than a "background" (in both a literal and symbolic sense) because human beings were always the most privileged subject matter for them. In contrast, a large portion of Moriyama's self-proclaimed

⁵⁸ Asahi Shimbunsha, ed., *Sunappu shashin (Sunappu Photography)* (1970), unpaginated.

sunappu photographs—especially those made after 1980—focus on inanimate objects such as tires or high-heeled shoes. In *An Exhortation to Street-Sunappu*, Moriyama uses the term “*street-sunappu* (rojô sunappu)” as a sort of compound term, as if it signifies an independent category of photographic practice. As quoted above, Moriyama explains that his fascination with the streets goes back to his habit of “wander[ing] around the town” when he was a boy. The specific reasons as to why he liked the streets so much since his childhood are not particularly relevant to this study. Rather, it is more important to understand the consequences that his inclination toward wandering the urban streets have had for his work.

In the late 1960s, Moriyama’s *sunappu* on the street began to be called *buré boké* (blurred and out-of-focus) by photography critics. When the photo critic Koên Shigemori reviewed William Klein’s *New York* in 1960, he emphasized that the photographs in the book “are extremely blurred, have coarse grains as far as they get, and their focuses are not careful at all.”⁵⁹ But, it is not until the late 1960s that such a term as “*buré boké shashin*” appeared in the photography magazines and came to be regarded as a controversial trend in contemporary Japanese photography. The short-lived magazine *Provoke*, which was discontinued after publishing only three issues in 1968-69, was one of the most important publications to disseminate this photographic style. Edited by Koji Taki and Takuma Nakahira, *Provoke* printed critical writings and photographs by the editors, poems by Takahiko Okada, and photographs by Yutaka Takanashi and Moriyama. While contributing to *Provoke*, Moriyama, who was more experienced and prolific as a photographer than his close friend Nakahira, also regularly published his work in

⁵⁹ Shigemori, “Wiriaumu kurain ni tsuite no oboegaki” (Notes on William Klein), 144.

photography magazines such as *Asahi Camera* and *Camera Mainichi* and came to be regarded as the leader of *buré boké* photography.⁶⁰ Objecting to the notion that *buré boké* was a fashionable photographic *style*, Moriyama claimed that his blurred and out-of-focus pictures were “[his] body, or an inevitable reflection of [his] life” and *buré boké* was his “reality (*riaritî*).”⁶¹ In 1970, he wrote:

For me, photography is not for making a beautiful work of art, but is the only means of finding the true reality (*riaritî*) in the inextricable relationship between my own life and fragments of the enormous world which I cannot photograph completely however I try.⁶²

In order to express “the true reality,” it is necessary, he claimed, to pursue “physical and sensory photographs which exclude the elements of concepts and words as far as possible.”⁶³ Both Nakahira and Moriyama insisted that blurred and out-of-focus photographs were not artificially crafted images, but rather closer to the view obtained by the naked eye.⁶⁴ But such a claim apparently contradicts Moriyama’s justification of his

⁶⁰ For example, in a 1976 interview, the editor of *Asahi Camera* mentions that Moriyama and Nakahira were “the standard bearers (kishu) of *buré boké*.” See Moriyama Daido and Norio Ôsaki, “Isshun issyun kawaru riaritî no arika: Moriyama daidô shi ni intabyû” (Where the Reality That Keeps Changing in Every Moment Is: An Interview with Daido Moriyama), *Asahi Camera* (March 1976): 207.

⁶¹ “技法というより、むしろぼくの肉体であり、ぼくの生活からくる必然的な反映なのだ、と考えている。” Daido Moriyama, “Moriyama daido no kankaku to taiatariteki shuhô: Honshi no shitsumon ni kotaete” (Daido Moriyama’s Senses and His Bodily-Impact Method: Answers to Our Questions), *Photo Art* (July 1969): 157.

⁶² “僕にとって、写真とは一枚の美しい芸術作品を作るためのものではなくて、撮っても撮っても撮りきれない膨大な世界の断片と、抜きさしならない自己の生とのかかわりのなかに真のリアリティーを見つけるための、唯一の手段としてあるのだといえる。” Daido Moriyama, “Shukanteki sunappu” (Subjective *Sunappu*), in *Asahi Shimbunsha*, ed., *Sunappu shashin* (*Sunappu* Photography) (1970), 82-83.

⁶³ “だから、それらの認識をふまえたうえで、極力観念や言葉の要素を排除した、生理的、感覚的な写真を考えているわけである。” *Ibid.*, 79.

⁶⁴ See Takuma Nakahira, “Miburi to shitenô eizô: Buré boké wa yôshiki de wa nakatta” (*Eizô* as a gesture: *Buré boké* was not a style), *Asahi Camera* (March 1976): 212; Moriyama, “Shukanteki sunappu (Subjective *Sunappu*),” 82.

application of what is called “*nô faindâ* (no finder)” in Japanese, namely, a technique of taking photographs without looking at the viewfinder of the camera. Asked about his frequent use of *nô faindâ*, he stated in 1969:

Suppose that in one night I was rough both physically and mentally and tried to make that mood into photographs. If I looked into the viewfinder and worried about this or that, my idea would have turned into the world of words, especially that of concepts. To avoid this, marking off with *nô faindâ* is better.⁶⁵

On the one hand, the blurred image was connected with the vision obtained by the naked eye, and on the other it was presented as a trace of his bodily movement. Whatever the rationalizations of the blurred image and whether they were persuasive or not, Moriyama tried to convince his viewers of the idea that his photographs were a direct expression of the photographer. It was natural, then, that Moriyama employed the technique of *sunappu* for his *buré boké* photography. In terms of the mechanism of photography, it is the quickness of *sunappu* that produces blurred and out-of-focus photographs. Whereas the earlier generation of photographers, such as Kimura and Domon, believed that making a sharp image with *sunappu* was a requisite skill of professional photographers, Moriyama emphasized the quickness of *sunappu* itself, paying little attention to whether the resulting images conform to the norm of *sunappu* photography at that time. In other words, he utilized the quickness of the act of photographing, which guaranteed—or at least signified—a directness of expression.

It is also important, however, to notice that Moriyama’s most blurred photographs still retain recognizable forms of objects; this is the case even with his 1972 *Shashin yo*

⁶⁵ “ある夜、ぼくが肉体的にも精神的にも荒々しかつたとする。そのふんいきをそのまま写真にしようとするとき、ファインダーをのぞいてあれこれ考えていると、ぼくの考えは次第に言葉の、それも観念の世界になってしまう。それを避けるにはノーファインダーで切った方がよい。” Moriyama, “Moriyama daido no kankaku to taiatariteki shuhô” (Daido Moriyama’s Senses and His Bodily-Impact Method), 158.

sayônara (Bye-Bye Photography) in which the destruction of the image reaches its peak.⁶⁶ In fact, the iconography of his photographs defies formalistic readings of *buré boké* as a pure record of the photographer's phenomenological encounter with the world surrounding him. It is in this respect that the streets continue to be an important subject even in his most blurred and out-of-focus photographs. Certainly, Moriyama's thematization of the streets in his late 1960s photographs can be discussed in relation to various contemporary cultural and artistic phenomena in which the streets often became the privileged site of political protest and artistic activities.⁶⁷ In the context of this study, however, it is significant to note that Moriyama's exploration of the streets could not be separated from his reflections on the Americanization of Japanese land and its culture.

In fact, since the beginning of his career, Moriyama dealt with the American presence in Japan as his subject matter. For example, *Yokosuka*, one of his earliest works, published in the August 1965 issue of *Camera Mainichi*, takes up the subject Tômatsu had been wrestling with since 1959.⁶⁸ His attitude toward America, however, was considerably different than that of Tômatsu. As the curator Sandra Phillips has aptly

⁶⁶ Daido Moriyama, *Shashin yo sayônara (Bye-Bye Photography)* (Tokyo: Shashin Hyôronsha, 1972; reprint, Tokyo: Power Shovel, 2006).

⁶⁷ Since the early 1960s, inspired by the Happenings conducted by American artists such as Alan Kaprow, some Japanese artists, including the artist group High Red Center, started to do guerilla performances in public spaces. Actors from avant-garde theaters, which Moriyama photographed in 1967, set up an improvisational theater in a park in Shinjuku, trying to break the boundaries of traditional theatrical space. The notion that art should be produced on the street rather than within institutional settings was a widely shared idea by Japanese avant-garde artists in the 1960 and '70s. For more on Japanese performance art in the 1960s, see Alexandra Munroe, "Morphology of Revenge: The Yomiuri Independent Artists and Social Protest Tendencies in the 1960s," in Munroe, ed., *Japanese Art after 1945: Scream against the Sky* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994), 149-163.

⁶⁸ Hiromichi Moriyama, "Yokosuka" (Yokosuka), *Camera Mainichi* (August 1965): 71-79. Moriyama's real first name is "Hiromichi," and "Daido" is a different reading of two Chinese letters that constitute his first name. Such a different reading of Chinese letters is not unusual in Japanese. In his early works, he often used "Hiromichi" rather than "Daido."

pointed out, “rather than perceiving Americanism as invasive or dehumanizing, Moriyama, unlike his older colleagues, had a more complex appreciation of the changes he witnessed.”⁶⁹ But Moriyama was not just appreciative of the influx of American culture to Japan. More importantly, he had an acute understanding of works of American art and literature introduced into Japan, such as Andy Warhol’s silkscreen paintings and Jack Kerouac’s novel *On the Road*, both of which he referred to in his own work.⁷⁰

3-3-2. The Strategy of Appropriation

Moriyama admitted in 1972 that Tômatsu, Klein, and Andy Warhol had been three of his most significant influences.⁷¹ In fact, his admiration for Warhol was so overwhelming that when he stayed in New York for the first time at the end of 1971, he turned down his companion Tadanori Yokoo’s offer to take him to the Factory, Warhol’s studio. In a 2001 interview, Moriyama recalls: “I think I was so in awe of him and adored him so, I was torn, I wanted to hold onto my adoration, I was afraid to confront the real man: Andy Warhol.”⁷² When Tômatsu started his *Occupation* series in 1960, he was careful not to make his work too imitative of Klein’s. In contrast, Moriyama was

⁶⁹ Phillips, “Daidô Moriyama: Stray Dog,” 16.

⁷⁰ The following section is largely based on my essay written in Japanese and published in the catalogue of a 2008 retrospective exhibition of Moriyama’s work. See Yoshiaki Kai, “Akusidento no shôgeki imadanao: Moriyama to wôhôru” (The Impact of the Accident, Still: Moriyama and Warhol), in Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, ed., *Moriyama daidô ron* (Essays on Daido Moriyama) (Tokyo: Tankosha, 2008), 173-182.

⁷¹ Daido Moriyama, “Moriyama daido wa kotaeru: Boku wa kôshite shahsin o toru (Daido Moriyama Answers: This is how I take photographs), *Asahi Camera* (April 1972): 148. Also see Daido Moriyama, “Ano kodawari tsuzuketekita kurain ni tôtô atta” (I finally met Klein whom I had been obsessed with), *Nippon Camera* (August 1980): 124-125.

⁷² Daido Moriyama, “Moriyama Interview, December 22, 2001 Shinjuku, Tokyo,” translated by Linda Hoaglund, in *'71-NY* (New York: PPP Editions, 2002), unpaginated.

indifferent to such a concern. What is idiosyncratic about Moriyama's confrontation with the artists he admired was that he borrowed their styles and subject matter so unabashedly that he ended up producing what cannot be simply dismissed as imitations. This is particularly striking in his engagement with Warhol. His series *Akushidento* (*Accident*) published in the twelve installments of *Asahi Camera* in 1969 is one of his most experimental works. Each installment deals with a different issue, ranging from international events such as the Vietnam War reported on TV news (January) to domestic incidents such as a shipwreck in Chôshi, Chiba (May). The series is full of formal experiments: some are reproductions of other photographs (fig. 3-19), and others are extremely blurred and out-of-focus. He also often utilizes perspective compression characteristic of a long-focus lens, increasing the uneasy atmosphere of the image (fig. 3-20).

It is undeniable that the *Accident* series turned out to be a radical contribution to the photography magazine. At the same time, its obvious debt to the work of Andy Warhol makes one question its originality. The installment that is particularly suggestive of this debt is one entitled *Jiko* (*Accident*), published in the June issue.⁷³ For this work, Moriyama facsimiled a photographic poster of a car accident made by the Metropolitan Police Department to appeal for traffic safety (fig. 3-21). In fact, when seeing this work, it is difficult not to remember Warhol's *Disaster* series of 1963, which had already been introduced in Japan through imported publications as well as through reproductions printed in Japanese art magazines.⁷⁴ In the third issue of *Provoke*, published in August of

⁷³ Daido Moriyama, "Jiko" (Accident), *Asahi Camera* (June 1969): 147-153.

⁷⁴ The leading art magazine *Bijutsu Techo* carried a feature article on Pop Art in its October 1967 issue that includes a reproduction of Warhol's *Disaster* captioned "Jidôsha jiko" (Car Accident) (93).

the same year, Moriyama again referred to Warhol, shooting piles of imported American goods, including Campbell's Soup cans, sold in the supermarket (fig. 3-22).⁷⁵ In this work Moriyama keeps a certain critical distance from Warhol's silkscreen paintings, by using a camera to deal with the influx of American commodities into the Japanese market, whereas *Accident's* use of a pre-existing image of a car accident is almost a direct pastiche of Warhol's *Disaster*.

In this respect *Accident* may have an affinity with Ushio Shinohara's "*Imitêshon Âto* (Imitation Art)" made in the mid 1960s. Though obscure outside of Japan, Shinohara, born in Tokyo in 1932, is a well-known artist who has been active since the 1960s. In 1960 he participated in an artists' group named Neo Dada Organizers and was in the center of the avant-garde art scene in Japan until he moved to New York in 1969. In 1964, based on a small reproduction printed in a Japanese art magazine, Shinohara made multiple copies of Robert Rauschenberg's assemblage *Coca-Cola Plan* (1958) and brought them to the public program in which Rauschenberg himself participated during his stay in Tokyo.⁷⁶ With a reference to Homi Bhabha's theory of the subversive power of mimicry in colonial culture, the art historian Hiroko Ikegami suggests that Shinohara's

In 1995, Moriyama recollected that he saw a Warhol catalogue in 1967: "I think it was probably Sakumi Hagiwara who showed me the catalogue of Andy Warhol's European exhibition and it impressed me very much indeed. I instinctively understood the meaning of transfer and repetition and thereafter, Andy Warhol was to remain a strong influence over me." See Daido Moriyama, "Inu no Toki: Afterword/ A Photographic Memory," translated by Gavin Flew, in *Inu no Toki* (The Time of a Dog) (Tokyo: Sakuhinsha, 1995), 347. The Warhol catalogue Moriyama mentioned must be the one published by the Moderna Museet in Stockholm. However, since it was in 1968 that the catalogue was published, Moriyama must be mistaken about the year when he saw the catalogue. As it happens, this catalogue was reviewed by the designer Seiichi Horiuchi in the June 1969 issue of *Camera Mainichi*.

⁷⁵ Daido Moriyama, [untitled], *Provoke*, no. 3 (August 1969): 56-85.

⁷⁶ See Hiroko Ikegami, "A Dialogue in Tokyo: Rauschenberg Meets the Japanese Avant-Garde," in *The Great Migrator: Robert Rauschenberg and the Global Rise of American Art* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, The MIT Press, 2010), 174-203.

blatant appropriation of the work of a blue-chip artist from America not only testified to the tantalizing appeal of American contemporary art among Japanese artists, but was also “a critical strategy to destabilize the authority of the very thing he was imitating.”⁷⁷ In Moriyama’s *Accident* one can find a similar strategy of mimicry. While Shinohara copied the original in the manner of handmade bricolage, Moriyama literally reproduced a Warholian motif by publishing it in a photography magazine. If Warhol would not give up the canvas as a medium for his expression, despite his artist-cum-machine philosophy, Moriyama presented his appropriation of Warhol as a work that was *originally* a reproduction. This is because in Moriyama’s understanding of photography, printed matter is the primary medium of photography and, therefore, the original form of photographic expression.⁷⁸ This is not merely a speculation on the nature of photography, but is also reflected in the actual appearance of his magazine work, not limited to this particular work. Indeed, the gravure printing of the *Accident* series in the 1969 edition of *Asahi Camera* has a tactile quality that gives the work an auratic presence akin to a unique work of art.⁷⁹ Describing Warhol’s *Campbell’s Soup Cans*, the curator Kirk Varnedoe has suggested that “the canvases’ sensual existence” and “stylistic and physical

⁷⁷ Ibid., 197.

⁷⁸ Moriyama has often stated this belief. In 1976 he mentioned, “I feel something like an essence of photography in photographs which are being multiplied in a rotary press.” (“でも、ぼくはやっぱり、輪転機にかかって増幅される写真のほうに、写真の本質みたいなものを、今でも感じています。”) See Moriyama and Ôsaki, “Isshun isshun kawaru riaritî no arika” (The Reality That Keeps Changing in Every Moment), 209.

⁷⁹ Traditionally Japanese photographers made their prints so that they looked best when they were reproduced in printed matter. About Ihei Kimura’s view on photographic printing, see Ryûichi Kaneko, “Ihei Kimura *The Eye of Ihei Kimura 1970*,” in Kaneko and Vartanian, *Japanese Photobooks of the 1960s and ’70s*, 166. Generally, this is also the case with Moriyama’s work.

peculiarities” defy a purely conceptual reading of Pop Art.⁸⁰ It is as if Moriyama tried to turn his magazine work, which was reproduction by nature, into a “sensual existence” that rivals Warhol’s paintings.

If Shinohara confronted American art with a dadaistic spirit, Moriyama’s engagement with it was much more sincere and, for that reason, turned to be an example which tells us about a more nuanced aspect of Japanese artists’ admiration for American art. The aim of his appropriation of Warhol was not to debunk the originality of the American artist. Rather, it constituted a difficult (even impossible) attempt to infuse his own work with Warholian sensibility. It is suggestive, then, that in his short commentary published with *Accident*, Moriyama did not mention Warhol but instead described his physical encounter with the poster of a car accident. According to his explanation, having been inspired by the “strangely ominous mood” of the poster he had seen in the subway station, Moriyama visited the police department to get a copy to “duplicate [it] in detail and reconstruct [his] own accident.”⁸¹ In a contemporary interview, he also suggested: “I photographed a poster advocating traffic safety because it shocked me more than a real traffic accident I witnessed when I was riding in a car. In other words, I found an extraordinary reality in that poster.”⁸² It is important to note that Moriyama identifies his

⁸⁰ Kirk Varnedoe, “Campbell’s Soup Cans, 1962,” in Heiner Bastian, ed., *Andy Warhol Retrospective* (London: Tate Publishing, 2001), 43.

⁸¹ “さほど目立つポスターではないが、妙にいんさんなふんいきを持っている。／（…中略…）「よし、この一枚を微細に複写して、僕なりのアクシデントを再構成してみよう」（…）” Daido Moriyama, “Sakuhin kaisetsu: Rensai 6 akusidento jiko” (Comment on the Work: Serial Work, *Accident*, no. 6: *Accident*),” *Asahi Camera* (June 1969): 169.

⁸² “一枚の交通安全ポスターは、ぼくが自動車に乗っていたときナマの交通事故を目撃することより以上のショックを受けたから撮ったのであり、つまりぼくが非常なリアリティを一枚のポスターのなかに見つけた、というわけである。” Moriyama, “Moriyama daido no kankaku to taiatariteki shuhô” (Daido Moriyama’s Senses and His Bodily-Impact Method), 157.

first encounter with the poster when he wandered on the streets of the town.⁸³ Therefore, Moriyama's appropriation of Warhol was also related to his experiences on the streets. I have already mentioned that Moriyama considered *buré boké* not as a pictorial style of photography but as an equivalent of his own reality. If we do not dismiss his words on *Accident* as mere rhetoric, we can assume that Moriyama perceived the same reality in a photographic reproduction made by another photographer.⁸⁴ However, his sensibility that "found an extraordinary reality in that poster" was already mediated by that of *another*, namely, Warhol. Moriyama's admiration for Warhol was so great that it no longer mattered whether it was his own reality or that mediated through Warhol. Such an intense self-identification with an American artist was extraordinary even in the Japanese art scene of the 1960s and '70s when a number of Japanese artists and photographers looked to American art as a model: although anti-American attitudes spread among leftist artists and critics, especially after the Vietnam War erupted, it was also beyond question for them that the center of contemporary art had moved from Paris to New York.

However, Moriyama's confrontation with American subjects cannot be limited to his appropriation of American art; *Accident* should be taken as an exception, an example that epitomizes his overidentificatory relationship with Warhol in an exaggerated manner. As pointed out above, streets are the privileged site for Moriyama's *sunappu* photography, because they were a place for him to encounter and experience American culture. In 1968

⁸³ To be exact, it was at the stairs of a subway station. But, it can be considered as an extension of the urban streets because it is a public space open to everyone.

⁸⁴ In 1970 Moriyama wrote: "For me, all of the outside world and objects have equal (*tôka-na*) realities, whether they are photographs taken by others that once functioned as media or photographs taken by myself." ("(...)僕にとっては僕の目にふれるすべての外界や事物は、一度媒体物として機能された他人の写真であっても、僕が直接撮った写真であっても、すべて等価な現実性を持つわけである。") See Moriyama, "Shukanteki sunappu" (Subjective *Sunappu*), 86.

he started taking photographs from the front window, sitting down in the passenger seat of a car or a truck running on national highways.⁸⁵ Later, Moriyama explained that the inspiration came from a Japanese translation of Jack Kerouac's novel *On the Road*, a book Nakahira recommended him to read.⁸⁶ What is idiosyncratic about Moriyama's adaptation of *On the Road* is that he tried to make his own version of the novel, not in the United States but on the national highways in Japan. It seems evident that Kerouac's *On the Road* could not have been conceived in any other place than America; the flat vastness of the American landscape that urged the protagonists to keep travelling is almost the direct opposite of the smallness of mountainous Japan.⁸⁷ Fully understanding this, Moriyama embarked on a road trip in Japan.⁸⁸

In Moriyama's *Hunter*, a 1972 photography book consisting of photographs taken during road trips around Japan, one finds a number of shots that include "American" motifs, such as a scene near the Misawa U.S. Air Base in which a small sign that reads "SNACK BAR" is visible to the right of the composition (fig. 3-23).⁸⁹ The veil covering

⁸⁵ From 1968 through 1973 Moriyama often published this category of his works in photography magazines. See, for example, Hiromichi Moriyama, "Akatsuki no ichigôsen" (National Highway 1 at Dawn), *Camera Mainichi* (December 1968): 76-86; Hiromichi Moriyama, "Tokyo kanjô kokudô jûrokugôsen: On za rôdo" (On the Road: National Highway 16 Tokyo's Loop Area), *Camera Mainichi* (October 1969): 51-74.

⁸⁶ Daido Moriyama, "Highway" (1999), in Ivan Vartanian, Akihiro Hatanaka, and Yutaka Kambayashi, eds., *Setting Sun: Writings by Japanese Photographers* (New York: Aperture, 2006), 115-124. Moriyama mentioned *On the Road* in the June 1969 issue of *Asahi Camera* in which his *Accident* was published (169).

⁸⁷ Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (New York: The Viking Press, 1957; Penguin Books, 2003). The first Japanese translation of *On the Road* was published in 1959 by Shin-bungakusôsho.

