



# Sustainable Development Goals from the Perspective of Photographic Archives: A Case Study on Photographs from Occupied Japan

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## Abstract

In this chapter, I present a novel way to examine the historical background of the issues discussed in sustainable development goals (SDGs) using historical photographs. Considering the 17 SDGs, and Japan's occupation period (1945–52) to construct a case study, I demonstrate how to interpret the gaps and connections between the situations observed during the occupation period and the present. Finally, I refer to SDGs 7 and 11 in detail; however, this is not a summary for a particular SDG, but a way to think about the background of the issue for all SDGs.

## Keywords

Photograph · Japan · Occupation period ·  
Photographic archives · Contemporary history

## 4.1 Introduction

### 4.1.1 Thinking from the Other Side

In this chapter, I consider how photography can function for SDGs from old photographic

archives and make a proposal using these photographs taken in Japan immediately after the end of the war as an example.

When I see the SDGs, the images that come to mind are those of photographs that I collected in Japan during its occupation (1945–52). “No poverty (SDG1),” “zero hunger (SDG2),” and “good health and well-being (SDG3)” were the major issues facing Japan during the occupation. The generation that lived through the postwar period battled against these challenges. However, the issues of “affordable and clean energy (SDG7)” and “job satisfaction and economic growth (SDG8)” are in different phases. For example, the switch from charcoal to fossil fuels, and the decline in the number of primary industry workers did not occur until 1955, after the occupation. These SDGs, therefore, images of the prehistory of this issue to resurface.

The SDGs, as this book shows, are very broad in scope and require various research approaches to engage and involve many people. The SDGs are a current and future issue; however in this study, I consider what can be done from the “opposite perspective” of historical photography.

### 4.1.2 My Research and SDGs

My research field is photo archiving (Satō 2006, 2015, 2021), which involves the collection of old photographs from various places, passing them on to those who need them, and considering how

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to utilize them for various people. However, I am not aware of any paper or book that squarely addresses the question of how photo archives can help SDGs. Photo archiving is a public field. There are many points of contact between collecting, researching, and utilizing historical photographs and advancing on the SDGs.

Photographs have many possibilities, especially those photos are “open to reading” for the viewer (Ueda et al. 2021). It is not always a given that the viewer will understand exactly what the photographer intended, but the viewer can focus on areas that the photographer was not aware of. Photography allows the viewer the freedom to make discoveries and encourages fresh thinking.

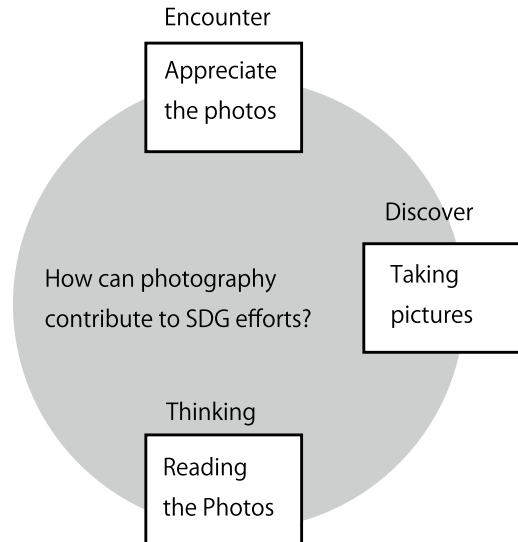
Although my research has mainly focused on photographs of occupied Japan, I present a methodology that can be applied in other parts of the world under different conditions and at different times. I hope that readers will consider the following text and study the photographs while keeping in mind the history of the region, even though they may not wholly be related to the occupation or Japan.

## 4.2 The SDGs and the Role of Photography

In this section, I present three main ways in which photography contributes to SDGs. (Fig. 4.1).

### 4.2.1 Encountering Photographic Expression

In the