⁸⁸ In the late 1960s, America was no longer a place that could only be imagined by Japanese photographers. For example, in the September 1968 issue of *Camera Mainichi* the photographer Takayuki Ogawa published his photographs taken in New York and entitled *New York Is*, for which he was awarded the Newcomer's Award of the Japan Photo Critics Association.

⁸⁹ Daido Moriyama, *Kariudo* (Hunter) (Tokyo: Chûo-kôron sha, 1972).

the entire frame suggests that this photograph was taken through the curtained window of a nearby building. It effectively adds a sense of distance to the image, emphasizing the foreignness (for the Japanese) already evoked by the English sign. At the same time, many photographs in *Hunter* do not directly depict objects or scenes related to the spread of American culture in Japan. For example, a shot juxtaposed with the “SNACK BAR” photograph in the same spread seems to have been taken in an underpass in some city. The lens of the camera tilts slightly downward, capturing the people walking on the pass—who are turned into anonymous silhouettes in the high contrast image—over the shoulder of a man that partially blocks the photographer’s vision. The point of view of the camera also suggests that the photographer walks among these nameless pedestrians. This photograph is thus not just a record of people walking on the underpass, but also that of Moriyama’s own wandering in the city. However closely we look at the image, it remains impossible to find in it any signs that are conspicuously “Japanese” or “American.” Rather, it is an image characterized by a lack of national specificities. What characterizes *Hunter* as a whole is the coexistence of these kinds of images with those that depict motifs that are apparently “American.”

Stylistically, many of the photographs included in the book are still *buré boké* (blurred and out-of-focus), a technique that Moriyama would abandon in the mid-1970s.⁹⁰ It is worthwhile to remember that in Tômatsu’s work the American “occupation” of Japan was signified not just by its subject matter, but also by the entire mood created by his high contrast and grainy black-and-white photographs. For Tômatsu, the pictorial

⁹⁰ Moriyama’s work underwent a considerable change around 1980. Generally, his photographs became less blurred and out-focus, and instead were characterized by a more solid depiction of objects. For a short summary of his 1980s work, see my “Daido Moriyama,” in Mark Durden, ed., *Fifty Key Writers on Photography* (London: Routledge, forthcoming).

style inherited from William Klein's *New York* could not be separated from the ominous presence of America in Japan. That is why Tômatsu deliberately switched from black-and-white photography to color photography when he began to concentrate on documenting Okinawan native culture uncontaminated by American military presence in the 1970s.⁹¹ Looking back at the change of medium that occurred in his work, Tômatsu suggested later, quite succinctly: "America can be glimpsed in monochrome photography, but its presence is not felt in color."⁹² That is why Tômatsu used color photography for his projects since the mid-1970s, which have moved away from addressing the American presence in Japan and instead deal with Japanese native cultures, which continue to survive despite that presence. We may apply Tômatsu's formulation to Moriyama's black-and-white photographs. That is, if "America can be glimpsed in monochrome photography," the corollary is that Moriyama's fascination with America is found in each of his black-and-white photographs, regardless of its nominal subject. If so, his photographs in *Hunter* that do not depict anything apparently "American," in fact hint at the American presence in Japan. However, in the same way that his appropriation of Warhol was mixed with admiration and aggressiveness, his blurred and out-of-focus black-and-white photographs, all taken in Japan, are not so much a metaphor of the Americanization of Japanese land as an attempt to mix "America" and "Japan" together in a drastic way, dissolving the national specificities of both countries. One can say,

⁹¹ In 1975 Tômatsu published *Taiyô no enpitsu* (The Pencil of the Sun), a photobook on the native cultures of Okinawa and Southeastern Asia, the last half of which consists of color photographs. See Tômatsu, *Taiyô no enpitsu* (The Pencil of the Sun).

⁹² Shômei Tômatsu, "Toward the Sea of Chaos" (1998), translated by Gavin Frew, in Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, ed., *Traces—50 Years of Tômatsu's Works* (Tokyo: Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, 1999), 187.

therefore, that while Tômatsu adhered to the Japan-America dichotomy, Moriyama's *Hunter* deconstructed, not just this dichotomy, but also the American-ness of a novel centered on the American experience. Through a tongue-in-cheek superimposition of Kerouac's *On the Road* onto the Japanese road, Moriyama both celebrated and mutilated the original at the same time.

Finally, it is important to note that in his photographs taken on the streets Moriyama utilized the technique of *sunappu*, as the title of the book "Hunter" implies. The metaphor of hunting became particularly relevant to his photographic act when he took photographs from the window of a running car, using a telephoto lens attached to an SLR camera.⁹³ He has often referred to this metaphor; for example, in a recent interview conducted while he was riding in a car, Moriyama said, "*Sunappu shotto* is a pointed expression, isn't it? When I engage in this way of photographing, I begin to feel that the sense of shooting (*shotto-suru*) is a kind of physical pleasure."⁹⁴ In Moriyama's engagement with American subjects, *sunappu* became a weapon. As was the case with his photographs of Campbell's Soup cans stacked in a Japanese supermarket, *sunappu* enabled him to target the American commodity *and* identify himself with the American artist he most admired. Even though it is misleading to consider that Moriyama's *sunappu* photography only concerns the Americanization of Japan, it turns out to be an

⁹³ Moriyama wrote in 1970: "I take most of my *sunappu* photographs from a running car or with 'no finder' while I am walking." ("僕はスナップ撮影のほとんどを、走行中の自動車から、また歩行中にノーファインダーで、といったふうに撮っている。") See Moriyama, "Shukanteki *sunappu* (Subjective *Sunappu*)," 80.

⁹⁴ "スナップショットとはよく言ったものだよね。こういう [走行中の車の窓越しの] 撮り方だと、本当にショットする=撃つという感覚が、一種の生理的快感のように思えてくる。" Moriyama and Nakamoto, *Rojô sunappu no susume* (An Exhortation to Street-Sunappu), 134.

invaluable lens through which to view Japanese artists' complex relationships to American art and culture in the 1960s.

This chapter examined the development of *sunappu* in the 1960s through an analysis of the work of Shômei Tômatsu and Daido Moriyama, two photographers who pioneered the progressive direction of Japanese photography during this period. Whereas Tômatsu did not hesitate to tackle political issues central to postwar Japanese society, Moriyama rejected the conventions of didacticism that characterized photojournalism. Their differences are too significant to ignore, but in this chapter I chose to emphasize the commonalities in their pursuit of realistic representations of society. I also explored their shared rejection of the conventional photographic style epitomized by the *Riarizumu* Photography movement led by Ken Domon and his acolytes in the 1950s. Tômatsu and Moriyama both made use of the technique of candid photography to this end, inheriting the historical connection between *sunappu* and an authentic representation of the world. However, what Tômatsu and Moriyama produced using this technique was significantly different from Domon's or Kimura's *sunappu* photographs. In particular, *sunappu* by the former betrayed the antagonistic relationships between the photographer and the subject, using them to confront the American presence in postwar Japan. It is this characteristic that made the 1960s work by Tômatsu and Moriyama not just a milestone in the history of Japanese *sunappu* photography but also an important example of artistic reactions to the Americanization of postwar Japan.

Chapter Four

Sunappu and the Everyday

4-1. *Sunappu* and *Konpora*

4-1-1. The Distance between *Sunappu* and the Snapshot

When Daido Moriyama and Takuma Nakahira were contributing their *buré boké* photographs to the short-lived magazine *Provoke*, there emerged another photographic movement, known as *konpora* (コンポラ) photography, that was extensively discussed in the photography magazines from the late 1960s through the early '70s. Although not often discussed in these terms, I propose to examine *konpora* as a further extension of the *sunnappu* tradition. *Konpora*, a word written in *katakana*, thus suggesting its foreign origin, is perhaps one of the weirdest terms in the history of Japanese photography. An abbreviation of *kontemporarî* (contemporary), the term *konpora* began to appear in photography magazines by 1968, signifying not so much contemporary photography in general, but one distinctive trend of contemporary photography characterized by a common style and subject matter. Today, *konpora* is considered a historic style or movement of Japanese photography from 1968 through the early 1970s and is no longer used to refer to contemporary photography.

In this chapter I discuss the relationships between the type of photographs called *konpora* and the concept of *nichijôsei* (日常性), a word which can be best translated as “everydayness” (*nichijô* signifies ordinary daily lives and *sei* is a suffix which functions as “-ness” in English). In fact, there emerged an attention to ordinary everyday life even

during the turbulent era of the student movements in 1968. Such an attention became a widespread phenomenon well beyond the photographic community.

As I discussed in the first section of Chapter Three, the implications of the term *sunappu* changed continuously as the technology of photographic apparatuses advanced and as taking instantaneous photography no longer required the special skills of a professional photographer. This also meant that what had been called *sunappu* in the Japanese photographic community inevitably approached what is called a “snapshot” in English—namely, amateur photographs characterized by their technical, as well as aesthetic, banality. Describing a few examples of photographs that “exhibit many of the snapshot’s most common attributes,” the photo-historian Geoffrey Batchen suggests:

They’ve been taken of friends and family members by amateur photographers with cheap handheld cameras for the express purpose of producing a personal memento. As pictures, they combine humor and unrehearsed intimacy with a formality borrowed from a professional studio tradition. The subject (almost always a person) is usually placed firmly in the center of the picture plane, looking directly at the camera, well aware that they are posing for posterity’s sake.¹

Even though the Japanese photographic term *sunappu* originated with the English word “snapshot,” the *sunappu* produced by the photographers discussed so far in this study—Ihei Kimura, Ken Domon, Shōmei Tōmatsu, and Daido Moriyama—differs significantly from the type of photographs explained above. At the same time, it is important to remember that the development of *sunappu* cannot be separated from the presence of amateur photographers in Japan who practiced photography as a hobby or as a form of popular art. As discussed in Chapters One and Two, both Kimura and Domon were greatly admired by amateurs who subscribed to photography magazines. Professionals,

¹ Geoffrey Batchen, “Snapshots: Art History and the Ethnographic Turn,” *Photographies* 1, no. 2 (September 2008): 133.

amateurs and photographic industries, including camera and film manufacturers and publishing companies, are the three constituents that formed and advanced the Japanese photographic community.² In contrast, Tômatsu and Moriyama were not enthusiastic about communicating with their amateur fans; for instance, they rarely served as the judges of monthly contests in photography magazines.³ It is apparent that they paid little attention to amateur photographers' reception of their work; indeed, older generations of amateur photographers were perplexed by Moriyama's blurred and out-of-focus photographs.⁴

Nevertheless, Tômatsu and Moriyama were no less entangled in the structure of Japanese photography than Kimura and Domon. First of all, the primary, if not exclusive, vehicle through which the two photographers published their photographs were monthly photography magazines such as *Camera Mainichi* or *Asahi Camera*, whose main readership was amateur photographers. Thus, it would not be an exaggeration to say that their photographic styles were shaped by the medium and format of photography magazines. Their works could be categorized as neither traditional documentary photography published in newspapers or general interest magazines nor as commercial or

² It was not until the 1990s that public museums (most major museums in Japan are public institutions) and commercial galleries began to play an important role as the fourth constituent of the Japanese photographic community.

³ Instead, both Tômatsu and Moriyama taught at art schools. From 1963 to 1973, Tômatsu held positions at art institutions such as Tama Bijutsu Gakuen and Tokyo Zokei University. Moriyama was a full-time lecturer at Tokyo Shashin Senmon Gakkô (later renamed Tokyo Visual Arts) from 1975 to 2000.

⁴ In an April 1972 essay, the photo critic Tsutomu Watanabe noted that many amateur photographers were baffled by Moriyama's blurred and out-of-focus pictures, although he also suggested that it attracted a number of photography students, who, in his view, imitated Moriyama's style superficially. See Tsutomu Watanabe, "Kininaru shashinka no shôtai" (The True Character of the Photographer Who Gets Attention), *Asahi Camera* (April 1972): 133.

fashion photography produced under the logic of consumer capitalism. The marginal position of photography magazines as a genre of publication corresponded to the elusiveness of Japanese creative photography, especially when compared to the situation in the United States, where such museums as the Museum of Modern Art in New York or the George Eastman House in Rochester gave institutional support to art photographers.

Moriyama was well aware of his own ambiguous position as a professional photographer (in the sense that he earned his income from his photographs); in 1973 he wrote:

I boil down the question [of “Why do we take photographs?”] and find myself standing in the mazelike paradox that I am a professional photographer as well as an amateur (in that most of my photographs are very removed from the social or economic principles of supply and demand.) I release the shutter in Tokyo or in the provinces for my own benefit only, not for someone or something else.⁵

As Moriyama acknowledges himself, the fact that his photographs were received as “a very personal expression” helped him to secure a “unique position in journalism.”⁶ In other words, Moriyama was (and continues to be) in a paradoxical situation in which he behaved like an amateur photographer in order to be a professional photographer.

In order to illuminate the particularity of the Japanese context, I would like to briefly discuss the position of the snapshot in the Western history of photography. As Batchen has suggested, the snapshot, the most common and banal form of photography, has typically been dealt with very scantily in the standard writings on the history of photography, such as Beaumont Newhall’s *The History of Photography*. On the rare

⁵ Daido Moriyama, “From Document to Memory” (June 1973), translated by Ivan Vartanian, in Vartanian, Hatanaka, and Kambayashi, eds., *Setting Sun: Writings by Japanese Photographers* (New York: Aperture, 2006), 95.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 96.

occasion that photo-historians give attention to vernacular photography, they tend to emphasize the creativity and originality of exceptional examples selected from an infinite mass of snapshots.⁷ There have been two distinctive ways in which the snapshot became incorporated into the art history of photography. First, it has admitted some photographs that were originally made as family snapshots into the canon of art photography, no longer treating them as ordinary family snapshots but rather as works of genius. The most typical and telling example is the work of the French photographer Jacques-Henri Lartigue. Lartigue's fame as a photographer was established when photographs that he made as a teenager in the early 1910s were exhibited in 1962 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.⁸ In the museum's bulletin, the photography curator John Szarkowski, who organized the exhibition, explains the significance of Lartigue's work. Tellingly, he never uses the word "snapshot" to describe the photographs and instead suggests that "these pictures are the observations of genius: fresh perceptions, poetically sensed and graphically fixed."⁹ Lartigue's photographs often strike the viewer with their intimacy, a quality that is not surprising given their origin as family snapshots that were made with no intention of showing them to the public.¹⁰ However Szarkowski does not mention this

⁷ Batchen, "The Snapshot," 130-131.

⁸ For the detailed study on the consecration of Lartigue as a master of art photography, see Kevin Moore, *Jacques Henri Lartigue: The Invention of an Artist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), esp. 163-193.

⁹ John Szarkowski, "The Photographs of Jacques Henri Lartigue," *The Museum of Modern Art Bulletin* 30, no.1 (1963): unpaginated.

¹⁰ Lartigue's first book of photography, published in 1966, both in French and English, tries to retain or even increase this intimate impression by employing a book design which imitates the old-fashioned family album. See Jean Fondin, ed., *Boyhood Photos of J.-H. Lartigue: The Family Album of a Gilded Age* (Lausanne: A. Guichard, 1966).

aspect of his work. Instead, he appreciates it as a manifestation of “the essence of modern photographic seeing.”¹¹

As this example illustrates, when the snapshot began to be referred to in the discourse of art photography, it was usually regarded as an unexpectedly modern or even avant-garde form of photography rather than as the most trivial and banal of photographic genres. In December 1966, Nathan Lyons, the curator at George Eastman House, organized an exhibition entitled *Contemporary Photographers: Toward a Social Landscape*. The show featured the work of five American photographers: Bruce Davidson, Lee Friedlander, Garry Winogrand, Danny Lyon, and Duane Michaels. The catalogue of the exhibition was imported to Japan soon thereafter and made a huge impact on the Japanese photographic scene, becoming one source of the term *konpora* (I will discuss the catalogue in more detail below).

Even though the exhibition did not include amateur snapshots, in the introduction of the catalogue Lyons mentions their relevance to contemporary photographic expressions. He states:

For a number of years in lectures throughout the country, I have suggested the need for an evaluation of what might be considered authentic photographic forms. One which I have paid particular attention to, and which has undergone extensive research, has been the question of the “snapshot.” What is generally implied is the state of picture awareness of the rank amateur. Interestingly enough, the snapshot’s significance in modifying our attitude toward picture content and structure has been quite remarkable. The accidents of millions of amateurs devoid of a picture vocabulary—which produced an outpouring of multiple exposures, distortions, unusual perspectives, foreshortening of planes, imbalance—has

¹¹ Szarkowski, “The Photographs of Jacques Henri Lartigue,” unpaginated. Interestingly, in Lartigue’s photographs Szarkowski finds a characteristic that might be called an essence of *sunappu*, namely, a way of taking photographs unbeknownst to his or her subject. He writes: “Perhaps no one took the boy and his machine seriously: among hundreds of his photographs one finds not a single self-conscious pose or calculated posture” (Ibid).

contributed greatly to the visual vocabulary of all graphic media since before the turn of the century.¹²

What attracted Lyons's attention was not so much the subject matter of the snapshot—namely, its intimate depictions of private scenes—as its formal characteristics, such as “an outpouring of multiple exposures, distortions, unusual perspectives, foreshortening of planes, imbalance.” While he calls the snapshot an “authentic photographic form,” Lyons also implies that it is the photographers' creativity that applies this form and turns it into a “visual vocabulary” of photography; Lyons quotes Duane Michaels' letter to him in which the photographer states, “[w]hen a great photographer does infuse the snapshot with his personality and vision it can be transformed into something truly moving and beautiful.”¹³ In conclusion Lyons suggests:

I do not find it hard to believe that photographers who have been concerned with the question of the authentic relevance of events and objects should consciously or unconsciously adopt one of the most authentic picture forms photography has produced.¹⁴

Unfortunately, his words are not clear enough to articulate how the participating photographers' works are related to, or even inspired by, amateur snapshots. Unlike Szarkowski, who did not call Lartigue's photographs snapshots, thereby implicitly denying the association, Lyons admitted the significance of the snapshot produced by “the rank amateur.” He did not point out, however, its coziness or banality, qualities one often finds in snapshots. Rather, Lyons's understanding of the snapshot as “the authentic

¹¹ Nathan Lyons, *Contemporary Photographers: Toward a Social Landscape* (New York: Horizon Press, 1966), 6-7. For more on this exhibition, see Gilles Mora, *The Last Photographic Heroes: American Photographers of the Sixties and Seventies*, translated by Nicholas Elliott (New York: Abrams, 2007), 40, 46.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

photographic form” was essentially similar to Szarkowski’s interpretation of Lartigue’s work as the embodiment of “modern photographic seeing.” This is also clear from the fact that Lyons refers to Alfred Stieglitz as the pioneer who noticed the possibilities of the snapshot style of photography.¹⁵ Broadly speaking, it was not until the mid-1970s that American photography began to pay special attention to the ordinariness or even banality of the snapshot—rather than its alleged modernity or authenticity—and to regard this as a visual characteristic that could be rendered in a positive light.¹⁶

4-1-2. The Emergence of *Konpora* Photography

Always eager to know the latest trend in Western photography, the Japanese photographic community did not fail to notice this new attention to the snapshot in American photography. Lartigue was introduced to Japan in 1971; the June issue of *Camera Mainichi* carried a special feature on Lartigue in which more than thirty photographs were reproduced with comments by the editor Shôji Yamagishi, who had

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ In 1974, Jonathan Green published a book entitled *The Snapshot* as a special issue of the photography magazine *Aperture*. The book consists of works by such photographers as Robert Frank, Lee Friedlander, and Garry Winogrand and texts on the significance of the family snapshot contributed by authors such as John A. Kouwenhoven. In the Introduction, Green states: “This publication. . . examines the vitality and ambiguity of the naïve home snapshot and its bearing upon a variety of approaches used by contemporary photographers.” See Jonathan Green, ed., *The Snapshot*, published as *Aperture* 19, no. 1 (1974): 3. One might say that it was Conceptual Artists who first appropriated the aesthetic and technical banality of the snapshot. In the last half of the 1960s, American artists such as Ed Ruscha, Dan Graham, John Baldessari, Bruce Nauman, and Robert Smithson used, in different ways, photographs with an apparent disregard for the composition or the quality of photographic prints. For a concise summary on the Conceptual Artists’ use of photographs, see Jeff Wall, “‘Marks of Indifference’: Aspects of Photography in, or, as, Conceptual Art” (1995), in Douglas Fogle, ed., *The Last Picture Show: Artists Using Photography 1960-1982* (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 2004), 32-44.

visited the photographer's house in France.¹⁷ Lartigue's photographs impressed a number of Japanese photographers, including Moriyama and Araki.¹⁸ However, it was the catalogue of the exhibition *Toward a Social Landscape* that became a more significant source of inspiration for the younger generation of photographers. Soon after its publication, the book was reviewed in the October 1967 issue of *Camera Mainichi*. In his short review entitled "A Return to *Sunappu Shotto*," the reviewer (who appears to be the critic Shin'ichi Kusamori, though the article is unsigned) states:

Here there are no documents, no pictorialism, or no residual of *Riarizumu*. It appears that they intend to return to the tradition of the earlier "*sunappu shotto*." The five photographers are common in their attitude of trying to see humans and objects in the casualness of the everydayness (*nichijōsei*) we overlook.¹⁹

There are two points worth considering in this inconspicuous short review.

Reading Lyon's introduction (probably with his imperfect knowledge of English), the reviewer suggested that the featured photographers tried to "return to the tradition of the earlier '*sunappu shotto*.'" But Lyons never mentioned such a "tradition" in his essay.

Rather, the amateur snapshot was imagined as something that was outside the tradition of photographic art. As quoted above, by the word "snapshot" he implied "the state of

¹⁷ Sei'ichi Horiuchi and Shoji Yamagishi, "Subarashiki jinsei J. H. rarutīgu" (A Wonderful Life: J. H. Lartigue), *Camera Mainichi* (June 1971): 9-49, 64-69.

¹⁸ For their comments on Lartigue, see Daido Moriyama and Takuma Nakahira, "Taidan hachigatsu futsuka yamonoue hoteru" (A Dialogue at Yamanoue Hotel in August 2), in Daido Moriyama, *Shashin yo sayōnara* (Bye-Bye Photography) (Tokyo: Shashin Hyōronsha, 1972), 280-281; Nobuyoshi Araki, "Rarutīgu sono karoyaka na ashidori" (Light Steps of Lartigue), *Shashin hihyō* (Photography Criticism) 5 (February 1974), reprinted in Nobuyoshi Araki, *Shashin ron* (*On Photography*) (Tokyo: Tojusha, 1981), 128-130.

¹⁹ "ここにはドキュメントも、絵画主義もリアリズムの残党もない。初期の「スナップショット」の伝統に復帰しようというのが、彼らの志向であるように思える。／私たちが、見過ごしている日常性のさりげなさの中に、人間を、人間とその物たちをみようとすることで、五人の姿勢は一致している。" Kusamori was a regular book reviewer for *Camera Mainichi* at that time. Anon., "Sunappu shotto eno fukki" (A Return to *Sunappu Shotto*), *Camera Mainichi* (October 1967): 27.

picture awareness of the rank amateur.” It seems almost unquestionable that the reviewer did not know the fact that the English word “snapshot” usually signified an amateur photograph and instead confused it with Japanese *sunappu*. Otherwise, he would not have used such words as “the tradition of the earlier ‘*sunappu shotto*.’” The second point is that the reviewer considered that the photographs in the book addressed the issue of “the everydayness (*nichijōsei*) we overlook,” a theme that was not mentioned in Lyon’s introduction. In fact, *nichijōsei* was a loaded term in art criticism in Japan at that time since it was used in the title of the art critic Atushi Miyakawa’s influential essay written in 1964 (I will discuss the essay below). Although it has not previously been pointed out, as far as I know, it is indeed a significant fact that *Toward a Social Landscape* was received in Japan within the conceptual framework of the everyday. But, before discussing this issue further, a few words should be spent to explain how the term *konpora* began to spread in the Japanese photographic community after 1968 and came to be regarded as a new trend of photography that was antithetical to the *buré boké* (blurred and out-of-focus) photographs by Moriyama and Takuma Nakahira.

Konpora is a strange photographic term even from a Japanese perspective; it is not so much because the English word “contemporary” is abbreviated to “kon-pora” (Japanese language sometimes performs this kind of condensation, such that “air conditioner” has been called “éa kon”) as it is that such a generic adjective as “contemporary” was chosen to signify a specific style of photography. The first occasion on which *konpora* photography was extensively discussed in a photography magazine was the special feature published in the June 1968 issue of *Camera Mainichi*. Even though it has been said that the term *konpora* was borrowed from the title of the 1966

exhibition at the George Eastman House, the fact that the generic series title *Contemporary Photographers* was chosen instead of the more specific *Toward a Social Landscape*, suggests that *konpora* implied more than what was in the purview of the exhibition (more specifically, in its catalogue).²⁰ Therefore, one cannot say that *konpora* is just the Japanese version of the exhibition *Toward a Social Landscape* or works by the five photographers included in the exhibition. Rather, *konpora* simultaneously implied both this specific exhibition and a conspicuous trend in contemporary Japanese photography. This is one of the factors that makes it difficult to come to a precise understanding of *konpora* photography.

It was the photographer and teacher Kiyoji Otsuji (1921-2001) who became most sympathetic to the type of photograph called *konpora*. Otsuji had been an active photographer since the early 1950s, participating in the Experimental Workshop (Jikken Kôbô) led by the renowned art critic Shuzô Takiguchi. Otsuji began to teach at Kuwazawa Design School in 1958, and then became a professor at Tsukuba University in 1976.²¹ Otsuji was one of the few who tried to define *konpora* photography. In an important essay entitled “The Age of Isms is Moving Away,” published in the June 1968 issue of *Camera Mainichi* (five months before the first issue of *Provoke* appeared), Otsuji

²⁰ In fact, *Contemporary Photographers* was a series of three exhibitions in which *Toward a Social Landscape* was its first installment. The other two exhibitions in the series showed very different styles of photographs, attesting to the fact that Lyon’s understanding of contemporary photography was rather eclectic. See Nathan Lyons, *The Persistence of Vision* (New York: Horizon Press, 1967); Nathan Lyons, *Vision and Expression* (New York: Horizon Press, 1969). It is important to note that the second and the third exhibition were almost completely ignored in the Japanese photographic community.

²¹ For more on Otsuji’s biography and his work, see Rei Masuda, “A Guide to Kiyoji Otsuji’s Experimental Workshop of Photography,” translated by Kikuko Ogawa, in *The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, ed., Kiyoji Otsuji Retrospective: Experimental Workshop of Photography* (Tokyo: The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, 1999), 123-126.

stated, “it seems that recently a certain common tendency among young ambitious photographers has become conspicuous.”²² After describing Duane Michaels’s photographs printed in *Toward a Social Landscape* (fig. 4-1), Otsuji discusses the visual characteristics of what he regards as “a certain common tendency” both in the United States and Japan:

The reverse side of this attitude with which they actively employ a simple and naïve way of taking photographs is that they are *fastidious in denying all the possible techniques of photographic expression*. They are turning away from them, as if they spit on and look the other way from clever techniques, compositions, and all the other ostentatious manners of photographic expression.

Let me point out another outstanding characteristic which one can find in their pictures. It is that they *often deal with casual events that are commonplace in everyday life (nichijô)*. They do not shoot especially unusual accidents or objects. Rather, they avoid and pass by those things, and even if they photograph something that looks unusual, they *never exaggerate or emphasize* it. They photograph it delicately, burying it in everyday life, as if it was something that only some people could notice. Therefore, their cameras naturally tend to retreat, capturing a wide view including other everyday objects [emphasis original].²³

In Otsuji’s view, this tendency was not an American import. Rather, he emphasizes the simultaneity of this phenomenon across the Pacific. These formal characteristics of

²² “若い意欲的な写真家の作品に、共通したある種の傾向が、最近になって特に目立ちはじめたように思える。” Kiyoji Otsuji, “Shugino jidai wa tôzakatte” (The Age of Isms is Moving Away), *Camera Mainichi* (June 1968): 15.

²³ “積極的に単純素朴な撮り方をするこのような態度を裏側から見るならば、写真表現の手練手管を潔癖なまでに否定していることだといえよう。しゃれた技巧や構図や、その他諸々のこれ見よがしの写真表現術に対して、足元にぺっと唾をはいて横を向いてしまうような背の向け方である。／もう一つ、画面の上に目立つ特徴を取り上げてみよう。それは取上げる対象が、日常ありふれた何げない事象が多いことである。特別に変わった事件や物を撮るわけではない。むしろ、そういうものは避けて通り過ぎ、仮りに異常と見えるものを撮るにしても、決して誇張したり、強調するようなことはしない。何げなく日常の中に埋め込んでひめやかに、気付いた人にしか気付かれないことであるかのように撮る。だから自然とカメラは後へ下がり、他の日常事とともに広々と撮り込む傾向になる。” Otsuji, “Shugino jidai wa tôzakatte” (The Age of Isms is Moving Away), 16-17.

konpora photography reflect, he suggests, not only the photographers' personal attitudes toward their surroundings but also the climate of the age. He maintains:

In the era of mistrust, perhaps we have more of a longing for origins. Partly for this reason, everyday phenomena that do not change have become a popular subject to photograph. *Konpora* photography is *cynical* about hyperbolic and overblown things. And they *tend to withdraw into their insides*. I wonder if this is a manifestation of the sense of resignation they felt after realizing how trivial their effect on the outside world was? Or, it is perhaps related to the state of the society in which we can feel it to be peaceful and quiet as long as we keep closing our eyes. In any case, this is *a type of photograph that does not appear in the midst of a violent upheaval* [emphasis original].²⁴

In this essay, Otsuji's evaluation of *konpora* was still ambiguous: he appears to avoid judging this recent photographic trend, trying only to situate it in the context of the era.

The last sentence is especially intriguing, because when this article was written Japan was “in the midst of a violent upheaval,” or at least at its beginning. While the economy continuously grew under what was called the “Izanagi boom,” protests and demonstrations by the left became increasingly violent, corresponding to the world-wide phenomenon of the anti-authority and anti-war movements in such cities as Paris or Prague. In October 1967, a mass of protesters tried to block Haneda Airport to prevent then-Prime Minister Eisaku Satoh, who was supporting the U.S. military intervention, from visiting South Vietnam. In January 1968, there was a large-scale protest against the entering of the U.S. nuclear-powered vessel *Enterprise* into the Sasebo Port in Kyushu.²⁵

²⁴ “不信の時代には原初への憧れが強まるということだろうか。その意味からも日常不変の事象が好んで撮影対象とされる。コンポラ写真にあっては、大げさな気張ったことに対しては冷笑的である。そして個人の内側にとじこもりがちである。外へ働きかける力がどんなに無力であるかを思い知らされた諦観の現われなのだろうか。あるいは目をつぶってれば平和で安穩であるかに思えてくる世情とも関係しているかもしれない。いずれにせよ激しい動乱のさなかには生まれてこない写真である。” Ibid., 17-18.

²⁵ For more on Japanese society in the late 1960s, see Takafusa Nakamura, *A History of Shōwa Japan, 1926-1989*, translated by Edwin Whemmouth (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1998), 392-399.

It is not clear how Otsuji felt about the climate of the society when he wrote this essay, but he admits, at least, it was “the age of mistrust.”

Two years later, in an essay published in *Sunappu Shashin*, Otsuji elaborated on the characteristics of *konpora* photography. His basic claim had not changed since June 1968, but now he emphasizes the importance of paying attention to our everyday life. His words on the relationships between *konpora* and everydayness deserve a long quotation:

A large number of photographs until now have been taken when the photographer came across something special or unusual. . . . Accordingly, those who look at photographs have similar expectations even if they are not aware of them. When the expectations were deflected, that is, when they look at *konpora* photographs, they might claim that they cannot understand the photographs. As our daily lives exist in the everyday (*nichijō*), we find shock or freshness in special events. However, it does not mean that we may well neglect the everydayness (*nichijōsei*) as something that may be as important as the air we breathe yet unworthy of our attention. Daily life *is* our life. It is the place where we live. Various meanings given to it must have been the most familiar and important to us. Even the most trivial things ought to be directly connected to the life of each of us. It must be suggested that it is unreasonable to pay attention only to the sparks on the front [i.e. events such as protest demonstrations], overlooking this fact.

For this reason, a number of intellectuals have written about everydayness. I think that one can regard *konpora* photography as photographers' statements on this issue with photographs.²⁶

²⁶ “今までの写真の多くは、常とは違った特別なこと、珍しいものにゆき当たったときカメラを向けた。（...中略...）だから写真を鑑賞する側も、そういう期待をいつの間にかもってしまっているのではないか、と思う。それがはぐらかされた場合、つまりコンポラ写真などを見たとき、わからないという声になるのではないだろうか。だが、われわれの生活の場は日常の中にこそあるので、だから特別の出来事にショックや新鮮さを感じるわけなのだろうが、しかし空気のように大事だけれど気にとめるほどのこともないとして、日常性をおろそかにしてよいとはいえない。日常生活がわれわれの生活なのである。われわれが生きている場なのである。この中に込められた様々な意味は、最も身近で大切なものであるはずである。どんなささいなことでも一人一人の生き方に直結しているはずである。これを見過ごして、先端の火花だけに注目するのはおかしいことといわねばならない。／こうしたことから、多くの識者が日常性についての意見を発表されているが、コンポラ写真は、まさに写真家の写真によるその意見の開陳としてとらえてもよいのだと思う。” Kiyoji Otsuji, “Konpora shashin” (*Konpora Photography*), in Asahi Shimbunsha, ed., *Sunappu shashin* (*Sunappu Photography*), vol. 3, *Asahi camera kyōshitsu* (*Asahi Camera Lectures*) (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbunsha, 1970): 97-99.

In this article, Otsuji reproduced examples of photographs taken by Japanese photographers that he considered *konpora* (fig. 4-2). The photographers whose works were used include Shigeo Gochô (1946-1983), Kazuo Sekiguchi (1946-), Yasuhiro Ishimoto (1921-), Takayuki Ogawa (1936-2008), Takayuki Shimotsu (1942-2009), Ryôji Akiyama (1940-), Shin Yanagisawa (1936-2008), Kenji Kanesaka (1934-1999), and Yutaka Takanashi (1935-).²⁷ Otsuji, who had opportunities to come into contact with young photographers as a teacher, considered *konpora* a photographic style that reflected the sensibilities of a younger generation of photographers. However, unlike *buré boké* photography, that was associated with a specific magazine (*Provoke*) and specific photographers (Moriyama and Nakahira), who had common, if not the same, artistic visions, *konpora* was not coherent as a movement; perhaps it was not even a movement at all. Most of the photographers named by Otsuji were working independently and generated unique subject matter, even if, as Otsuji suggested, one can find some commonality in the type of compositions they typically employed and in the mood of the images they produced. Their works were united by their use of a horizontal frame, standard or wide lenses instead of a telephoto lens, and an inclusion of the surroundings around the main subject, rather than taking a close-up shot.²⁸ Moreover, it is not apparent that all of these photographs named by Otsuji addressed the issue of everydayness. In fact, some of the photographs were taken while the photographers were on foreign travels and away from their everyday lives; Shimotsu's photographic essay *Okinawa Island* (1967) consists of photographs taken in Okinawa, an island that was then under the

²⁷ Except for the photographs by Gochô and Sekiguchi, who were his students, Otsuji selected examples from work that had been published in photography magazines or photobooks.

²⁸ Otsuji, "Konpora shashin" (*Konpora Photography*), 95-97.

administration of the United States, whereas Ogawa's *New York Is* (1968) and Morinaga's *Moment is Monument* (1969) were made during their trips to New York.²⁹ Such an apparent heterogeneity makes the definition of *konpora* photography so elusive that one might doubt the usefulness of the term to explain the tendencies of Japanese photography around 1970.

Nevertheless, Otsuji's definition of *konpora* is important because it touched on the central facet of the work of Shigeo Gochô, one of the most significant photographers working in this style. In particular, Otsuji's emphasis on everydayness as the primary theme of *konpora* photography offers us a framework for examining the affinities between *konpora* and contemporaneous Japanese art, something that has been neglected in the academic literature. In fact, as I will discuss below, everydayness was one of the key concepts at that time, not just in the field of photography but across different genres of art. An attention to everydayness thus allows us to consider the discursive connections between photography and art, a topic that has been hitherto ignored by scholars.

4-2. Exploring the Everyday

4-2-1. Discourses of *Nichijôsei*

As mentioned above, one of the sources of the term *konpora* was the catalogue of the exhibition *Contemporary Photographers: Toward a Social Landscape*. It is undeniable that some stylistic characteristics of *konpora* defined by Otsuji can be also found in the works of the five photographers who participated in the exhibition,

²⁹ For a detailed analysis of Shimotsu's *Okinawa Island*, see Yukiko Tomiyama, "<Nichijô> shashin no shizukana teikô: Shimotsu takayuki okinawatô o yomu" (Silence Resistance in Everyday-Life Photographs: Reading Shimotsu Takayuki's Okinawa Island), *Hyosho: Journal of the Association for Studies of Culture and Representation* 5 (March 2011): 179-197.

especially those by Friedlander, Michaels, and Winogrand. For the photographs published in this book, they preferred to use a wide or normal lens, shooting the main subject from a distance. Their photographs often capture banal everyday scenes rather than politically or culturally charged “decisive moments.” As Lyons has pointed out in his Introduction, some of the photographs by Davidson, Lyon and Michaels look similar to snapshots made by unskilled amateurs, even though the entire work was not necessarily permeated by a so-called “snapshot aesthetic” (Lyons himself did not use this word).³⁰

In a similar way, when *konpora* began to be discussed in 1968, Japanese critics sometimes pointed out its stylistic affinity with *kinen shashin*.³¹ *Kinen shashin* literally translates to “commemorative photography” and it is roughly equivalent to the Anglophone snapshot. At that time, the term *konpora* was used to refer to both American and Japanese contemporary photographs (today it usually signifies only the latter). Although these critics’ suggestions may be appropriate for photographs featured in the catalogue *Toward a Social Landscape*, Japanese examples categorized into *konpora* do not really look like amateur snapshots. This point will be clear if one looks at one photography book that is now considered as a typical work of *konpora* photography. In 1971 Gochô and Sekiguchi, students of Otsuji whose photographs were also reproduced in his 1970 article, published *Days*, a photobook that has often been considered one of the

³⁰ For the “snapshot aesthetic” in art photography, see Matthew S. Witkowsky, “When the Earth was Square,” in Sarah Greenough, ed., *The Art of the American Snapshot, 1888-1978* (Washington: National Museum of Art, 2007), 241.

³¹ See, for example, Takuma Nakahira, “Dôjidaiteki de aru towa nanika” (What Does Being Contemporary Mean?) (1969), in *Mitsuzukeru hateni higa: Hihyô shûsei 1965-1977* (Fire at the Limits of My Perpetual Gaze: Collected Essays of Takuma Nakahira 1965-1977) (Tokyo: Oshiris, 2007), 60-61.

quintessential works of *konpora* photography.³² In Gochô's part of the book, consisting of twenty-four photographs, only a few might be mistaken as *kinen shashin* or family snapshots. Rather, his photographs in the book are mostly *sunappu* in the sense that they were taken with a handheld camera unbeknownst to the subjects. Among the twenty-four photographs, nineteen capture a human figure (or figures); five depict animals such as a dog or a monkey, as if they replace human beings. It is well known that Gochô suffered from a physical handicap; because of the thoracic vertebral caries (a disease that destroys the vertebral column) he was diagnosed with when he was three years old, even after growing up to be an adult, he was no taller than 150 centimeters (five feet) and suffered from chronic disorders (he died prematurely at the age of thirty-six). As is often suggested, this physical condition often manifests itself in his photographs, which were apparently taken at a lower height than the average viewpoint of adult photographers.³³

Gochô's first photograph depicts people on the observation deck of an airport, captured from a distance (fig. 4-3). The composition is characteristically static; the clear sky above the horizon occupies two thirds of the entire picture. The people seem to be enjoying the calm weather. Gochô's gaze is focused on young Caucasian children playing on the bench, even though they are no more than a small detail of the picture. In fact, a simultaneous attention to a particular subject and a distance from that subject is a significant characteristic of Gochô's photographs in *Days*. In another photograph, a man

³² Shigeo Gochô and Masao Sekiguchi, *Hibi* (Days) (Tokyo: privately printed, 1971). All the photographs of Gochô's part are reproduced in Yamagata Museum of Art et al., eds., *Shigeo Gocho 1946-1983* (Tokyo: K. K. Kyodo News, 2004).

³³ See Nobuyuki Okabe, "Minareta machino nakade: Gochô shigeo ni okeru shisen to kyori" (*Familiar Street Scenes: Gaze and Distance in the Work of Shigeo Gochô*), in Yamagata Museum of Art et al., eds., *Shigeo Gocho 1946-1983*, 260-269.

stretches his back in front of a tawdry “bar” (as the sign says) that looks like a strip joint (fig.4-4). Without knowing it, he is choreographed with the painted dancer on the signboard of the bar. The book also includes a shot taken at a cemetery in which a dog stares at a camera some twenty feet away from the photographer (fig.4-5), and another of a man standing in a parking lot, turning to the high wall as if he is speaking to his own shadow on the wall (fig. 4-6).

The depictions of everyday life in Tokyo found in these photographs appear ordinary and calm, but they are also animated by a subtle strangeness that must have attracted the photographer’s eye (note that foreigners, another sign of strangeness, often appear in the photographs). To repeat, they are all *sunappu* in the narrower meaning of the term; that is, they were taken instantaneously with a hand-held camera, capturing human beings (or a dog) unaware of the presence of the camera. Nevertheless, they are characteristically different from *sunappu* produced by Domon or even Moriyama. It is significant to notice that the reduced size of the main subject of the composition was something new to the tradition of Japanese *sunappu* photography. It is likely that Gochô was inspired by photographs by Friedlander and Winogrand reproduced in *Toward a Social Landscape* which adopt a similar style of composition (for example, see Winogrand’s *Albuquerque, New Mexico* [fig. 4-7]). The smallness of the main subject required Gochô’s photographs to have minute details. They are never blurred, out-of-focus, or grainy, but delicately developed and printed; otherwise, a viewer cannot turn his or her attention to a subject that occupies no more than a small part of the composition. It almost goes without saying that detailed images were completely lacking in *buré boké* photographs by Moriyama and Nakahira, as well as in many photographs by Tômatsu. Indeed, the delicate rendering of

details, as opposed to the expressive grains and blurs of *buré boké*, was a common characteristic of *konpora* photography, including photographs published in *Toward a Social Landscape* as well as those by other Japanese photographers such as Yutaka Takanashi. Detail thus became a conspicuous marker that differentiated these two contemporaneous photographic movements.

Viewing the catalogue of *Toward a Social Landscape*, one might be frustrated by the lack of textual information explaining the meanings of each contributor's work. The only substantial text in the catalogue is Lyon's Introduction. Even so, it does not allow the reader to understand the subject matter and theme of each photograph specifically. But it was precisely this ambiguity that allowed Japanese photographers and critics to extract much from this book and (mis)interpret it as an expression of everydayness, a popular topic of discussion in the photographic community at that time.³⁴

³⁴ For example, at the Euro Photo, an international photography conference that took place in the south of France in April 1969, Shoji Yamagishi, the influential editor of *Camera Mainichi*, mentioned that among Japanese photographers there emerged a trend called *konpora*, such that they "tried to aim their cameras again at the things with which they were familiar." He also suggested that "serious eyes and attitudes exploring everydayness (*nichijōsei*) must have great significances and roles." ("輻輳、屈折した現代の社会のなかにあつて、きわめて日常的な市民の感情のデテールを通して、あらためて身近にカメラを向けようとする傾向は、単に写真界ならずともいろいろのジャンルですすでに試みられてきたが、それはまたとりもなおさず、カメラ本来の写るといふ単純な機能に立ち戻ることの意味してもいた。(…)写真家の主体性をとり戻す行為としても、このシリアスな日常性追求の目と姿勢は大きな意義と役割をもっているはずだ。") See Shoji Yamagishi "Yūro foto hōkoku: Shashin no atarashii taidō urutora banariti" (A Report on the Euro Photo: Ultra Banality, A New Movement of Photography), *Camera Mainichi* (July 1969): 58. An attention to everyday life, however, was not a phenomenon unique to Japanese photography. In the wall text of his 1967 exhibition *New Documents* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in which Diane Arbus, Friedlander, and Winogrand participated, the curator John Szarkowski suggested that "[w]hat they hold in common is the belief that the commonplace is really worth looking at," an opinion that corresponds with that of Otsuji (The wall text was later published in the leaflet for the touring version of the exhibition. For the full text, see John Szarkowski, "Introduction," the exhibition leaflet of *New Documentary*, reproduced in Mora, *The Last Photographic Heroes*, 48). However, partly because no catalogue accompanied this exhibition, *New Documents* was largely overlooked by the Japanese photographic community.

One influential piece of art criticism published in 1964 triggered a spread of the word and concept of *nichijōsei* in the field of contemporary art as well as that of photography: the essay entitled “Anti-Art: Its Descent to Everydayness” was written by the prominent art critic Atushi Miyakawa (1933-1977).³⁵ Even though his name remains obscure outside Japan, Miyakawa, who emerged as an art critic with his 1963 essay “Anforumeru ikō (After Art Informel),” was one of the most astute observers of the development of postwar Japanese art.³⁶ At that time, Japanese art criticism was generally under the influence of French existentialism. Miyakawa’s writings were thus distinctive for their attention to the nature of the medium and the self-referential process of art making. His “Anti-Art: Its Descent to Everydayness” was written as a response to the recent trend of contemporary art that another prominent art critic Yoshiaki Tôno (1930-2005) famously called Anti-Art (*han geijutsu*); broadly speaking, this was the Japanese version of Neo Dada and Happenings in the United States.³⁷ Opposing Tôno, Miyakawa stated that Anti-Art should not be confused with “non-art (*hi geijustu*),” claiming that in the history of modern art, new movements had always been presented as anti-art against its predecessors. Therefore, such a label as Anti-Art, Miyakawa suggested, was not really meaningful. Instead, he maintained that the trend of contemporary art misleadingly called Anti-Art was, in fact, characterized by a certain “stylistic specificity” which he described

³⁵ Atsushi Miyakawa, “Han-geijutsu: Sono nichijōsei eno kakō” (Anti-Art: Its Descent to the Everydayness), *Bijutsu Techō* (April 1964), reprinted in *Miyakawa atsushi chosakushū* (Collected Writings of Atsushi Miyakawa), vol. 2 (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1980), 87-96.

³⁶ Atsushi Miyakawa, “Anforumeru ikō” (After Unformel), *Bijutsu Techō* (May 1963), reprinted in *Ibid.*, 16-32.

³⁷ For more on Japanese “anti-art” in the 1960s, see Alexandra Munroe, “Morphology of Revenge: The Yomiuri Independent Artists and Social Protest Tendencies in the 1960s,” in Munroe, ed., *Japanese Art after 1945: Scream against the Sky* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994), 149-163.

as “a descent to banal everydayness (*hizoku na nichijôsei e no kakô*), by using either objects, such as readymade commodities or discarded materials, or [depicted] images.”³⁸

In Miyakawa’s view, this tendency does not mean “a return to the world of ‘fact,’” even if it may seem that way. Rather it “nullifies the concept of reality” and then realizes “an autonomy of the process of expression.”³⁹ Referring to Jasper Johns’s *Flag* as an example, Miyakawa suggests that the artist’s selection of such a mundane object for his subject matter allowed him to concentrate on the process of making a painting itself, without being bothered by the idea of whether his work represents reality or not. One must say that it is a rather unusual interpretation of Neo Dada and the succeeding Pop Art, because they have been usually understood, especially in the Japanese art community, as artistic movements that tried to return to reality, renouncing the effect of pictorial illusionism. Accordingly, the crux of Miyakawa’s claim was hardly understood by contemporaries. Nevertheless, after the essay appeared in 1964, “a descent to everydayness (*nichijôsei e no kakô*),” a phrase used in the title of his essay, began to receive increased attention in contemporary art criticism, the words *nichijô* and *nichijôsei* becoming buzzwords.⁴⁰

While Miyakawa considered “a descent to everydayness” as no more than a precondition for a work of visual art to be released from its traditional role as a

³⁸ “ (...) 「反芸術」を現在の時点におけるその様式的な具体性にまでひき戻す必要がある。つまり、それは、オブジェ(既成の日用品や廃物)によってであれ、イメージによってであれ、卑俗な日常性への下降である、と一応規定できるだろう。” Miyakawa, “Han-geijutsu” (Anti-Art), 90.

³⁹ “反芸術の日常性への下降が、「事実」の世界への復帰であるかに見えて、かえってリアリテの概念を空無化しているとすれば、それは日常性を導入したものがなによりも表現過程の自立にほかならなかつたからである。” *Ibid.*, 94.

⁴⁰ For example, in a roundtable published in the February 1970 issue of the leading art magazine *Bijutsu Techô*, a group of artists who would be later called “Mono ha (Things School)” defined their works as a criticism of *nichijô*. See Susumu Koshimizu et al., “‘Mono’ ga hiraku atarashii sekai” (The New World That ‘Things’ Open Up), *Bijutsu Techô* (February 1970): 34-55.

representation of reality, other Japanese artists and art critics regarded everydayness as a theme worth exploring in and of itself; it is in this respect that one can find a common concern across the art community and the photographic community at that time. Even though these two communities were generally separated—for example, in the 1960s and ‘70s, it was rare for even such prominent photographers as Tōmatsu and Moriyama to publish their works in major art magazines such as *Bijutsu Techō* and *Geijustu Shinchō*, let alone exhibit in art museums—there was one important occasion on which contemporary photography and art converged under their shared interest in everydayness: Otsuji’s photographic documents of the exhibition of “The 10th Tokyo Biennale,” an exhibition now commonly known for its subtitle “Between Man and Matter (*Ningen to busshitsu*).”⁴¹ Held in Tokyo in May 1970 and then touring to two other cities in Japan, the exhibition was curated by the influential art critic Yusuke Nakahara (1930-2011), who invited forty Japanese and foreign artists to the show, including Richard Serra, Carl André, and Sol Lewitt. It was intended to spotlight the latest significant trends in contemporary art emerging in the international art scene. As Nakahira notes in his introduction to the catalogue, the concept of the exhibition was inspired by two recent foreign exhibitions: *When Attitudes Become Form*, curated by Harald Szeemann at Kunsthalle Bern in 1969, and *Anti-Illusion: Procedures/ Materials* held at the Whitney Museum of American Art in the same year.⁴²

⁴¹ The literal translation of the Japanese title would be “Man and Matter,” but Nakahara deliberately chose the English title “Between Man and Matter.”

⁴² See Nakahara’s introduction printed in the catalogue of the exhibition. Yusuke Nakahara, “Between Man and Matter,” translated by Joseph Love, in Mainichi Shimbunsha, ed., *The 10th International Art Exhibition of Japan* (Tokyo: Mainichi Shimbunsha, 1970), unpaginated.

Generally speaking, the works included in the exhibition correspond to what has been categorized as Process Art in the writings on postwar art. It is beyond the scope of this study to examine the exhibited works in detail; what is relevant here is that the curator Nakahara interpreted them using the concept of everydayness.⁴³ In an essay written shortly after the exhibition, he wrote about the phenomenon of “making the non-everyday space of the museum more everyday-like.” He maintained:

It is widely known that a phenomenon that appears to be an integration of art and life became conspicuous in the works exhibited in museum spaces. In other words, by making the non-everyday space of the museum more everyday-like, they let the alienation of “space” happen. . . .

I have repeatedly talked about the shift from the work as “thing (mono)” to the work as “space.” Instead of regarding a work-as-object as something that transcends the [surrounding] space, what I have suggested is equating objects with space and granting significance to the relationships between objects and space. Our real lives are like that. In the life space (*seikatsu kûkan*) in which we live, it is not that various objects exist transcendentally. Our life space where we act exists as their aggregate. In this sense, one can say that the work as “space” is the same as life space in their “structures.”⁴⁴

Nakahara considered that the newly emerging works of art succeeded in transforming the gallery space of the museum into the everyday “life space” (whether such an

⁴³ For more on this exhibition, see Yôko Watanabe, “‘Hijyô na boken’ no tenrankai: Tokyo biennâre ’70 saikô” (A “Highly Audacious” Exhibition: Reconsidering Tokyo Biennale ’70), in The Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, ed., *Tokyo fu bijutsukan no jidai: 1926-1970* (The Age of Tokyo Metropolitan Art Gallery: 1926-1970) (Tokyo: The Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, 2005), 150-152.

⁴⁴ “芸術と生活の一体化とみえる現象が、美術館内空間の作品において顕著であったことは周知の通りである。いいかえれば、それは美術館の非日常的空間を日常化させることによって「空間」の異化をもたらしたのだった。（…中略…）／私はこれまで度々「もの」としての作品から「空間」としての作品というようにいつてきたが、それは一個の物体である作品を空間から超越したものとしてみるのではなく、物体と空間をいわば同質化し、物体と空間の関係のなかに意味をあたえようということである。われわれの現実の生活とはそういうものである。われわれの生活する生活空間とは、さまざまな物体が超越的に存在しているわけではないからである。その総体としてわれわれの行動する生活空間がある。そういう意味では、この「空間」としての作品は、その「構造」においては生活空間と同じものといっている。” Yusuke Nakahara, “Busshitsu kara <kûkan> e: Yomiuri andepandan ikô” (From Matter to “Space”: After Yomiuri Independents), *Bijutsu Techô* (October 1971): 43.

interpretation does justice to the works by André and Lewitt is not important here). Interestingly, Otsuji's series of photographs depicting the installation views of *Between Man and Matter* correspond with Nakahara's understanding of the work. His photographs are unusual as a document of an art exhibition. For example, one photograph (fig.4-8) from the series captures the gallery in which only one person is visible and several objects, which we assume to be works of art, are placed on the floor or hung from the wall.⁴⁵ In this photograph Otsuji's attention appears to be targeted, not so much at depicting each of these objects, as at grasping the atmosphere, or the structure, of the entire space. The gallery is vacant but it does not especially impress the viewer with a sense of coldness, the quality which one often finds in the gallery space of a modern museum. Rather, Otsuji photographed the galleries of the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum, where *Between Man and Matter* was held, as if they were ordinary places like a gymnasium or hall. Another photograph (fig.4-9) from the same series captures a moment in which volunteers are executing a work by Sol Lewitt, which consists of inserting thousands of sticks of rolled papers of red, blue, and yellow into grids of small holes on the plywood walls. The volunteers look absorbed in their monotonous work, isolated from each other. Otsuji's photograph shows the process of production, and, like the earlier example, it is focused on not so much showing the work itself as illustrating the space in which human beings engage with objects, as they do in their everyday lives.

Otsuji's photographic documents of the installation of *Between Man and Matter*, therefore, turned out to be a pointed commentary on the exhibition that addressed the question of "making the non-everyday space of the museum more everyday-like." It is

⁴⁵ The title of the photographs tells us that it is an installation by the Swiss artist Markus Raetz who was also featured in *When Attitudes Become Form*.

important to notice that both of these photographs—in fact, most of the photographs in the series—are taken using the typical style of *konpora* photography: the use of a wide lens, horizontal format, a distance from the main subject that enables the photographer to depict its surroundings, and a preference for undramatic moments. In other words, Otsuji shot the installation of *Between Man and Matter* in the photographic style that he defined as an expression of everydayness, the concept Nakahara also evoked in his comments on the recent phenomenon of contemporary art. In the following year, Otsuji made a series entitled *Uehara 2-chome—Tonari kinjo* (*Uehara 2-chome—My Neighborhood*), which consists of his photographs taken on the streets near his home in Uehara, Tokyo (fig.4-10).⁴⁶ The stylistic similarity between this series and his museum pictures is apparent, despite one major difference: the former was taken with color film whereas the latter was taken in black-and-white. This similarity implies that the gallery space in the art museum and the space of his neighborhood are essentially the same, and, therefore, do not need to be represented in different photographic styles. Otsuji's photographic document of the exhibition *Between Man and Matter* and the curator Nakahara's explanation of the exhibition suggest that everydayness was a theme shared by Japanese art and photographic communities from the late 1960s through the early 1970s.

It is not difficult to find a connection between this shared concern for everydayness and the climate of Japanese society at that time. When *konpora* emerged in the first half of 1968, the activities of the New Left and student movements were about to reach their climax: students of major universities occupied the classrooms, insisting on

⁴⁶ This series was not taken with a 35mm camera but with a hand-held 6 x 9 camera Otsuji made by himself (see the chronological record printed in *The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, ed., Kiyoji Otsuji Retrospective*, 116). However, the photographs retain the candidness, or *sunappu*-ness, typical of images made with small format cameras.

the self-government of their school; anti-Vietnam War demonstrations filled the streets, often ending in violent collisions with the police. By 1970, however, the antiestablishment movements had rapidly waned. The Osaka International Exposition, a national project that opened in March 1970, celebrated the progress of technology and the economic prosperity of postwar Japan in an attempt to reignite the country's waning optimism. The New Left movement radicalized as the student movements began to decline; its offspring, the United Red Army, no longer received sympathy from the public. An attention to the everyday found in the works of contemporary artists and photographers reflected this post-1970 climate in which people returned to their ordinary lives. As the art critic Ichiro Haryû suggested in 1972, “after the struggle came to a dead end in the student movement, everyone, in the end, began to say ‘Let’s fix our eyes on the everydayness of a simple life.’”⁴⁷ Born in the midst of the most turbulent days of postwar Japan, *konpora* had predicted this change a few years later.

4-2-2. Shigeo Gochô’s Representations of the Everyday

Shortly after the term *konpora* appeared, photography magazines treated *buré boké* photography by Moriyama and Nakahira as a branch of *konpora*, simply because it was a contemporaneous photographic trend.⁴⁸ However, *konpora* and *buré boké* soon

⁴⁷ “学生運動で闘争がにっちもさっちもいなくなると、結局、素朴な生活の日常性を見つめようといひ出した、皆。” Yoshiaki Tôno, Yusuke Nakahara, Ichiro Haryû, and Naoyoshi Hikosaka, “Sengo bijutsuhyô no seiritsu to tenakai” (The Establishment and Development of Postwar Art Criticism), *Bijutsu Techo* (January 1972): 96.

⁴⁸ For example, the April 1969 issue of *Asahi Camera* published a roundtable entitled “Konpora ka riarizumuka (*Konpora* or *Riarizumu?*),” in which the editor of the magazine contrasted *konpora* with traditional Riarizumu Photography and described Nakahira’s *buré boké* as a challenge to Riarizumu. See Kyoko Yoshino, Shisei Kuwabara, Yutaka Takanashi, Takuma Nakahira, and Takao Niikura, “Zadankai konpora ka riarizumuka: Atarashii shashin hyôgen no kanôsei o saguru” (A Roundtable:

came to be considered as antithetical movements that emerged almost simultaneously. For example, in an essay published in January 1972 Shōmei Tōmatsu wryly “diagnosed” what he called “patients” suffering from *konpora* and *buré boké*. In his view, “whereas recognitions of the present condition [of the society] held by *konpora* patients are affirmative, those by *aré boké* (grainy and out-of-focus) patients are negative.”⁴⁹ Tōmatsu goes on to state:

Whereas *konpora* patients’ awareness [of the society] is ambiguous, *aré buré* patients are somewhat deliberate. It is clear from the fact that whereas the former group does not doubt the mechanical capacity of photography and submits the choice of values to their own sensibility, the latter group intuits that the functions of photography are somehow dubious and tries to destroy them. . . . The presence of *konpora* patients is inconspicuous, giving no discomfort to people. Because they are harmless to the establishment, they are left alone. To the contrary, because *aré buré* patients attempt to destroy the mechanism, they are excluded from the establishment, being considered a hazardous material.⁵⁰

In fact, the view that *konpora* photography is conformist was not unique to Tōmatsu but had been expressed by the photographers and critic who were associated with the magazine *Provoke*, the bastion of *buré boké* photography. In June 1971 Koji Taki (1928-2011), the critic who edited *Provoke* with Nakahira in 1968-1969, reviewed Gochō and

Konpora or Riarizumu?: An Investigation into New Photographic Expressions), *Asahi Camera* (May 1969), 220-225.

⁴⁹ “コンポラ患者の現状認識は肯定的でアレ・ブレ患者のそれは否定的ということが出来る。” Shōmei Tōmatsu, “Gendai shashin o dōsuru: Tate are bure konpora no kanjyadomo yo” (What to Do with Contemporary Photography?: Stand up, *Aré Buré* and *Konpora* Patients!), *Camera Mainichi* (January 1971): 61. Tōmatsu uses the term “*aré buré* (grainy and blurred)” instead of more common “*buré boké* (blurred and out-of-focus),” but the two signified the same thing.

⁵⁰ “コンポラ患者の意識があいまいであるのに対してアレ・ブレ患者はやや意識的ということが出来る。そのことは、前者が写真の機械的性能に疑いをもたず、また、価値の選択を自らの感性にゆだねてしまうのに対して、後者は写真の機能をなんとなくうさん臭いものと直感し、その破壊を試みている事実からして明瞭である。(…中略…) コンポラ患者は存在自体が希薄で人に不快感を与えない。体制にとって無毒無害である。したがって放任される。一方アレ・ブレ患者はメカニズムの破壊を企てるがゆえに、有毒有害なものとして体制からしめ出される。” *Ibid.*

Sekiguchi's *Days*, the photography book discussed above. Entitled "Youngsters without Teeth," the review has often been cited as one of the harshest criticisms of *konpora* photography.⁵¹

Even though Taki does not use the term *konpora*, his analysis of *Days* is relevant to *konpora* photography as a whole. He suggests that the photographs used in the book give the impression that the two young photographers—they were twenty-five years old when it was published—have "a seemingly dry vision" as well as "a modest attitude that they do not step into [the subject] besides just *looking at it*" (emphasis original).⁵²

However, Taki claims that the world represented with such an attitude is not a neutral one, but rather is already "entangled in meanings on multiple levels." He maintains that "the attitude chosen by them and their way of looking are so simple and harmonious that I cannot help but have doubts about them."⁵³ Due to the fact that in their photographs "things appear to exist with certainty" and therefore "the world, which lets things exist in that way, is certain," Taki suggests that Gochô and Sekiguchi must have "a philosophy or attitude that everything in the world is all right."⁵⁴

⁵¹ Koji Taki, "Shashinshû hibi: Kiba no nai wakamonotachi" (Photography Book *Days: Youngsters without Teeth*), *SD* (June 1971): 117-119.

⁵² "(...) 牛腸、関口という若い写真家たちの一見さりとした視覚、あるいは見ること以上には踏みこまぬという謙虚さにもかかわらず (...)" *Ibid.*, 117.

⁵³ "(...) かれらの世界がそれほどナイーブではなくすでに十重二十重に意味に絡まれていることを感じないわけにはいかないし、同時にそこでかれらによって選択された態度、あるいは見る方法はあまりにも素朴すぎ、調和にみちていて疑問を感じないわけにはいかないからである。" *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ "事物は一見、確かそうに存在しているし、それは事物それ自体というよりも、事物をかくあらしめている世界が確かなのである。(…中略…) 確実なのはどこかに世界はすべてよしといった思想、あるいは態度があることである。無常感かとも思えるが、それよりもかれらは無傷であって、調和がありすぎ、どこにも亀裂の跡もない。" *Ibid.*, 119.

Finally, Taki compares this “philosophy or attitude” with the one held by Moriyama and Nakahira, his former younger colleagues: “While Moriyama and Nakahira have been, for better or worse, bloody existences showing their teeth, there have begun to appear youngsters without teeth.”⁵⁵ Taki’s comment that in *Days* “the world is certain” is an unmistakable reference to the title of the book that he and Nakahira published as a supplement to *Provoke* that had recently ended with the third issue: *Abandon the World of Certainty, First*, published in 1970.⁵⁶ As discussed in Chapter Three, blurred and out-of-focus pictures were presented by them as an antithesis to the conventional mode of photographic representation. *Buré boké* photography was, at least on a theoretical level, a tool or method to “abandon the world of certainty,” to pursue instead the real that is hidden behind the veil of conventionality. Taki believed that, unlike Moriyama and Nakahira, the photographers of *Days* uncritically accepted the world as it is.

An August 1971 dialogue between Nakahira and Moriyama that was printed in Moriyama’s 1972 photography book *Bye-Bye Photography* conveyed a similarly negative opinion of *Days*. Moriyama says, “In the style generally called *konpora* photography, we can find a wrong prosperity of tranquil Japan.”⁵⁷ Nakahira concurs: “Yes, there is a wrong prosperity. Didn’t they send you the photography book named *Days*? Looking at

⁵⁵ “森山や中平がよきにつけあしきにつけ歯をむきだした生ぐさい存在であるのに比べて、牙のない若ものたちがあらわれてきたことである。” Ibid.

⁵⁶ Koji Taki and Takuma Nakahira, eds., *Mazu tashikarashisa no sekai o sutero: Shashin to gengo no shisô* (Abandon the World of the Certainty, First: Philosophies of Photography and Language) (Tokyo: Tabata Shoten, 1970).

⁵⁷ “いわゆるコンポラ写真と総称されるスタイルの中には、泰平日本の悪しき繁栄が見られる。” Moriyama and Nakahira, “Taidan hachigatsu futsuka yamonoue hoteru” (A Dialogue at Yamanoue Hotel in August 2), 301-302. The dialogue is omitted in the 2006 reprint of the book published by Power Shovel, Tokyo, but it is reproduced in Moriyama’s anthology of writings. See below. Daido Moriyama, *Kako wa itsumo atarashiku mirai wa tsuneni natsukashii* (Past is Always New, Future is Always Nostalgic) (Tokyo: Seikyusha, 2000), 21-105.

the book, I wonder how they can live so emotionlessly and so delightfully.”⁵⁸ Nakahira also criticizes Otsuji, who was the teacher of Gochô and Sekiguchi at Kuwasawa Design School:

Nevertheless, the bad critic says it is fantastic that nothing special happens. That is so ridiculous. Surprisingly, Kiyoji Otsuji has no principles. He usually says “good” to anything. If you don’t have pent-up resentment, you should not take photographs.⁵⁹

For Moriyama and Nakahira, as well as for Tômatsu and Taki, *konpora* photography looked too uncritically at the present condition of Japanese society, accepting the everyday world as it is. However, it is worthwhile to consider whether these criticisms really do justice to the works of *konpora* photography, such as *Days*. It is certainly undeniable that, compared to Nakahira and Taki, Otsuji and Gochô were indifferent to the political turmoil of Japanese society at that time; one can say, at least, that they did not try to picture the turmoil in their photographs. As its critics complained, *konpora* photographs certainly appear, to use Taki’s word, “harmonious” when compared to photographs by Tômatsu and Moriyama that tend to be violent and destructive. It is not clear whether Taki knew of Gochô’s physical handicap when he criticized him as a “youngster without teeth,” but he considered Gochô’s photographs to embody an attitude which was too uncritical of the present condition of Japanese society.

⁵⁸ “そう、悪しき反映がある。『日々』という写真集、送ってこなかった？ それなんかを見ると、あれほど無感動に、爽やかに生きていることが不思議でならない。” Moriyama and Nakahira, “Taidan hachigatsu futsuka yamonoue hoteru” (A Dialogue at Yamanoue Hotel in August 2), 302.

⁵⁹ “にもかかわらずそれに、何ごともないということがすごいというふうに、悪い評論家がいるわけだ。それがまたくだらない。大辻清司という人は意外に無原則だ。いろんなものを、たいがい良いという人だ。うらみつらみがなければ撮らない方がいい。” Ibid.

Certainly, Otsuji considered everydayness to be important in and of itself. In the 1970 essay quoted above, he writes:

As our daily lives exist in the everyday, we find shock or freshness in special events. However, it does not mean that we may well neglect the everydayness (*nichijōsei*) as something that may be as important as the air we breathe yet unworthy of our attention. Daily life *is* our life. It is the place where we live.⁶⁰

It is this world view that was targeted by the former *Provoke* members' criticism of *konpora* photography. However, whether Gochō's photographs accept the real world uncritically—in other words, whether they celebrate everydayness—is a question that needs to be carefully considered. In my view the crux of *konpora* represented by the work of Gochō does not lie in its attitude toward everydayness, even though it certainly addressed this issue. As early as 1969, the critic Shin'ichi Kusamori offered a considerably different interpretation of *konpora* photography. He writes: "I take it that [*konpora*] tries to restore our natural bodily eyes, rather than be born as the result of an attention to the everyday or a recognition that is shared by *shishōsetsu* ('I' novels)."⁶¹ Although it is not very clear what he exactly meant by the words "bodily eyes," it seems that he contrasts it with analytical or speculative eyes. Kusamori emphasizes that the *konpora* photographer tries to "make him or herself blind" and "remove his or her own ideas, notions, and philosophies [from the photographs], and [make] photographs speak

⁶⁰ “だが、われわれの生活の場は日常の中にこそあるので、だから特別の出来事にショックや新鮮さを感じるわけなのだろうが、しかし空気のように大事だけれど気にとめるほどのこともないとして、日常性をおろそかにしてよいとはいえない。日常生活がわれわれの生活なのである。われわれが生きている場なのである。” Otsuji, “Konpora shashin” (*Konpora Photography*), 98.

⁶¹ “だから、日常的なものへの関心とか私小説的な認識が高まった結果なのではなく、私たちの背のびしない肉体の目を復権しようとしているのではないかと深読みして考えたのである。” Shin'ichi Kusamori, “Konpora yoni habikoru” (*Konpora is Rampant in the Society*), *Camera Mainichi* (March 1969): 15.

by themselves.” Accordingly, “details of ‘things’ emerge punctiliously from every corner [of the photograph] to the extent it appears almost nostalgic. And such a photograph gives a presence of things to its viewer.”⁶² In fact, this interpretation of *konpora* stands in contrast to Taki’s review of *Days*; Taki suggests that the photographs in the book are representations of the “gazes (*manazashi*)” of Gochô and Sekiguchi rather than of those “things” depicted in the pictures.⁶³ Since Kusamori’s analysis was about *konpora* in general and not specially about *Days* (which was not yet published when he wrote the article), it might be inadequate to compare these two opinions. But to think about the role of the photographer’s gaze in Gochô’s photographs might offer a useful point of view on *konpora* photography.

Taki considered that the point of Gochô’s photographs lies in their “discoveries of moments and spaces that no one has ever looked at.”⁶⁴ But he believed that such discoveries were insignificant as long as “things appear to exist with certainty.” As I have pointed out above, in Gochô’s photographs one often finds a simultaneous attention to a particular subject and a distance from that subject. Taki was correct in his suggestion of the role of the photographer’s gaze in Gochô’s work, but it is important to notice that the gaze was also diminished or marginalized in the picture because of the smallness of the

⁶² “外部世界の現象を対象にしながら、自分の観念や想念や思想をとりのぞき、写真そのものに語らせている写真である。（…中略…）また当然これらの行為は、自分を盲目とすることであるから、自分に不必要なものは削除するという刈取りの作業は行われていず、外界の「物」のデテールが克明にすみずみにわたってなつかしいばかりにでてくる。またそのような写真が生まれることは、みるものにももの存在感をあたえることにもなる。” *Ibid.*, 16.

⁶³ Taki, “Kiba no nai wakamonotachi” (Youngsters without the Teeth), 119.

⁶⁴ “それらはかれらが見なければ存在しなかつた世界であり、だれにも見られていない時間あるいは空間の発見なのである。” *Ibid.*

main subject on which the gaze was turned (this will become clear if one compares them with Moriyama's photographs, images that often capture the main subject in their full frames). Importantly, this allows him to make a space in the picture that is *freed* from the gaze of the photographer. This is relevant to what Kusamori suggested as the primary characteristic of *konpora*: that a *konpora* photograph "speaks by itself" and thereby offers a "presence of things" to the viewer.

It is in this respect that Gochô's work is related, not just to the concept of *Riarizumu*, but also to the historical precedents of *sunappu* photography. It is worth remembering that Ken Domon claimed that *sunappu*, or candid photography, is the only method for representing society objectively, which he famously called *Riarizumu* Photography. For Domon, the unstagedness of *sunappu* guaranteed the objective status of the produced image. As to Gochô's photographs, one can argue that the objectivity of the image is presented through a different mechanism and visual rhetoric; that is, by depicting the main subject in such a way that it occupies no more than a small part of the composition, his photograph implies that the rest of the objects represented in the photographic image exist irrespective of the photographer's gaze, therefore evading his subjectivity. This may be applicable to any other photograph that employed a similar composition (which is typical for *konpora*), but Gochô's work foregrounds this characteristic, by arranging photographs with the same type of composition in a single sequence of work.

As a consequence, the fact that Gochô's photographs were taken in the midst of everyday life in which no politically or culturally charged events happen does not necessarily mean that they try to propose that the world is "harmonious" or that the

everyday is important in itself. Instead, the photographer's attention seems to have been always paid to human beings or dogs he encountered on the street—the focus on people on the streets situates his work in the tradition of *sunappu*—and this makes his pictures rather *indifferent* to the conditions of the surroundings around the main subjects, despite the fact that they often amply include the surroundings in the frame. It was such an indifference that unexpectedly contributed to the objective look of Gochô's photographs, rendering them unusual representations of everyday life. When compared to them, Tômatsu's grainy photographs of U.S. base towns or Moriyama's blurred images taken from the window of a moving car look all the more emotional, as if they tried to infuse their representation of the environment with a certain mood that corresponded with the condition of the society. In this regard, Tômatsu and Moriyama's photographs are "social landscapes" (even though this term has not been applied to their work). To the contrary, in Gochô's photographs in *Days*, the landscapes are neither social nor private, but presented as something devoid of any special meaning. It is important to note that this mode of presentation is emblematic of our relationships to the environments in which we live. We do not always give special meaning to the street scenes we see every day; we tend to come into contact with them with a rather indifferent attitude. However, it is not easy to represent this indifference. As soon as the photographer chooses to depict a familiar scene that would normally escape our attention, it becomes the focus of the photographer's gaze and is therefore no longer perceived with indifference. Gochô's *Days* avoids this paradox because his focus was directed at human beings on the streets, and not at their surroundings. It is this characteristic that makes *Days* a unique example of photographic representation of everydayness.

4-3. Nobuyoshi Araki and the Snapshot

Nobuyoshi Araki (1940-) has been one of the most sought-after photographers in Japan since the 1980s; probably his popularity is rivaled only by Daido Moriyama. In the West, he is especially known for his erotic, or even pornographic, pictures of kimono-clad oriental models that have sometimes been criticized as a misogynistic exploitation of women.⁶⁵ Partly because of his self-appointed title as a “genius of photography” and his almost cult reputation in Japan, Araki’s work has rarely been contextualized within other photography of this period. However, his work around 1970, with which he attracted the attention of the Japanese photographic community, was clearly inspired by the discourse of everydayness at that time.

Two photography books by Araki published in 1971 and 1980 demonstrate how he applied the visual vocabulary of *konpora* and then that of *kinen shashin*, or the family snapshot, to his search for the photographic expression of the everyday. Araki made his debut as a photographer in 1964 with *Sacchin*, a series of photographs about a small boy living in his neighborhood, which was awarded the Taiyo Prize. The first substantial work that secured him a position as a young ambitious photographer, however, was *Sentimental Journey*, a photography book privately published in 1971.⁶⁶ The book consists of 109 photographs (including the front cover) that record, in seemingly

⁶⁵ Recently the Japanese scholar Hiroko Hagiwara criticized the existence of what she calls an “Araki industry” that prevents feminist discussions of Araki’s work from developing in the Japanese photographic community. See Hagiwara Hiroko, “Representation, Distribution, and Formation of Sexuality in the Photography of Araki Nobuyoshi,” *Positions* 18, no.1 (Spring 2010): 231-251. I would like to thank Hyewon Yi for bringing this article to my attention.

⁶⁶ Nobuyoshi Araki, *Senchimentaruna tabi* (Sentimental Journey) (Tokyo: privately printed, 1971; reprint, Göttingen: Steidl, 2001).

chronological order, his honeymoon to Kyoto and Kyushu with his wife Yoko.⁶⁷ In the preface Araki writes that he believes “*shishôsetsu* (私小説) is what is the closest to [the nature of] photography.”⁶⁸ *Shishôsetsu*, usually translated as “‘I’ novel” in English, is a genre of modern Japanese fiction in which the author narrates stories based on what actually happened in his or her own life. The events told in *shishôsetsu* tend to be daily trivial events rather than extraordinary incidents.⁶⁹ Although Araki would continue to define his work as a photographic version of *shishôsetsu*, which has been famously called “*shishashin*” (‘I’ photography), that is, photography based on his own private life, he was not the first to associate photography with *shishôsetsu*.⁷⁰ In fact, critics had already discussed *konpora* in relation to *shishôsetsu*. For example, in an essay published in the September 1968 issue of *Camera Mainichi*, a critic named Yûsuke Kaji suggested that contemporary photography made the same mistake as *shishôsetsu* in its “thoughtless respect for everydayness.”⁷¹ Araki concludes the preface of *Sentimental Journey* by

⁶⁷ In fact, as the photo critic Kôtarô Iizawa has pointed out, the arrangement of the photographs does not follow the actual itinerary but is slightly modified in order for the sequence to have a development and a climax. See Kôtarô Iizawa, *Araki! “tensai” arâki no kiseki* (Araki!: The Career of Araki the “Genius”) (Tokyo: Shogakukan, 1999), 66. Iizawa’s book reproduces thumbnails of all 109 photographs in *Sentimental Journey*, a book that is now difficult to find even in the used book market.

⁶⁸ “私小説こそもっとも写真に近いと思っているからです。” Araki, *Senchimentaruna tabi* (*Sentimental Journey*), unpaginated.

⁶⁹ “Shi” is written with the *kanji* (Chinese character) that means “I” or “private,” and “shôsetsu” means “novel” in English. For more on *shishôsetsu*, see Irmela Hijiya-Kirschner, *Rituals of Self-Revelation: Shishôsetsu as Literary Genre and Socio-Cultural Phenomenon* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard East Asian Monographs, 1996).

⁷⁰ In 1994 Araki published a photography book entitled “Shishashin.” Nobuyoshi Araki, *Shishashin* (*Shishashin*) (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbunsha, 1994). For more on the concept of *shishashin*, see Kôtarô Iizawa, *Shishashin ron* (*Essays on Shishashin*) (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 2000).

⁷¹ “コンテンポラリー・フォトの多くは、まさしくこの私小説のあり方を思わせる。日本の私小説作家たちのおちいったおとし穴は、安易な日常性尊重主義であったけれど、いま、その停滞の賛美、「負の時間」の賛美の傾向が写真作家たちのあいだにもびまんしようとして

stating that “I feel something in the order by which which daily life passes by quietly.”⁷² Even though Araki’s 1970s work is not usually categorized as *konpora*, it is apparent that in *Sentimental Journey* he addressed an issue that was widely explored by such photographers as Otsuji and Gochô.

Among the 109 photographs that constitute *Sentimental Journey*, forty four capture Yoko in their frames, the rest depicting various objects and landscapes that Araki saw during their honeymoon. As the photo critic Kôtarô Iizawa has correctly pointed out, photographs in the book have qualities that Otsuji defined as characteristic of *konpora* photography, even though Araki’s work is not usually associated with this photographic trend; they are taken with a wide lens, often depicting the main subject at a distance.⁷³ Although Araki took these photographs during a special moment of life, his honeymoon, the views of Kyoto and towns in Kyushu are far from dramatic, but rather are characterized by their ordinariness, such as the two consecutive photographs taken on the platform of a train station (fig.4-11). However, the quality that distinguished him from Otsuji, Gochô and other *konpora* photographers, is that he tried to address the theme of everydayness by depicting his own private life. What gives a sense of intimacy to *Sentimental Journey* is the representations of his wife Yoko, who often appears in the pictures stripped to the waist (fig.4-12). It was not unprecedented that a male

いるのだ。” Yûsuke Kaji, “Kankiteki na shishin o nozomu: Kontenporarî foto wa shishôsetsu ka?” (Plead for Evocative Photography: Is Contemporary Photography *Shishôsetsu*?), *Camera Mainichi* (September 1968): 48.

⁷² “私は日常の単々（ママ）とすぎさってゆく順序になにかを感じています。” Araki, *Senchimentaruna tabi* (*Sentimental Journey*), unpaginated.

⁷³ Kôtarô Iizawa, “Araki nobuyoshi shikaban senchimentaru na tabi o yomu” (Reading Nobuyoshi Araki’s Privately Published Book, *Sentimental Journey*), in Littéraire Henshûbu Henshûbu, ed., *Shashin shû o yomu: Besuto 338 kenzen gaido* (Reading Photobooks: A Complete Guide of the Best 338 Books) (Tokyo: Metalogue, 1997), 85.

photographer took nude photographs of his partner and showed them to the public; the works of Alfred Stieglitz, Harry Callahan, and Emmet Gowin come to mind. However, Araki reached an extreme by including a sequence of six point-of-view shots taken while he was having sexual intercourse with Yoko. One spread (fig. 4-13) features two photographs of Yoko lying on her back on a futon in the nude; she clenches her fists, arching her neck. In the first photograph her body slightly curves left, while in the second it curves right, suggesting the movement between the two shots and therefore the temporal duration of the act in which the couple was engaging. Although it is not depicted in the picture, one naturally assumes that Araki took the photo while he was having sex with Yoko. Once one understands the setting in which these pictures were taken, Yoko's gesture is understood as an expression of ecstasy. In the sense that they are taken instantaneously in the midst of sex, these photographs are *sunappu* in the broad meaning of the term. But they also emphasize the candidness of the act, a quality that has been considered the essence of *sunappu*, by capturing Yoko in a state of such intense ecstasy that she was oblivious to the existence of an intrusive camera (note that in most other photographs of the book, Yoko poses for the camera consciously). Indeed, these are images that are unabashedly and almost stereotypically masculinist: a man who sexually conquers a woman. However, it would be misleading to see Araki's decision to include these photographs in *Sentimental Journey* as a means to flaunt his sexual potency. Rather, they are more closely related to his pursuit of a genuine representation of everyday life.

The photographs also invite us to reconsider the 'everydayness' of sex, given that the images were taken during a honeymoon, and it is difficult to imagine a honeymoon with no sexual contact between the couple. In other words, sex becomes a very ordinary

event during a honeymoon, perhaps more than at any other time in a couple's life.⁷⁴ By including blatant pictures of sexual intercourse with his newly married wife, pictures which apparently shocked contemporary viewers, Araki must have wanted to suggest that sex was an important part of his everyday life and that he represented it truthfully. In this regard, it is suggestive that the two photographs of Yoko discussed above are characterized by their candidness. She appears unaware of the camera, or at least undisturbed by it. But these shots can also suggest that only at such an extreme moment of sexual climax could Araki produce images that are not affected by the presence of the camera and are therefore guaranteed authenticity as documents of his everyday life. To take pictures of intercourse and publish them as a book, however, is not what people normally do. Herein lies the ultimate *unnaturalness* of Araki's photographs of sexual intercourse with his wife, a factor that produces the impression that the scenes were staged after all (in spite of Yoko's absorption in the sexual act during the photographing). Moreover, it also reveals a central paradox about the photographic investigation of everydayness as a whole: the more intimate the scenes he tries to present as records of his private life, the more extraordinary and even theatrical the resultant pictures become.

Although some of the photographs in *Sentimental Journey* (especially those capturing Yoko standing on the street) look like *kinen shashin*, namely casually taken snapshots made as a personal memento, the overall impression of the photography book is very different from that of a family album. It is not just because sexually explicit

⁷⁴ In a recent interview Araki stated: "As to my honeymoon, I started taking photographs right away, beginning with our train ride, and then having sex. That is what everyone does on a honeymoon, so it is nothing special." See Hyewon Yi, "Crossing Boundaries: An Interview with Nobuyoshi Araki," *Trans Asia Photography Review* 1, no.2 (Spring 2011). Available at <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.7977573.0001.205>

photographs are included in the book but also because it has too many shots of street scenes and miscellaneous objects that are unlikely to be found in ordinary family albums. It was rather Gochô's 1977 photobook *Self and Others* that first applied the format of the family snapshot in a conscious and effective way.⁷⁵ Usually considered the most important work in Gochô's short career, *Self and Others* is a photography book that consisted of more than fifty photographs of his family, friends, or children he met on the street, all taken in a style that reminds one of the amateur snapshot. Whereas most photographs in *Days* are *sunappu* in the sense that they were shot instantaneously without being noticed by the subjects, in *Self and Others* models consciously pose for Gochô's camera, usually occupying the center of the composition. In one photograph, for example, a girl in a skirt with a floral pattern stares at the camera, joining her hands behind her back [fig. 4-14]. The symmetrical composition and linear perspective emphasized by the lane receding backwards behind the girl underscores the physical and psychological confrontation between the model and the photographer. In 1972 Gochô began to take photographs that would be included in *Self and Others*.⁷⁶ His shift from the candid photographs of people on the street to the posed pictures of models who agreed to be photographed caused a significant change in Gochô's work. This new work was not so much a representation of everydayness as a conceptual investigation of the relationships between "self and others," a title Gochô borrowed from the Scottish psychiatrist Ronald

⁷⁵ The book has only an English title, although the text in the book is written in Japanese. Shigeo Gôcho, *Self and Others* (Tokyo: Hakuakan, 1977); Shigeo Gôcho, *Self and Others*, new ed. with an introduction by Kôtarô Iizawa (Tokyo: Miraisha, 1994).

⁷⁶ Therefore, Gochô's appropriation of the composition typical of the amateur snapshot preceded that by the American photographer William Eggleston, whose 1976 exhibition and book has been often argued as a work permeated by the "snapshot aesthetic." For a contemporary review that suggested the affinity between Eggleston's color photographs and amateur snapshots, see Steven Winn, "The Snapshot Art of Eggleston," *The Weekly*, 29 September 1976, 16.

D. Laing's 1961 book *Self and Others*.⁷⁷ By sequencing the photographs of his family, friends, and children he met on the street, Gochô tried, or so it appears, to measure the existential distance between himself and his subjects.

It is important to note that the photographs in *Self and Others* are not classified as typical work of *sunappu* in the terminology of Japanese photography. Although taken with a hand-held camera, they lack candidness, a quality that has been considered the essence of *sunappu*. Abandoning the technique of *sunappu* that characterized *Days*, Gochô applied the visual vocabulary of the family snapshot. To quote Batchen's elucidation of the typical appearances of the snapshot again, "the subject (almost always a person) is usually placed firmly in the center of the picture plane, looking directly at the camera, well aware that they are posing for posterity's sake."⁷⁸ This is a characteristic that is also found in the photographs that constitute *Self and Others*.⁷⁹ However, it should be also noted that what *Self and Others* referred to was only the appearance of the snapshot, not its functions. In other words, the photographs in the book are not meant to commemorate a particular event at a particular time (as most amateur snapshots do). Nor were they taken as personal mementos. It is certainly important that Gochô used his family and friends as models, but the photographs were apparently taken for their own sake, namely, for this specific project. It is this aspect that distinguishes pictures in *Self and Others* from amateur snapshots that one finds in family albums; whereas the former

⁷⁷ Okabe, "Commentaries on Gocho's Career," 326. The Japanese translation of Laing's *Self and Others* was published in 1975 by Misuzu Shobo.

⁷⁸ Batchen, "Snapshots," 133.

⁷⁹ In the way that underscores this affinity, in the last spread of the book Gochô reproduces a family snapshot taken when he was six years old, captioned as "kazoku shashin (family photograph)."

exist, so to speak, as autonomous images, the latter usually point to events and memories that are associated with them but not depicted in the images themselves.

It was Araki's 1980 photography book *Araki nobuyoshi no nise nikki (Pseudo Diary)* that really appropriated both the appearances and functions of the snapshot.⁸⁰ Unlike Gochô and other *konpora* photographers, Araki pursued the theme of everydayness in his own way, even after the term *konpora* came to be considered a past movement in the mid-1970s. The horizontal-format book consists of more than 280 photographs, each occupying a full single page, paired with another in one spread. The most conspicuous motif in the book is the naked bodies of a number of female models; ordinary looking street scenes are often unexpectedly juxtaposed with bizarre sexual performances (fig. 4-15). The photographs are consciously taken in the style of amateur snapshots; the main subject is usually placed in the center of the composition. It appears that little attention was paid to the making of a beautiful print with a subtle tone and minute details. In this book Araki pretends to be an unskilled amateur photographer, succeeding in giving an impression that they are unembellished and thus honest documents of what he saw and experienced.

As a consequence of his appropriation of the style of the amateur snapshot, most photographs in *Pseudo Diary* depict posed models rather than candidly captured subjects. But a posed model staring at the camera in the center of the composition signifies more than a reference to an amateur snapshot. It reflects the idea that a photograph of a posed model is more realistic and authentic than a candid photograph. In *Sentimental Journey*, Araki included a number of photographs of Yoko in which she stands in front of the

⁸⁰ Nobuyoshi Araki, *Araki nobuyoshi no nise nikki* (Nobuyoshi Araki's *Pseudo Diary*) (Tokyo: Byakuya Shobo, 1980).

camera in a manner reminiscent of amateur snapshots. A posed model suggests that he or she was in a cooperative relationship with the photographer when the photograph was taken; in other words, posing always involves staging. According to the theory of *sunappu* advocated by Ken Domon, such a relationship inevitably jeopardizes the authenticity of a photographic image. But, as discussed in Chapter Two, Domon himself was forced to breach this doctrine of *sunappu* photography when he communicated with small girls in a coal-mining town to shoot *The Children in Chikuhô*. Furthermore, candid photography has its own problems regarding authenticity. However candid a photograph may appear, the photographic image itself cannot prove that it was taken candidly; it is not impossible to stage a photograph that looks candid. In contrast, in so far as we accept the indexical nature of the photographic image, a photograph of a posed person does certify that the person once posed before the camera. In other words, what Roland Barthes famously called the “that-has-been” of the photographic image attests to the presence of the model at one point in time.⁸¹ One can say, therefore, that the realism of a candid photograph, i.e., *sunappu* in the narrower meaning of the word, and the realism of an amateur snapshot, are of a different nature: whereas the former is about representational realism, the latter is an example of ontological realism. And it was the latter that Araki chose to pursue in his *Pseudo Diary*.

The inclusion of dates imprinted on the photographs—a feature typical of those taken with a point-and-shoot film camera—is another element that emphasizes their sense

⁸¹ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, translated by Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 76-77. As Geoffrey Batchen has elucidated, “according to Barthes, the reality offered by the photograph is not that of truth-to-appearance but rather of truth-to-presence, a matter of being (of something’s irrefutable place in time) rather than resemblance.” See Geoffrey Batchen, “Ectoplasm,” in *Each Wild Idea: Writing, Photography, History* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2001), 133.

of amateurishness. The dates may attest to these photographs' status as a picture diary in which the dates play an indispensable role, but as the title "Pseudo Diary" already suggests, the dates, at least some of them, must have been false. There are too many dates labeled April 1st (April Fools' Day) and August 15 (the anniversary of the end of WWII); it even includes future dates like "88 3 17" (March 17, 1988) (fig. 4-16), encouraging the reader to doubt, not just those impossible dates, but all the dates imprinted on the photographs. It is important to note, however, that these false dates do not diminish the likelihood that the events captured in the photographs actually happened. To the contrary, they have the effect of accentuating what I called ontological realism above. That is, the dates which the photographer arbitrarily changed end up emphasizing the unchangeability, or at least the resistance against change, of the photographic image. Even if we cannot believe the date imprinted on a photograph, we usually do not abandon the presumption that the scene depicted in the photograph actually took place at one point in time. That the photographs look amateurish is important in this regard because, looking at such images, we naturally assume that they were produced with minimal technical intervention by the photographer.

It would therefore be misleading to consider that by presenting a "pseudo diary" Araki suggested that photography is a means to tell a lie. To the contrary, one can say that *Pseudo Diary* is a work in which he tried to manifest his own version of photographic *Riarizumu*. As I have pointed out in the preceding chapters, the history of *sunappu* cannot be separated from a search for what the photographers believed to be genuinely realistic representations of the world (in the 1950s, it was manifested in the *Riarizumu* Photography movement). Even though there might be some arguments

regarding whether we can include his photographs in *Pseudo Diary*, which appropriate both the appearance and function of family snapshots, within the genre of *sunappu* photography (in published writings and interviews, Araki never called his work *sunappu*, at least until 1980), it is incontestable that Araki's work developed from this genre, expanding its purview, almost transforming it into another entity.⁸²

Araki's interest in the realism of photography situates his work within the context of Japanese *sunappu* photography.⁸³ In the 1970s, he often used his neologism "Ero Riarizumu (Eroto-Realism)" to explain his attitude.⁸⁴ Critics also had no difficulty finding in Araki's early work, such as *Sentimental Journey*, an ambition to renew photographic realism. For example, already in 1973 the photo critic Tsutomu Watanabe wrote: "His personal documents that talk, with a highly light touch, about real activities that are extremely private are tinged with the reality of murky emotions that cannot be found in the existing *Riarizumu* that is meant to be useful."⁸⁵ As I have suggested above,

⁸² Therefore, the point is whether we should include in the genre of *sunappu* Gochô and Araki's photographs that are informed by the visual vocabulary of the snapshot. If we consider candidness as the indispensable characteristic of *sunappu*, they cannot be categorized into this genre. But if we understand *sunappu* in a wider meaning of the word, that is, a photograph taken instantaneously, they are certainly *sunappu*. The important thing is that this genre has existed with a certain ambiguity in its meanings. I explained this ambiguity in the first section of Chapter Two.

⁸³ One might suggest that the nudes, the recurring motif in Araki's work until today, function as a marker of the real that evades fictionalizations. In particular, the process of stripping a female model of her clothes (a process that is not necessarily depicted but implied in every nude photograph) can be understood as a metaphor for the photographer's search for the real. But his exploitation of women's bodies for such a purpose, of course, poses an ethical question about the political correctness of his work.

⁸⁴ See, for example, Nobuyoshi Araki, "The Photo Apparatus Between Man and Woman," translated by Ivan Vartanian, in Vartanian, Hatanaka, and Kambayashi, eds., *Setting Sun: Writings by Japanese Photographers*, 145.

⁸⁵ "(...) 極端に私的な現実の営為を、きわめて軽みのタッチで語ってみせる彼のパーソナルなドキュメントというのは、これまでの何かに役立たせようとするリアリズムにはおよそみられないような、ドロドロとした情念のリアリティーを漂わせている。" Tsutomu

in *Pseudo Diary* Araki employs various techniques to conjure an impression that the photographs are representations of his own experiences, despite the tongue-in-cheek title “pseudo diary.” However, whether they can be considered as successful representations of everydayness remains to be seen. Using the format of a photographic diary, Araki presents the photographs as documents of his everyday life. But it seems obvious that most of the events captured in the photographs took place in order to be photographed; his encounter with a large number of models would not have been possible if he had not been a photographer. The American photographer Diane Arbus famously observed that “the camera is a kind of license.”⁸⁶ It also applies to Araki’s relationships with his models. In his case, his life, or more exactly what he shows us as his life (because it is apparent that he does not show everything that has happened in his life) is so dominated by his activity as a photographer that it is almost impossible to distinguish his everyday life as a person from his life as a photographer. Therefore, Araki’s *shishashin* (‘I Photography’) suffers from the same paradox that the literary critic Ken Hirano called “*shishôsetsu engisetsu* (a theory of *shishôsetsu*-as-performance)” in 1951. Hirano suggested that an author of *shishôsetsu* who began to write based on his or her miserable experiences tends to live desperately so that he or she can continue to find materials suitable for his or her novels.⁸⁷ That is, a novel based on life began to be confused with a life based on the novel. Araki’s work that addresses everydayness through the depiction

Watanabe, “Araki nobuyoshi: Jishôfukushashi no keihakuha” (Nobuyoshi Araki: A Flippant Photographer Who Professes Himself to be a Copier), *Asahi Camera* (January 1973): 77.

⁸⁶ Diane Arbus, *.diane arbus*. (New York: Aperture, 1972), 1.

⁸⁷ Ken Hirano, “Shishôsetus no niritsu haihan” (The Antinomy of *Shishôsetsu*) (1951), in *Geijutsu to jisseikatsu* (Art and Real Life) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2001), 9-43. Also see Hijjiya-Kirschneireit, *Rituals of Self-Revelation*, 89-94.

of his private life is characterized by a similar reversal of the relationships between life and photography. While exposing the most intimate scenes in his life, his work also attests to the difficulty of visualizing everydayness with a camera.

This chapter has demonstrated that since the late 1960s such photographers as Otsuji, Gochô, and Araki have dealt with the theme of the everydayness in different ways. Whereas Otsuji and his student Gochô turned to ordinary everyday scenes, representing them with a style inspired by contemporary American photography, Araki's strategy was to identify the everyday with his own private life. Both Gochô and Araki's works derived from the tradition of *sunappu* photography, in which realism had been a recurring doctrine, but they were also inspired by *kinen shashin*, or the family snapshot. From the present perspective, their photographs of the late 1970s ended up complicating the genre of *sunappu* itself, by consciously bringing the format of the family snapshot into the visual vocabulary of *sunappu*.

Chapter Five

Sunappu Seen from Abroad:

Reconsidering the Exhibition *New Japanese Photography*

5-1. The Background

The preceding four chapters have discussed the development of *sunappu* in Japanese photography, attempting to expose the discursive backgrounds that are often hidden within the transparency of photographic images. Many prominent Japanese photographers, especially Ken Domon and Daido Moriyama, understood their works in relation to the concept of *sunappu*, employing this term frequently in their published texts. I believe that it is critically important to take into account this tradition when one discusses Japanese photography, especially when it is seen and appreciated outside of a Japanese context. Otherwise, Japanese photography will appear, at least through Western eyes, as no more than a type of curious exotica or derivative of Western photographic traditions.

At the same time, it cannot be denied that the tradition of *sunappu* has had a suffocating effect on contemporary Japanese photography; the tradition may inspire a young photographer, but it can also stifle his or her creativity. Unlike other genres of the visual arts in Japan (with the possible exception of *nihon-ga*, traditional Japanese-style painting), young photographers do not necessarily have to look at works by foreign photographers for inspiration. This is perhaps what most distinguishes the earlier era of Japanese photography from the post-1970s photography scene: people were fascinated by imported rather than locally-produced photography. In contrast, in the present era, when

Moriyama and Nobuyoshi Araki themselves have become internationally renowned photographers, the appeal of international contemporary photography is not as obvious as it was decades ago. Despite the fact that photography and art magazines, as well as art museums, continue to introduce the latest blue-chip photographers, such as Wolfgang Tillmans or Ryan McGinley, they have exerted only a modest influence on the work of Japanese students of photography. The single-minded admiration for foreign artists, such as Ihei Kimura had for Henri Cartier-Bresson or Moriyama had for Andy Warhol, seems to be a relic of the past.

While this probably testifies to the maturity of Japanese photography, this shift has also made it surprisingly insular. This insularity often remains unnoticed as long as one is embedded in the textual and visual space of Japanese photography itself. The moment in which the enclosed and coherent nature of Japanese photography becomes shattered is when it is looked at and consumed outside of Japan. In a 2008 interview I conducted with the photography curator Christopher Phillips, he reflected on his experiences organizing an exhibition of contemporary Japanese photography and video art:

I thought that it might be interesting to attempt to make an exhibition of “Japanese” photography, because in Japan today, photography still exists as part of a relatively self-enclosed cultural system. Looking on as an outsider, I see Japanese photography as existing in its own world of myths and legendary heroes, such as Tomatsu, Moriyama, and Araki. The younger photographers all learn the legendary stories about the gods of photography, and tell them over and over again. The result is a kind of shared identity as photographers. But I do not think that helps the young Japanese photographers when they travel outside Japan, because no one else can really understand the stories that they are telling about Araki or Moriyama. . . . I think it can sometimes be difficult for someone coming from the Japanese photo world, which is rich and intense in its own way but also quite limited, to establish contact with people in the rest of the photo world.¹

¹ Yoshiaki Kai, “Photography Beyond Borders: An Interview with Christopher Phillips,” *Photographers’ Gallery Press* (Tokyo), no. 8 (2009): 302-303.

Phillips's remark pointedly suggests that the Japanese photographic tradition often appears incomprehensible (like "myths") when seen by outsiders. Like any other work of visual art, the physical properties of Japanese photographic works do not literally transform when they are exhibited elsewhere. But when they are seen in a context in which most of the audience is not familiar with the history of Japanese photography and do not understand the Japanese language, the meanings of those pictures become inevitably different. Such a gap might be interpreted as a misunderstanding on the side of the Western audience. Indeed, the recent climate of multiculturalism encourages us to be attentive to the native context in which a work of art was originally produced. However, I do not want to simply criticize such a misunderstanding as a manifestation of the often ignorant and unconsciously racist attitudes toward non-Western cultures held by Western art communities, but rather would like to point out that the misunderstanding can be productive. The reception of Japanese photography outside of Japan may offer us a clue to an understanding of its characteristics, especially its problems and limitations, which tend to be overlooked in the Japanese context. In other words, the Western reception is a mirror reflecting aspects of Japanese photography that remain unnoticed within Japanese photographic discourse.

As a case study, *New Japanese Photography*, the 1974 exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, is particularly effective in this respect. This exhibition was curated by John Szarkowski, then-Director of its Department of Photography, who invited Shôji Yamagishi, the editor of the photographic magazine *Camera Mainichi*, to be a co-curator of the exhibition. This exhibition marked the first significant introduction of

contemporary Japanese photography to American audiences. The exhibition showcased the work of thirteen photographers, including Tômatsu and Moriyama. One can say that the origin of the Moriyama retrospective in 1999 and that of Tômatsu in 2004, both of which toured major institutions in the United States, can be traced back to this 1974 exhibition.² In this chapter I will argue that American reviewers received *sunappu* photographs in the exhibition not so much as “works” infused with the photographers’ personalities but as raw and transparent visual documents of contemporary Japanese society. This was mainly because the tradition of *sunappu* was so elusive outside of Japanese photographic contexts that the reviewers did not notice it. But it was also related to the fact that *sunappu* was a photographic practice that always gave priority to producing authentic images of the world, rather than making personal works of art photography.

New Japanese Photography ran from March 27 through May 19, 1974. The exhibition occupied the main gallery space for special exhibitions (the East Half of the Garden Wing), following a retrospective of Marcel Duchamp. After the exhibition at the MoMA ended, it toured to eight venues in the United States and Canada.³ The exhibition featured the work of fifteen photographers. They were all male and ranged in age from the late twenties to the mid-sixties: Ken Domon, Yasuhiro Ishimoto, Shômei Tômatsu,

² Sandra Phillips and Alexandra Munroe, eds., *Daidô Moriyama: Stray Dog* (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1999); Leo Rubinfien, ed., *Shômei Tômatsu: Skin of the Nation* (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2004).

³ The itinerary of the touring exhibition was as follows: Denver Art Museum (9/13- 12/1), St. Louis Art Museum (1/9 – 2/16/75), Minneapolis Institute of Arts (3/10-4/27), Winnipeg Art Gallery(6/12 - 7/20), Krannert Art Museum of the University of Illinois, Champaign (9/1 - 10/12), San Francisco Museum of Art (10/31 - 12/14), Seattle Art Museum(1/8 - 2/16/76), Portland Art Museum, Oregon (3/16 - 4/18). This list is written on the “Loan Forms” folder in Curatorial Exhibition Files, Exh. #1057, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.

Kikuji Kawada, Masatoshi Naito, Tetsuya Ichimura, Hiromi Tsuchida, Masahisa Fukase, Ikko Narahara, Eikoh Hosoe, Daido Moriyama, Ryoji Akiyama, Ken Ohara, Shigeru (later renamed Akihide) Tamura, and Bishin Jumonji. Each photographer was given a discrete space, displaying between four (Jumonji) and forty-two (Tômatu) images. The total number of photographs amounted to 192, according to the checklist of the exhibition.⁴

Although the exhibition was realized in 1974, we know from the letters kept in the Museum of Modern Art Archives that Szarkowski's interest in Japanese photography was already present in 1965, at the latest. In a letter that year to Yoshimasa Uchiyama, the president of Yashica, a camera manufacturing company, Szarkowski writes: "I do indeed hope to be able to visit Japan in the next few years to study at close range the very interesting development of contemporary Japanese photography."⁵ Although this might have been no more than flattering words to a Japanese businessman, it seems undeniable that Szarkowski retained an interest in Japanese photography. In September 1967, he received a letter from Ishimoto, the Japanese photographer who studied at the Institute of Design in Chicago during his long-term stay in the U.S. and who was included in a photography exhibition at MoMA entitled *Three Photographers* in 1961.⁶ In the letter, Ishimoto reveals that he has sent photographs by Yutaka Takanashi and Kishin Shinoyama to Szarkowski and he also requested the publisher of Narahara's photobook to

⁴ The checklist of *New Japanese Photography*, held at the Library of The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

⁵ Letter from John Szarkowski to Yoshimasa Uchiyama, dated June 10, 1965, Curatorial Exhibition Files, Exh. #1057. MoMA Archives, NY.

⁶ On Ishimoto's activity after he returned to Japan in 1953, see Yasufumi Nakamori, *Picturing Modernism in Japanese Architecture: Photographs by Yasuhiro Ishimoto* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010), esp. 24-26.

send a copy to him.⁷ Ishimoto's reference to these three names is understandable because they were the most promising young photographers at that time. Neither the *buré boké* style discussed in Chapter Three nor *konpora* photography mentioned in Chapter Four had yet been born. In any case, from this letter we can assume that by this time Szarkowski had some knowledge about the emerging trends in Japanese photography.

In a letter dated May 1970 from the curator Wilder Green to Waldo Rasmussen, head of the International Program, Green writes that MoMA “[had] for some time projected a JAPANESE PHOTOGRAPHY exhibition,” which would open in April of 1971, and he asked Rasmussen whether the International Council could subsidize Szarkowski's research trip to Japan in the fall of 1970.⁸ Probably for financial reasons, this trip was postponed and finally conducted in May 1971.⁹ Before visiting Japan, Szarkowski had sent letters to Ishimoto, Uchiyama, Yamagishi, Tatsuo Shirai, the editor of *Asahi Camera*, Kineo Kuwabara, the photographer who was at that time the editor of *Kikan shashin eizô (The Photo Image)*, and Hosoe, one of the participants in *New Japanese Photography*, notifying them of his upcoming trip to Japan.¹⁰

⁷ Letter from Yasuhiro Ishimoto to Szarkowski, dated September 21, 1967, Curatorial Exhibition Files, Exh. #1057, MoMA Archives, NY. Narahara's book mentioned in the letter must be *Yôroppa: Seishi shita jikan (Where Time Has Stopped)* (Tokyo: Kajima kenkyûjo shuppankai, 1967).

⁸ Letter from Wilder Green to Waldo Rasmussen, dated May 26, 1970, Curatorial Exhibition Files, Exh. #1057, MoMA Archives, NY. It was not the first time that the MoMA had organized a show on Japanese contemporary art. In 1966 the International Council of the museum sponsored *The New Japanese Painting and Sculpture*, a touring exhibition in which forty-six Japanese painters and sculptors participated. See William S. Lieberman, ed., *The New Japanese Painting and Sculpture* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1966).

⁹ Letter from Szarkowski to Yamagishi, dated May 7, 1971, Curatorial Exhibition Files, Exh. #1057, MoMA Archives, NY.

¹⁰ Curatorial Exhibition Files, Exh. #1057, MoMA Archives, NY.

On the fifth day of his two-week stay in Japan, Szarkowski was interviewed by the magazine *Camera Mainichi*, where Yamagishi worked as an editor.¹¹ In the interview, Szarkowski stated that the aim of his visit was to conduct research for the exhibition on Japanese photography he was then planning. The interviewer notes that Szarkowski “works really energetically like an executive businessman in America,” and “looks through a pile of back numbers of *Camera Mainichi* and photobooks and rapidly reproduces the ones that are necessary for him.”¹² Szarkowski mentioned the names of Tōmatsu, Hosoe, Narahara, and Ishimoto as photographers who piqued his interest in Japanese photography, all of whom would eventually participate in *New Japanese Photography*. About Moriyama, Szarkowski said, “Although the work of Daido Moriyama is barely known in the United States, it is his work which gave me a more intense impression than any other I have seen in Japan.”¹³

Asked about the difference between the works of Japanese and American photographers, Szarkowski answered:

The first thing I noticed was that Japanese photographers throw all their energies into publishing their works in magazines and printed matters in the form of reproduction. Photographers in the United States care more for original prints. The situations are different. Unlike in Japan, there exist a number of museums and galleries which always exhibit photographs as well as private collectors of

¹¹ Hideko Yoshikawa, “Intabyū: Nyūyōku kindai bijutsukan shashin buchō jon shākafusukī shi ni kiku” (Interview with Mr. John Szarkowski, Director of the Department of Photography at The Museum of Modern Art, New York), *Camera Mainichi* (July 1971): 26-29.

¹² “四十五歳のシャーカフスキー氏は、アメリカのエグゼクティブ級のビジネスマンによくあるような、実に精力的に働くタイプ。山積みされたカメラ毎日のバックナンバーや写真集を次から次と目を通し、必要なものはどんどん複写してゆく。” *Ibid.*, 26. Since the interview is published only in Japanese, his words are my translation from Japanese.

¹³ “アメリカでは森山大道の作品についてはほとんど知られていませんが、日本にきて見たなかでもっとも強烈な感じを受けたのは彼の作品です。” *Ibid.*

photographic prints and a market for original prints. But, I think that people in Japan should turn and give more attention to original prints than they do now.¹⁴

It is worth noting that this is one of the earliest instances in which the unique ‘photobook culture’ of Japanese photography was clearly mentioned in comparison with contemporary American photography, where original prints were valued more.¹⁵ Since then, this view has become almost a cliché about Japanese photography and has served as a backdrop for the recent speculative boom in the commercial market for Japanese vintage photobooks in the United States and Europe. It is unfortunate for us that in this interview Szarkowski does not point out any other differences he perceived between Japanese and American photography. He never mentions the predominance of works taken with a hand-held camera, namely *sunappu*, over other photographic styles.

It is not clear when Szarkowski decided to appoint Yamagishi as collaborator for his exhibition. But in a letter dated to April 1973, two years after his visit in Japan, he writes to Yamagishi: “We have at last reached the point where we can begin real work on the Japanese show. The Museum will continue it [sic] efforts to find financial assistance for the show, but it has been agreed that I cannot delay further if the show, plus a

¹⁴ “第一に目につくことは、日本の写真家が雑誌や出版物に自分の写真をリプロダクションとして出すことに非常に精力を費やしていることです。アメリカの写真家は、オリジナルのプリントをもっと大切にします。日本と違って、常時写真が展示されている美術館やギャラリーがいくつもあることや、個人の写真プリントのコレクターがたくさんいて、オリジナルプリントのマーケットが確立している点など事情が違いますが、日本でももっと写真のオリジナルプリントを大切にすることに目をむけてもよいのではないのでしょうか。” *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁵ In the March 1971 issue of *Camera Mainichi*, Hosoe, who was staying and showing his work in the United States, had already suggested this difference. He was one of a few Japanese photographers who emphasized the importance of original prints. See Eikoh Hosoe, “Môhitotsu no shashin e no ashigatame: Korekusion no igi to sekai no genjô” (Preparation for Another Photographic Value: Significances of Collecting Photographs and the Current International Situation), *Camera Mainichi* (March 1971): 26-30.

publication, is to be finished less than a year from now.”¹⁶ As potential participants in the exhibition, Szarkowski mentions Tômatsu, Moriyama, Narahara, Haruo Tomiyama, Hosoe, Fukase, and Akiyama, adding, “I think perhaps that the central figure of the exhibition will be Tomatsu.”¹⁷ Yamagishi visited New York for the second time in July 1973, and it seems that it was during this second visit that Szarkowski asked Yamagishi to work as the co-director of the exhibition; in the letter Szarkowski sent Yamagishi just after he left New York, Szarkowski thanks him for agreeing to collaborate on the exhibition. In the same letter, Szarkowski lists all fifteen photographers who eventually participated in the show. One can thus assume that the basic framework of the exhibition was decided on in July 1973, when they had a chance to talk face to face.

That Szarkowski chose Yamagishi as the co-director of his exhibition was a logical decision, because at that time Yamagishi was one of the most influential figures in the Japanese photographic community. Born in 1928, Yamagishi entered *Mainichi Shimbun*, a major newspaper company, in 1950 as a photographer.¹⁸ In 1958, he started working as an editor for *Camera Mainichi*, the monthly photography magazine published by the company. In the mid-1960s he took control of the editing policy of the magazine, introducing works by young emerging photographers. Although he has often been described as an impresario of serious photographic expression in Japan (this much is undeniable), his taste was rather eclectic, at least before he was approached by

¹⁶ Letter from Szarkowski to Yamagishi, dated April 20, 1973, Curatorial Exhibition Files, Exh. #1057. MoMA Archives, NY.

¹⁷ Ibid. Haruo Tomiyama was finally not included in the exhibition for a reason unbeknownst to us.

¹⁸ Kazuo Nishii, *Shashin hensyûsha: Yamagishi shoji e o omâju* (The Photo Editor: An Homage to Shoji Yamagishi) (Tokyo: Madosha, 2002), 34.

Szarkowski. Indeed, when Yamagishi emerged as an influential editor of photography, he was appreciative of fashion photography.¹⁹ But it is also true that Yamagishi was respected by many of the photographers discussed in this study, particularly by Moriyama, who has often expressed his gratitude to Yamagishi for giving him a chance to publish his works when he started his career.²⁰

5-2. The Structure of the Exhibition

Each of the fifteen photographers who participated in the exhibition was given a separate space, with no overarching concept or topic that restrained the selections of each exhibit. This was the style that Szarkowski usually employed for the group exhibitions he organized at MoMA, including the well-known *New Documents* (1967), in which the three participants (Diane Arbus, Lee Friedlander, and Garry Winogrand) showed photographs whose subjects and concepts were not bound together under a single thematic framework, beyond the fact that they were all considered to be “new documents.” Some photographers (Domon, Ishimoto, Kawada, Fukase, Naito, Ohara, Tamura, and Jumonji) showed photographs from a single series, whereas other exhibits were comprised of works from more than one series.²¹

¹⁹ In the April 1965 issue of *Camera Mainichi*, Yamagishi featured *Shitadashi tenshi* (Angel Sticking Out Her Tongue), a photo essay by Yoshihiro Tatsuki. Because of the exceptional length of the essay as a contribution to the photography magazine, it has been often mentioned as a memorable event that testifies to Yamagishi’s strong editorship. Tatsuki, as well as Kishin Shinoyama, another young photographer discovered by Yamagishi, became renowned in the field of commercial photography rather than art photography.

²⁰ See Daido Moriyama, “Afterword/ A Photographic Biography,” in *Inu no toki* (The Time of the Dog), translated by Gavin Flew (Tokyo: Sakuhinsha, 1995), 346.

²¹ Checklist of the exhibition, The Library of The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The series they exhibited are: *The Muro-ji* (1954) by Domon, *Katsura* (1960) by Ishimoto, *The Map* (1965) by

In his letter to Yamagishi, Szarkowski wrote that he would decide on the installation design, and it was done in a style typical of Szarkowski's exhibitions (fig. 5-1).²² Christopher Phillips describes the drastic change in the installation of photography exhibitions at MoMA after Szarkowski succeeded Edward Steichen as Director of the Department of Photography in 1962:

Steichen's hyperactive, chock-a-block displays metamorphose before one's eyes into the cool white spaces of sparsely hung galleries. Mural-sized enlargements shrink to conventional proportions, and the eccentric clustering of photographs of wildly assorted dimensions gives way to an orderly march of prints of utterly uniform size.²³

In conceiving the installation of *New Japanese Photography*, Szarkowski basically adapted Japanese photographic works to the design which he thought was universally best for displaying art photographs: each photograph was framed individually so that one could contemplate it in the same attitude that he or she looked at a painting or a print. At that same time, his concern for emphasizing the uniqueness of Japanese photography in the installation design can be found in an oblong frame in which four or five photographs are juxtaposed with narrow margins (fig. 5-2). This device is used for the sections by Tōmatsu, Moriyama, and Kawada; in the case of the former two, the frames were tilted by some forty-five degrees and attached to the wall at a lower position than others in a way that is reminiscent of a bookrack.

Kawada, *Yohko* (1961-70) by Fukase, *One* (1970) by Ohara, *1194 Imaizumu, Kamakura, Kanagawa-ken* (1967-68) by Tamura, and *Untitled* (1971-73) by Jumonji.

²² Szarkowski wrote: "The detailing of the exhibition installation will be designed by me here, in keeping with the general structure and sequence that we have agreed on." Letter from Szarkowski to Yamagishi, dated July 11, 1973, Curatorial Exhibition Files, Exh. #1057, MoMA Archives, NY.

²³ Christopher Phillips, "The Judgment Seat of Photography," *October* 22 (Fall 1982), reprinted in Richard Bolton, ed., *The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1989), 34.

It is apparent that, by using this special frame, Szarkowski tried to emulate the book form, the form with which Japanese photographers, as he noted in his interview, were so preoccupied. It is significant, however, that he decided not to show photobooks by Tômatsu, Moriyama and Kawada. It was a deliberate omission because Ohara's section did include four copies of *One*, his photobook comprised of close-ups of 504 faces (fig. 5-3).²⁴ This display did also include, however, a large print of one of these faces. Since the pages of Ohara's book are no more than a repetition of different faces, the inconvenience of placing it in a plexiglass box is not so significant, at least when compared to the photobooks by Tômatsu, Moriyama, or Kawada. In the case of these three artists, the sequence of different images was crucial to an appreciation of their books. The general omission of photobooks from the exhibition, except for Ohara's *One*, suggests that Szarkowski did not consider them as art objects with their own aesthetic values.²⁵ Thus, the oblong frame was a kind of compromise to balance the idiosyncrasy of Japanese photography with Szarkowski's advocacy for original prints. However, one can hardly say that by employing this format, Szarkowski attached any substantial importance to the book form as the primary medium of Japanese photographic expression, because in both Tômatsu and Moriyama's sections, the oblong frames mixed pictures that belonged to different series, ignoring their original contexts.

²⁴ Ken Ohara, *One* (Tokyo: Tsukiji Shokan, 1970).

²⁵ Szarkowski's decision is interesting, especially when one thinks of the recent U.S. exhibitions on Japanese photography, in which photobooks were shown along with original prints. The difference cannot be solely ascribed to the curators' increasing awareness of Japanese photographer's preferences for photobooks rather than original prints, for this preference is exactly what Szarkowski pointed out in his interview discussed above.

It is important to note that the (ultimately oxymoronic) concept of original photographic prints hardly existed in the Japanese photographic community at that time. It was common for photographers to have exhibitions at small galleries run by camera manufactures such as Nikon or Konica, but prints shown in the exhibitions were rarely accorded special value, partly because there was no commercial market dealing with photographic prints and very few museums that collected photography.²⁶ But it was also because, unlike American art photographers such as Ansel Adams, Japanese photographers did not embrace the idea that a photographer can express his or her intention solely through the production of personally handcrafted photographic prints. It is small wonder, then, that the majority of the photographers participating in the exhibition entrusted the responsibility of preparing exhibition prints to Yamagishi. The correspondences between Szarkowski and Yamagishi suggest that, except for those prints by Narahara, Hosoe, and Ohara, Yamagishi commissioned a photographic laboratory in Tokyo to make exhibition prints (the cost was paid by the MoMA) and then shipped them to New York.²⁷ Narahara and Ohara lived in New York at that time. Hosoe was in Japan but he was then represented by Light Gallery in New York, so, there was no need to ship

²⁶ For a brief summary on the status of original prints in Japanese photography, see Yuri Mitsuda, “Shashin no arika: Hosoe eikoh originaru purinto to minigurafu” (Where Photography Is: Original Prints and Minigraph by Eikoh Hosoe), in *Shashin ‘geijutsu’ to no kaimenni: Shashin shi 1910 nendai – 70 nendai* (Photography at the Interface with ‘Art’: The History of Photography from 1910s to 1970s) (Tokyo: Seikyusha, 2006), 277-293. Zeit-Foto Salon, the first commercial gallery in Japan devoted to art photography, opened in 1978.

²⁷ In a letter dated July 11, 1973, Szarkowski writes to Yamagishi: “Except in the case of those photographers who regularly make their own prints for exhibition, all prints will be made by the Doi Company in Tokyo, and you will have authority to accept or reject the prints. I understand that you will welcome the advice of the photographers in this matter, when it is available.” Letter from Szarkowski to Yamagishi, dated July 11, 1973, Curatorial Exhibition Files, Exh. #1057, MoMA Archives, NY. It is not clear from the documents whether there prints were made from the negatives that the photographers lent to Yamagishi or reproduced from the prints made by the photographers themselves. The prints ended up in the collections of the MoMA.

his photographs from Japan. It is also telling that Hosoe was one of the first Japanese photographers who advocated the importance of original prints, claiming that photographers should care for them if they want to promote the status of photography as art.

Based on the documents left to us, it is difficult to know the extent of the collaboration between Szarkowski and Yamagishi in terms of the final selection of the photographers and the choice of works to be included in the exhibition. But we do know that before the prospect of an exhibition at MoMA was brought to his attention, Yamagishi had known all of the fifteen photographers and their works had been already published in *Camera Mainichi*, although the degrees of attention paid to them were considerably varied: whereas Domon was then regarded as the old master of Japanese photographers, such participants as Ohara or Tamura were considered no more than young promising photographers at best. The omissions of some significant names can be also explained by their relationships to *Camera Mainichi* and to Yamagishi himself. For example, in photography magazines at that time Ihei Kimura's work could only be seen in *Asahi Camera* because he had an exclusive contract with the magazine, and thus it would have been difficult to feature Kimura's work in an exhibition curated by the editor of the rival magazine *Camera Mainichi*. The reason for the absence of Yutaka Takanashi and Kishin Shinoyama, two photographers mentioned in Ishimoto's letter of September 1967, was probably not unrelated to Yamagishi's personal discord with them. As the photo critic Kazuo Nishii, who knew Yamagishi closely as a subordinate at *Camera Mainichi*, notes, Yamagishi's dictatorial attitude attracted admirers as well as enemies. He was even nicknamed "Yamagishi tennou (Emperor Yamagishi)" for his influential

position and strong personality.²⁸ Nishii names Takanashi and Shinoyama, among others, as photographers who were once close with Yamagishi but broke ties with him around 1970.²⁹

Therefore, Yamagishi's selection of participating photographers is not particularly surprising, and it is likely that Szarkowski more or less followed his suggestion. Another remaining question is how much Szarkowski controlled the selection of photographs shown in the exhibition. From their correspondence, it appears that the preparation of the exhibition consisted of Szarkowski choosing the photographs first and then getting feedback from Yamagishi and the photographers on his selection.³⁰ What is of particular interest here is how the exhibited photographs were associated with the concept of "Japanese photography," about which the curators must have had some ideas. Among the fifteen photographers, only Narahara displayed photographs that were taken outside Japan.³¹ Some of the photographers showed works whose subjects are unequivocally connected to traditional Japanese culture: Domon on the Muro-ji Temple in Nara, Ishimoto on the stone pavement of Katsura Palace in Kyoto, and Tsuchida and Naito on the folk customs of regional areas. However, the relationships that the works of the other

²⁸ Nishii, *Shashin hensyûsha* (The Photo Editor), 56. It is an interesting coincidence that Szarkowski was sometimes called "photo czar" in the 1970s in the photographic community in the United States. See Phil Patton, "The American Monument: Photographs by Lee Friedlander," *The New Republic*, Review of Books, etc., no.7 (November 13 1976), 36.

²⁹ Nishii, *Shashin hensyûsha* (The Photo Editor), 44-45.

³⁰ The Exhibition File of *New Japanese Photography* at the MoMA Archive holds folders in which contacts prints of the work of each photographer are pasted, a method used by Szarkowski, it seems, to decide which shots to use. As he told later, Ishimoto opposed Szarkowski's selection, which was culled from different bodies of his work, insisting that the selection consist of one single series, *Katsura*. See Akiko Moriyama, *Ishimoto yasuiro: Shashin to iu shikô* (Yasuhiro Ishimoto: Photography as Thoughts) (Tokyo: Musashino Art University Press, 2010), 234-235.

³¹ Narahara then lived in the United States and his exhibit included photographs taken in the U.S. and Europe.

eleven photographers had with Japanese culture were far from conspicuous, apart from the fact that they were taken in the territory of Japan by Japanese nationals.

5-3. Between Artworks and Documents: Perceptions of the Exhibition

The curators' brief introductions published in the catalogue help us to understand how they perceived the exhibited works' relationship, if any, to the concept of Japanese photography. Szarkowski begins his essay by writing, "The progressive homogenization of the world during the twentieth century has by now made the national art exhibition a device of greatly diminished utility."³² But while claiming that a classification of "contemporary artistic expression" defined on the basis of national boundaries had become less useful, he also mentions that "[m]ost of the meanings of any picture reside in its relationships to countless other and earlier pictures—to tradition."³³ Here Szarkowski refers to the synchronic standardization of art prompted by globalization (though he does not use this term) and the diachronic genealogy embodied by the "tradition" of each regional art, and he claims that the former is gradually overwhelming the latter. However, Szarkowski does not forget to add that this is not necessarily the case with photographic art: "As practiced by its most talented and original workers, photography is not the lingua franca of our age, but perhaps the most underground of all the arts. Thus it is still possible for exceptional local circumstances to produce special perspectives on the question of the medium's possibilities."³⁴

³² John Szarkowski, "Introduction," in Szarkowski and Shoji Yamagishi, eds., *New Japanese Photography* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1974), 9.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

Szarkowski maintains that the “underground” status of photographic art helped to keep the regional tradition alive. This suggestion is worth considering, given that the present study is an attempt to describe the tradition of Japanese photography embodied in the genre of *sunappu*. As Phillips has pointed out, Szarkowski, as well as Peter Galassi, his successor at MoMA, claimed that photographic art has had its own “tradition” and that this is manifested in the (supposedly Western) masterworks of art photography.³⁵ However, while suggesting the existence of a tradition in Japanese photography, Szarkowski does not explain clearly what that is. Instead he writes:

The preceding paragraphs attempt to explain the possibly surprising but undeniable fact that there has arisen in recent years a distinctively Japanese photography. . . .

In retrospect it seems possible that the ferment in Japanese photography during the past two decades has been caused by three factors: the patent bankruptcy of the prewar tradition of photographic pictorialism, the national fascination with photography as a technique, and the stunning speed with which the character of Japanese life itself has been transformed.³⁶

Szarkowski emphasizes “the patent bankruptcy of the prewar tradition of photographic pictorialism,” and thereby implies that postwar Japanese photography is established on the *lack* of a tradition. What compensates for this lack is the idea that it was produced as a response to the transformations of Japanese society after the war. Szarkowski elaborates on this third factor:

All countries have changed greatly in the past quarter-century, but perhaps none has changed so radically or with such dizzying speed as Japan. . . . What should be pointed out here is simply that these issues are the substance of the photographs in this book. On their evidence, it would seem that photography is ideally suited to deal with the definition of such revolutionary change, because it is flexible, intuitive, autographic, fast, cheap, tentative, and perhaps, in some sense not yet understood, accurate.

³⁵ Phillips, “The Judgment Seat of Photography,” 39-41.

³⁶ Szarkowski, “Introduction,” 9.

The quality most central to recent Japanese photography is its concern for the description of immediate experience: most of these pictures impress us not as a comment on experience, or as a reconstruction of it into something more stable and lasting, but as an apparent surrogate for experience itself, put down with a surely intentional lack of reflection. In the visual arts, it would be difficult to name an artist who more closely approaches the ideals of automatic writing than Daidoh [sic] Moriyama. . .³⁷

Thus, according to Szarkowski's view, what has shaped postwar photographic works made in Japan was not a certain internal chronological structure that runs through the history of Japanese photography—that is, what one calls a “tradition”—but rather the photographers' “intuitive response[s] to the experience[s]” of a rapidly changing Japan.

However, Szarkowski had nothing to say about how and why certain Japanese photographers chose to employ such intuitive responses, and in his introduction he admits that “[u]nlike Shoji Yamagishi, this writer is in no sense an expert on the history or meaning of this development [of postwar Japanese photography].”³⁸ Perhaps he wanted to entrust to Yamagishi the role of explaining the historical contexts of Japanese photography, contexts which were invisible to him. But in his introduction, Yamagishi does not discuss the historical contexts of the photographs exhibited in the show. Rather, he tries to avoid associating the photographs with “Japanese-ness,” that is, a generalized concept about Japanese people and culture.

The catalogue was bilingual; in the English version of his essay Yamagishi states:

In this exhibition we have tried to answer the question: How does Japanese photography relate to the contemporary concerns of the entire photographic community? It was not our aim to present the many features indigenous to Japanese photography as seen through the eyes of the Western world.³⁹

³⁷ Ibid., 10.

³⁸ Ibid., 9.

³⁹ Shoji Yamagishi, “Introduction,” in Szarkowski and Yamagishi, eds., *New Japanese Photography*, 11-12.

The Japanese counterpart of this passage, which is printed in the pages following the English text, is slightly different. The following is my translation, which I have tried to make as literal as possible:

Even if these photographs demonstrate what Szarkowski calls “the emergence of [a distinctively] Japanese photography” as a result, I did not intend to propose the idiosyncrasy of the Japanese style of photography, based on the contrast between the West and Japan. Rather, for me, it was a part of the habitual work that tries to find out the common significance of today’s photography, based on contemporary concerns and unrestricted ideas.⁴⁰

The difference between the English and Japanese versions is so large that one cannot assume that it is due to the carelessness of the translator.⁴¹ The Japanese version reveals Yamagishi’s anxiety that Japanese photography might be reduced, in the eyes of Western audiences, to exotic objects. Instead of emphasizing the “the idiosyncrasy of the Japanese style of photography,” Yamagishi underlines its universality: “It has been our concern in this exhibition to discover whether or not the fruit contains seeds of universality.”⁴² Of course, works of art that deal with the culture of a particular community regarded as a minority from the perspective of the majority can have a broad

⁴⁰ “これらの写真が結果としてシャーフスキーのいう「日本的な写真の出現」を示す例証になったとしても、私としては欧米と日本という対立した関係で、日本の写真の様式の特異性を提出したつもりはない。あくまでも同時代的な関心と自由な発想のうえに立った、一群の優れた写真家たちの仕事に即して、現代の写真がもつ共通の意義をさぐりだす、ふだんの作業の一環だった。” Shoji Yamagishi, “Maegaki” (Introduction), in Szarkowski and Yamagishi, eds., *New Japanese Photography*, 16.

⁴¹ The translator’s name is not credited in the book, but the letters between Szarkowski and Yamagishi suggests that the English translation of Yamagishi’s text was prepared by the Japanese side, and then Szarkowski asked Yamagishi to give him permission to further edit the text so that it reads smoothly in English. In a letter dated December 17, 1973, Szarkowski wrote to Yamagishi: “The one passage where I am suggesting a change in meaning is where you quote me, in order to suggest more accurately what I thought I said” (see a letter from Szarkowski to Yamagishi, dated December 17, 1973, Curatorial Exhibition Files, Exh. #1057, MoMA Archives, NY).

⁴² Yamagishi, “Introduction,” 12.

appeal beyond that community (for example, *ukiyoé* would not have been appreciated by the French Impressionists if it had not been able to speak to other cultures). But this is not what Yamagishi suggests by the word “universality.” Rather, he claims that each photographer’s work has to do with the question “what is photography?”—an ontological question relevant to all practitioners and viewers of this medium. He writes:

For *New Japanese Photography*, what we selected were not photographs that lead [viewers of the exhibition] to a facile understanding of Japanese photography, in the form of the historical classification or genealogy, but those that serve as a material to enable one to come one step closer to this both old and new question [of “what is photography?”].⁴³

Unlike Szarkowski, Yamagishi, who entered the *Mainichi Shimbun* (the publisher of *Camera Mainichi*) as a staff photographer, was not a lucid writer. His suggestion that the exhibited works were trying to answer the question of “what is photography?” is not fully elaborated in his short introduction. His inability to explain the specific character of Japanese photography is owed partly to his incompetence as a writer. But it was also due to his fear of producing a fixed image of Japanese photography, as well as his awareness that the fifteen photographers had not necessarily made their works *as* Japanese photography. In other words, the photographers usually did not think about their works’ relationships to the concept of Japanese photography (although they are not always concerned about the question of “what is photography?,” either). Therefore, Yamagishi could do nothing but appeal to the “universality” of the works, and apparently disagreed with Szarkowski’s suggestion that there is “a distinctively Japanese photography.”

⁴³ “日本の写真の歴史的な系譜や分類をして、安易な理解に導くのではなく、古くて新しいその命題に一步近づくための、素材的な役割を果たすという合意点に立って、「ニュー・ジャパニーズ・フォトグラフィー」の作品は選出された。” Yamagishi, “Maegaki” (Introduction), 16. Because the English translation of this part is not accurate enough, I translated the citation from the Japanese text. The English counterpart reads: “In view of this basic attitude, I feel that the concept of this exhibition cannot be thought dogmatic.”

One can easily assume that the viewers of *New Japanese Photography* were not convinced that the photographs in the exhibition addressed such universal questions as “what is photography?” However, some reviewers did feel that the photographs in the exhibition did not conform to their commonly held preconceptions about Japan. Ruth Tager, who saw the touring exhibition in Krannert Art Museum at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, writes: “These photographs effectively dispel any illusions one may still cherish of cherry blossoms in the spring and the quiet decorum of the tea drinking ceremony.”⁴⁴ In a review published in *Artforum*, the art critic Max Kozloff suggests that “it is odd, in a country noted for its national tidiness, its mania for order, and the simplicity of its surface, that they are so often portrayed here as covered over by welts, strewn with muck, grainy, or indescribably soiled.”⁴⁵ A common thread in all reviews of the exhibition was that this rather unconventional image of Japan had to do with the conflict between the traditional Japanese culture and the drastic Americanization of Japan after the Second World War.⁴⁶ This view corresponds with Szarkowski’s introductory words, as I cited above, about one of the three factors that formed Japanese photography (“the stunning speed with which the character of Japanese life itself has been transformed”).⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Ruth Tager, “Art Scene: Exhibit Focuses on Japanese Photography,” *The Courier* (Champaign, Illinois), 7 September 1975.

⁴⁵ Max Kozloff, “New Japanese Photography,” *Artforum* 12, no. 10 (June 1974): 44.

⁴⁶ Kozloff writes: “If hardly dominated by, the exhibition is redolent of, an American intrusion in postwar Japan. . . . The wounds of Japanese consciousness and abruptly its excitements, goaded problematically by America, become the sights through which we tour” (Ibid.).

⁴⁷ Interestingly, some critics felt that the exhibited Japanese photographs were similar to the type of photographs typically promoted by the MoMA. For example, A. D. Coleman suggests; “by remarkable coincidence, New Japanese photography looks almost exactly like the photography which has been exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art for the past 10 years.” See A. D. Coleman, “It

The reviewers' responses tell us that even if American viewers could have an idea—however biased it was—about Japanese society from the exhibits, they could not understand the history of Japanese photography itself; that is, its tradition as a creative medium. In a roundtable held in New York just after the exhibition opened, Ikko Narahara, one of the participating photographers, expressed his dissatisfaction with the exhibition:

That show [*New Japanese Photography*] should be regarded as a work by the two directors Szarkowski and Yamagishi, and I think it speaks about the history of modern Japan of some time ago. . . . I acknowledge the two directors' ability in arranging and contextualizing photographs. But, taking this conversely, I think it is done in a too well-mannered way. There can be another way of showing, where photographs are displayed in a freer and easier manner and what is Japan or what is Japanese photography oozes out from them.⁴⁸

Narahara is concerned that the meaning of the photographs by these fifteen photographers will ultimately be reduced to an illustration of Japanese history, and he suggests that Japan or Japanese photography is something that should be “oozed out” from a group of photographs rather than directly depicted. Narahara goes on as follows:

Because it will be viewed by a lot of people who do not know the backgrounds of Japanese culture, the exhibition is designed to give a certain atmosphere; in other words, it is organized so that a viewer can easily have an idea about Japanese

Doesn't Tell the Whole Story,” *The New York Times*, 7 April 1974, 34. Another critic considered that the work on exhibition was disappointingly derivative of American photography, stating: “Much of this uneven show is blatantly imitative in both style and content.” See Douglas Davis, “Eye is a Camera,” *Newsweek*, 29 April 1974, 106.

⁴⁸ “あのショーは、シャーカフスキーと山岸というディレクターの作品というべきもので、日本の歴史のちょっと前の現代史を語っているというところがあると思います、(…中略…) うまく整理し、脈絡をつけた二人のディレクターの力は認めるけれど、逆に考えると、ちょっと行儀がよすぎるんじゃないかなと思うんです。もっと、写真をポンポンと無造作にならべて、日本、あるいは日本の写真というものがにじみでてくるような方法があるのではないか、というようなことです。” Ken Sato, Ryoji Akiyama, Ikko [Narahara], Ken Ohara, Bishin Jumonji, Shigeru [Akihide] Tamura, Hiromi Tsuchida, Masahisa Fukase, and Shoji Ueda, “Genchi zadankai: Futari no sekounin ga nyûyôku no domannaka ni ie o tateta” (A Roundtable on Location: Two Constructors Built a Japanese-Style House in the Middle of New York), *Camera Mainichi* (June 1974): 103.

photography. But, I think that today's photography asks a viewer to look at photographs themselves, without such a form imposed on them.⁴⁹

In this way, Narahara, who lived in New York at that time and had familiarized himself with American contemporary photography, reaches for a modernist rhetoric of photographic art: the idea that good photographs speak for themselves without the need for external contexts. However, it should be mentioned that this is also the position held by Szarkowski, and the installation of the exhibition was designed so that a viewer can contemplate each photograph individually. One can therefore assume that the cause of the 'failure,' as Narahara implies, of the *New Japanese Photography* exhibition might have some relation to the nature of Japanese photography itself. What I would like to suggest here is that the reason why the photographs on exhibit appeared as no more than illustrations of modern Japan can be attributed to, not just the curatorship of the two directors, but also the characteristics of Japanese *sunappu* photography; that is, its relative indifference to personal expressions and concern for realistic representations of the world.

5-4. The Elusiveness of *Sunappu*

Related to this question, it is suggestive that reviewers pointed out that the exhibits were characterized by the inconsistency of the pictorial styles. For example, Kozloff suggests that "the change that comes over their enterprise is best described as a pulverization of the genres, with the consequent intense, opportunistic voyeurism and

⁴⁹ “あの写真展は、日本の文化のバックグラウンドを知らない人たちが多くみるというので、ひとつのフレイクをつくりだすこと、つまり、日本の写真がわかりやすいように構成されている。しかし、今日の写真というのは、そういう形式をあたえてみてもらうより、作品そのものをみてもらうということなんじゃないか。” Ibid.

high stylistic eclecticism practiced by individuals for whom the inadequate title is ‘freelance.’”⁵⁰ Likewise, A. D. Coleman maintains in his review of *New Japanese Photography*: “while Occidental photographers (and Western artists in general) tend towards monogamy in their relationship to personal style, Japanese photographers appear to feel free to change styles drastically, not only from essay to essay but often within a single piece of work.”⁵¹ One reason that the exhibition impressed its viewers with a lack of consistent style is that the choice of participating photographers was more comprehensive than selective. Obviously the exhibition had no intention to represent *sunappu* photography in Japan; among the works shown in the exhibition, those by Domon, Ishimoto, Hosoe, and Tamura cannot be considered as *sunappu* even if we take the word at its broadest meaning; Domon and Ishimoto use a large-format camera to capture static objects; Hosoe’s subject is human bodies apparently taken in a studio setting; Tamura places the camera at a fixed point and captures a sequence in time.

However, it is also important to notice that the exhibition placed priority on *sunappu* works over any other genres of photography. Two facts confirm this. First, this exhibition deliberately focused greater attention on the work of Tōmatsu and Moriyama than on that of others; the number of works on display by each of the two outnumbered those by any other photographer in the exhibition. As I discussed in Chapter Three, their

⁵⁰ Kozloff, “New Japanese Photography,” 45.

⁵¹ Coleman, “It Doesn’t Tell the Whole Story,” 34. In a similar vein, in a contemporary essay published in *Popular Photography*, the editor Richard Busch writes: “To the Western eye which is steeped in traditional forms and ways of seeing that usually put a strong emphasis on elements like composition, design, and technical excellence, many of these photographs—and, naturally, those produced by the more *avant-garde* professionals like Fukase, Kahoh[sic], Daido Moriyama, and others—are not easy sometimes to really see and feel and appreciate right away. At first encounter, many seem sloppy and haphazard.” See Richard Busch, “Japanese Photography Today,” *Popular Photography* 74 (March 1974): 178.

works represented the *sunappu* of the 1960s and should be seen in this context. Secondly, in his introduction Yamagishi mentions the attention paid to “*nichijōsei* (the everydayness)” by the new generation of photographers.⁵² Thus, though indirectly—Yamagishi never uses the term *sunappu* in his catalogue text—the exhibition refers to the two branches of *sunappu* that existed in Japanese photography at that time.

Therefore, the inconsistency of the photographic styles noticed by Western reviewers is indeed related to the nature of *sunappu* in some way. And it is this lack of a distinctive style that encouraged those viewers to see the photographs as somewhat transparent *reflections* of Japanese society, rather than as artistic objects crafted by these photographers. This was the case despite the fact that some photographs, especially those by Tōmatsu and Moriyama, were certainly perceived as expressive and even subjective depictions of Japanese urban scenes. In the Western reception of those images, the photographers’ *métier* was diminished and, therefore, a viewer could contemplate the photographed subject itself without being forced to think about the photographer’s intentional intervention in the picture-making process. As the viewers of the exhibition were provided with little to no historical context about Japanese postwar photography (movements like *buré boké* or *konpora* were not mentioned in the exhibition catalogue at all), the way to understand Japanese photography was through the images themselves.

Certainly, the authorial status of photography always remains precarious; this type of problem is not limited to Japanese photography, but is relevant to almost any work of art photography. How one can claim the authorship of a mechanically produced image is

⁵² Unfortunately, the noun “*nichijōsei*” is not correctly translated in the English text. As I suggested in Chapter Four, “*nichijōsei*,” which can be translated as “everydayness” in English, was circulated as a keyword in the discourses of art and photography in the early 1970s. Yamagishi’s specific use of this term apparently refers to this phenomenon.

a topic that has received a great deal of discussion.⁵³ But it can be also argued that Japanese *sunappu* appears less as ‘work’ when seen outside Japan, which I believe has to do with the nature of *sunappu*. Apart from the external contexts such as the setting where they are displayed, two qualities give a photograph the status of an artwork. Firstly, the careful finish of photographic prints makes them look like a precious object. In other words, whether a photograph falls into the category of ‘craft’ or not depends very much on the quality of prints. Making beautiful photographic prints with subtle contrast and minute details is often believed to be one of the most valuable skills of art photographers.⁵⁴ But, as pointed out above, Japanese photographers after the Second World War usually did not pay attention to original prints, but were more interested in publishing photobooks. It should not come as a surprise, then, that one reviewer pointed out the poor quality of prints shown in *New Japanese Photography*.⁵⁵ Such an impression must have encouraged a viewer to see the exhibited photographs more as documents than as artworks.

The second factor that allows a group of photographs to be distinguished as a distinct *oeuvre* is stylistic distinctiveness. As I have suggested above, critics have claimed that the works of Japanese photographers dispel this distinctiveness. To cite the

⁵³ Since the early 1980s, some art historians and critics began to challenge the history of photography when it was written based on the discourse of fine art. For a classical essay on this issue, see Rosalind E. Krauss, “Photography’s Discursive Spaces,” *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1985), 131-150.

⁵⁴ The American photographer Ansel Adams is probably the most notorious for his meticulous concern about making fine photographic prints.

⁵⁵ The photo critic Andy Grundberg writes: “Unlike the United States, Japan does not preserve prints in museums, so the book has become integral to the photographer’s expression. (Oddly, this seems to have had an adverse effect on attention to print quality).” See Andy Grundberg, “Photos: East goes West,” *Record*, 29 March 1974, B-14.

photography critic A. D. Coleman again: on viewing the exhibition, he had the impression that Japanese photographers quickly change their styles even within a single series. He cannot be blamed for misunderstanding Japanese photography, because some of the photographers' works are indeed characterized by a heterogeneity of styles. As discussed in Chapter Three, the heterogeneous coexistence of different photographic styles is one characteristic of Tômatsu's *Occupation* series, in which the hybridity of style metaphorically signals the hybridity of Japanese culture permeated by Americanization.

This heterogeneity can be also found in Moriyama's work, which consisted of *sunappu*-style photographs; they were all taken with a small hand-held camera, and most of them are candid photographs (fig. 5-4). But it is difficult to find a stylistic coherence among these pictures. In fact, it even seems that it would be better characterized by the word stylelessness. Seeing Moriyama's exhibit, the photo critic Andy Grundberg observed that "Daidoh [sic] Moriyama . . . is considered the doyen of the current generation of young photographers, but from the selection here one might think he was four or five photographers—all members of a degraded camera club."⁵⁶ For this reviewer, who was not familiar with Moriyama's work, it was perplexing that a photographer who was producing such a heterogeneous group of photographs was a leading young photographer in Japan.

⁵⁶ Grundberg, "Photos: East goes West," B-14. It should be added that from the early 1980s Moriyama tried to give more stylistic coherence to the photographs printed in a single photobook, as is evident from his 1982 book *Hikari to kage* (Light and shadow). This move can be interpreted as an attempt to endow his authorial trace with his photographs. To use Coleman's words cited above, Moriyama tried to establish "monogamy in their relationship to personal style" in the period he, as is often said, remained in a slump as a photographer.

The issues discussed above inevitably lead to the question of what is, then, the stylistic distinctiveness of *sunappu* as a genre of Japanese photography? In Chapter One I suggested that *sunappu* is a genre defined neither by subject nor style, but by a photographic technique. In the broad meaning of the term it means instantaneous photography, and in the narrow meaning, candid photography. This technical definition does not limit the subject and/or the style of *sunappu*; no single subject or style defines *sunappu*. Despite their apparent differences, the works of both Moriyama and Akiyama exhibited in *New Japanese Photography* could have been categorized as *sunappu* in the discourse of Japanese photography.⁵⁷ As I have tried to make clear throughout this dissertation, such unrestrictedness contributed to the flourishing of *sunappu* photography and to its multifaceted developments. At the same time, the lack of any single dominating style in the genre of *sunappu*, namely, the ultimate stylelessness of *sunappu*, made this genre elusive, especially when works belonging to this genre were exhibited abroad. In a sense, Japanese photographic jargons such as *buré boké* and *konpora* were invented and employed to come to terms with this elusiveness, classifying *sunappu* into sub-groups that were characterized by different photographic styles and ideologies. However, such classifications are not necessarily self-evident from the photographs themselves, but rather made recognizable only after appropriate contextual explanations are given to them, the explanations which were lacking in *New Japanese Photography*. Given that a personal style helps a photographer to claim creative authorship over his or her photographic productions, as Coleman has aptly suggested, the stylelessness could

⁵⁷ This point was, of course, beyond the understanding of Western reviewers of *New Japanese Photography*, who were given no chance to know that such a genre exists in the first place. Thus, to describe the overall tendency of the exhibit, one reviewer could only use the words “that territory we loosely label ‘documentary’.” See Coleman, “It Doesn’t Tell the Whole Story,” 34.

endanger the authorial positions of Japanese *sunappu* photographers. When a photograph (or photographs) is deprived of any trace of the photographer as the artist/creator, including specific decisions about publication and sequencing, it could be immediately turned into a document rather than an artwork.

It is also worth remembering that even within the boundaries of Japanese photography, this type of phenomenon can be witnessed throughout the history of *sunappu*. As discussed in Chapter Two, the monthly photography contests, to which a mass of amateur photographers submitted their *sunappu*, played an important role in the 1950s photography magazines. Although Domon and other professional photographers who served as judges tried to evaluate the socially critical attitudes assumed by amateur photographers, those amateur *sunappu*, gathered and published as a group, have virtually functioned as anonymous documents of contemporary society. I would suggest that the relation of those amateur photographs to Japanese photography as a whole is analogous to the relation of the works by the Japanese photographers exhibited in *New Japanese Photography* to the worldwide history of photography. In other words, when they were seen outside the context of Japanese photography, such names as Akiyama and Tsuchida, or even Moriyama and Tômatsu, did not count, at least back in 1974, in the Western viewers' minds. Such weakness of the authorial status of Japanese photographers was related not just to the nature of photography as a mechanically produced image, but also to what I see as the stylistic indeterminacy of *sunappu* as a genre of Japanese photography.

Finally, I would like to suggest that the inconspicuousness of the photographers' personas in *sunappu* photographs, which was made apparent when it was shown outside

Japan, cannot necessarily be interpreted as a weakness. *Sunappu* was traditionally devoted to representing the world as realistically as possible, rather than infusing photographic images with the photographer's sensibility or personality. As I have pointed out in Chapter Three, even Moriyama's *buré boké* photographs, which may appear subjective or even personal to the eyes of some viewers, were conceived by him and his colleague Takuma Nakahira as a means to visualize a societal "reality" that could not be otherwise represented. Therefore, so far as the impressions held by the American reviewers are concerned, the exhibition unexpectedly achieved the goal of *sunappu*, which always attempted to produce faithful representations of society. For, overlooking the role of *sunappu* as a creative tradition within Japanese photography, reviewers considered photographs in *New Japanese Photography* to be reflections of the political and cultural conditions of postwar Japan. This is a somewhat ironic consequence, however, because a photograph can never become a transparent document of the world, but rather is an artifact in which the human hand necessarily intervenes in its process of creation. It is this creative process that I have tried to explain through an examination of the history of *sunappu*. Perhaps there is "a distinctively Japanese photography" as Szarkowski suggested. But it would defy any simplified or essentialist characterizations, for its "Japaneseness" is nothing but a construction of the complex networks of photographic practices and discourses. These certainly reflect the condition of postwar Japanese society, but cannot be entirely reduced to it.

Conclusion

This dissertation has discussed the tradition of *sunappu* in Japanese photography since its inception in the mid-1930s up through the 1970s. The uniqueness of *sunappu* lies in the fact that it has played a role, not just as a photographic technique, but also as a genre of photography practiced by professional and amateur photographers and a discourse through which their works have been interpreted and evaluated. Had it not been for this discourse, none of the photographs by Ihei Kimura, Daido Moriyama, Nobuyoshi Araki, or Shigeo Gochô would have been produced in quite the same way. In other words, *sunappu*, both as a technique and a genre, helped photographers to tackle specific issues, such as Moriyama's exploration of the Americanization of Japanese culture or Gochô's themes of everydayness. One may call *sunappu*, then, an unquestionable tradition within Japanese photography.

A substantial number of professional and amateur photographers continue to produce *sunappu*, using small hand-held cameras on the streets. However, it is also true that in the past two decades more and more Japanese photographers have begun to work outside the tradition of *sunappu*, and some even consciously distance themselves from this tradition. The most emblematic of this change in the trend of Japanese photography is shown in the post-1990s work of Keizo Kitajima (1955-). In the mid-1970s Kitajima studied with Moriyama at the short-lived Workshop Photo School, becoming one of his most devoted students.¹ Kitajima emerged as a quintessential *sunappu* photographer with

¹ For more on Kitajima's career, see Shino Kuraishi, "The Technique of Encounter: Snapshots by Keizo Kitajima," translated by Yoshiaki Kai, in Keizo Kitajima, *The Joy of Portraits* (Tokyo: Rat Hole Gallery, 2009), 702-713. Also see the catalogue of his recent retrospective exhibition at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography. Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, ed.,

his photographs capturing the denizens of an entertainment area in Shinjuku, Tokyo. In 1981-82 he stayed in New York City for six months; his photographs taken there resulted in *New York*, a highly-acclaimed 1982 photography book awarded the prestigious Ihei Kimura Prize.² *New York* was Kitajima's response, not just to William's Klein's 1956 book, but also to Moriyama's fascination with American art and culture.³ In one spread of the book, Kitajima uses a photograph of Andy Warhol, who sullenly looks down at the photographer with his arms crossed (fig. 6-1). This picture cannot help but remind us of the episode when Moriyama visited New York in 1971, but could not bring himself to meet Warhol because he was "so in awe of him."⁴ By confronting Warhol, Kitajima was also confronting his teacher Moriyama, who identified with the American artist so passionately. Kitajima's *New York* consists of both candid and posed photographs of people he met on the streets of New York (figs. 6-2, 6-3). Such a coexistence reflects the transformation of *sunappu* since the mid-1970s, which I discussed in Chapter Four with examples by Gochô and Araki. *New York* and his subsequent photographs taken in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union secured Kitajima's position as a *sunappu* photographer. While referring to the earlier work of *sunappu*, he also enriched the genre, especially through his photographs taken outside Japan.

Keizo Kitajima 1975-1991: Kozu/Tokyo/New York/Eastern Europe/U.S.S.R. (Tokyo: The Sankei Shimbun, 2009).

² Keizo Kitajima, *New York* (Tokyo: Byakuya Shobo, 1982).

³ In 1971 Moriyama himself visited New York; his photographs taken in New York City were later edited into an independent photography book. See Daido Moriyama, *'71-NY* (New York: PPP Editions, 2002).

⁴ Daido Moriyama, "Moriyama Interview, December 22, 2001 Shinjuku, Tokyo," translated by Linda Hoaglund in *'71-NY*, unpaginated.

However, in the early 1990s, he completely abandoned the technique of *sunappu*, switching his equipment from 35mm hand cameras to 4 x 5-inch view cameras. Since then Kitajima has mainly devoted himself to two series, entitled *Portraits* (fig. 6-4) and *Places* (fig. 6-5), in which the qualities that historically characterized *sunappu*, such as candidness, spontaneity, or casualness, are consciously removed. Kitajima later stated that candid *sunappu* began to appear to be infused with “*yotei chōwa* (pre-established harmony),” meaning that, however unexpected an image of the subject *sunappu* aimed to capture, the resulting picture is already predicted from the start.⁵

Kitajima explained that his renunciation of *sunappu* was a logical consequence of his artistic development, the cause of which is not so much external as internal to his work. But it can be also contextualized within a broader change occurring in the history of Japanese photography. The most important factor responsible for the decline of *sunappu* photography since 1980 is the diversification of Japanese photography as a whole. For example, landscape and architecture photographs taken with a large-format camera began to be evaluated in Japanese photo-criticism more seriously than ever before.⁶ For ambitious young photographers, the tradition of *sunappu* could be suffocating rather than inspirational. They thus looked for a different model, studying the works of classical masters who had been relatively ignored in Japanese photo-criticism, such as Eugene Atget and Walker Evans, as well as photographers emerging after the mid-1970s, such as Stephen Shore, Joel Meyerowitz, Bernd and Hilla Becher, Thomas

⁵ Keizo Kitajima and Michio Hayashi, “Timeless Placeness: Watashitachi wa ima doko ni iru noka” (Timeless Placeness: Where are we now?), *Photographers’ Gallery Press* (Tokyo), no. 4 (2005): 41.

⁶ For example, Ryuji Miyamoto and Toshio Shibata, two photographers who work in this field, were awarded the Ihei Kimura Prize in 1988 and 1991, respectively.

Ruff, and Thomas Struth. Instead of the hand-held 35mm cameras historically associated with the technique of *sunappu*, a new generation of Japanese photographers tends to use large view cameras equipped with 8 x 10 or 4 x 5-inch sheet film, medium-sized cameras using 120 format films, or high-definition digital cameras that have recently appeared on the market. In contrast to *sunappu* photographers' preference for capturing candid scenes on the streets, they do not hesitate to carefully compose a photograph like a tableau. Important post-1980 photographers leading this new direction of Japanese photography include Ryuji Miyamoto (1947), Toshio Shibata (1949-), Naoya Hatakeyama (1958-), Risaku Suzuki (1963-), and Taiji Matsue (1963-).

Photography criticism in the United States of the 1980s was characterized by an evaluation of photographic works produced in the context of contemporary art. While photographs produced by artists such as Cindy Sherman and Jeff Wall received critical appraisals, art photography endorsed by John Szarkowski was criticized for its narrow view of the medium's capacity.⁷ The former was soon introduced in Japanese art magazines and, belatedly, in photography magazines; Yasumasa Morimura (1951-) is one of the Japanese photographers who first responded to this new trend in art photography. Like their American counterparts, Japanese critics interpreted the work of Sherman or Wall through the conceptual framework of postmodernism with which the 1980s art was closely associated.⁸ Considering that the development of *sunappu* had been motivated by the photographers' pursuits of realistic representations of the world, it is no wonder that postmodern photography of the 1980s, which questioned the objectivity of

⁷ See, for example, Abigail Solomon-Godeau, "Mandarin Modernism: 'Photography Until Now'," *Art in America* (December 1990): 140-149, 183.

⁸ Sherman was featured in the April 1984 issue of *Camera Mainichi*.

the photographic image, forced *sunappu* into a marginalized position. In other words, postmodern photography questioned *sunappu*'s foundational premise.

It is ironic that the second factor contributing to the decline of *sunappu*, beginning in the early 1980s, was the entry of photography into Japanese art institutions. As increasing numbers of commercial galleries and public museums began to show photographs as art objects, print media no longer constituted the sole venue through which Japanese photographers could showcase their work.⁹ As this study has shown, the artistic identity of *sunappu* featured in photography magazines was always ambiguous, wavering between documentary photograph and art. But once photography was institutionally sanctioned as a branch of fine art, photographers who exhibited their work in a gallery or museum were no longer forced to think about the documentary value of *sunappu*. Most importantly, this change made the problematic aspect of *sunappu* more conspicuous; whereas the aggressiveness of *sunappu* was compensated by its public significance as a social document in successful work by Domon and Tômatsu, *sunappu* lacking any social interest could become the product of irresponsible voyeurism. Indeed, the continuing popularity of *sunappu* among amateur photographers cannot be separated from such voyeurism.

At the same time, we cannot overlook the fact that the tradition of *sunappu* still holds critical relevance, inspiring a new generation of photographers that emerged after 1990. For example, *sunappu*'s exploration of the theme of everydayness discussed in Chapter Four was revitalized by young female photographers such as Hiromix (1976-), Mika Ninagawa (1972-), Rinko Kawauchi (1972-), and, more recently, Kayo Ume (1981-

⁹ The Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, the first public museum devoted to photographic art, was opened in 1990.

). Although each of them has a distinctive style and choice of subject matter, they are united by their use of a hand-held camera and their focus on representations of everyday life. Historically, *sunappu* was a practice that was undeniably masculine, not just because important *sunappu* photographers were all men, but also because the aggressiveness and voyeurism of *sunappu* were closely tied to male desire.¹⁰ It is significant, then, that these female photographers complicated *sunappu*'s historical association with masculinity. Recent participation of female photographers in the genre of *sunappu* after 1990 was, of course, not unrelated to the spread of inexpensive automated point-and-shoot cameras among women. But as this study has demonstrated, the history of *sunappu* has always been (and will be) conditioned by technical innovations in photographic apparatuses.

Scholars have overlooked the importance of the historical role played by *sunappu* as a technique, a genre, and a discourse. For American scholars, it has been difficult to conduct a textual analysis of Japanese photographic discourse, whereas for Japanese scholars, *sunappu* appeared so self-evident that it did not attract their attention. However, as this study has demonstrated, *sunappu* has functioned as a wheel or inner structure that advanced the development of postwar Japanese photography. A large number of photographers, especially a mass of amateurs, made their work following the existing models of *sunappu*, while others revised and expanded them. My attention to *sunappu* has thus revealed the importance of a diachronic thread in the history of Japanese photograph, defying, on the one hand, a Western tendency to regard non-Western art as a *reflection* of society, and on the other hand, Japanese writers' blind admiration for star

¹⁰ For a classical argument about the close relationships between the gaze of a camera and the male desire, see Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen* 16, no.3 (Autumn 1976): 6-18.

photographers such as Moriyama and Araki, which tends to underrate the importance of the historical contexts in which their works are situated.

Throughout the dissertation I have attempted to describe the relationship of photographic art to other cultural activities in Japan. As those relationships often remain invisible unless one closely examines the contemporaneous criticism in art, literature and photography, they have often escaped the attention of scholars. The themes discussed in this dissertation, such as *Riarizumu*, Americanization, and everydayness, will be useful tools to examine, not just the photographic works discussed here, but also a broader range of postwar Japanese art, including painting and sculpture.

Finally, it is my hope that this study will open a new perspective for our future discussions, not just of Japanese photography and art, but also of the history of photography in general. Although I have defined *sunappu* as a genre and a discourse specific to Japanese photography, *sunappu* as a technique—that is, candid photography—has been almost universally practiced until today: a large number of canonical photographs in the world history of this medium consist of candid images taken with a hand-held 35mm camera.¹¹ This study stands as the first to pursue an in-depth analysis of this specific photographic technique. Therefore, the various characteristics of *sunappu* laid out in this dissertation, such as its pursuit of authentic representations of society or antagonistic relationships with the subjects, will provide a useful framework for understanding the candid images created by Western photographers who now form the

¹¹ As Geoffrey Batchen suggests in his essay on the history of candid photography, “[f]ar from being a marginal perversion, seeing without being seen has been a central tenet of the practice of photography throughout its history.” See Geoffrey Batchen, ‘Guilty Pleasures,’ in Thomas Y. Levin, Ursula Frohne, and Peter Weibel, eds., *CTRL [SPACE]: Rhetorics of Surveillance, from Bentham to Big Brother* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2002), 446-459.

canon of photographic history, including Walker Evans, Helen Levitt, Garry Winogrand, Lee Friedlander, William Eggleston, and Philip-Lorca diCorcia, to name a few.

Approaching their photographs from the perspective of candidness will shed new light on their critical significance. This dissertation is about the history of Japanese photography, but its theoretical framework transcends regional, national, and international boundaries.

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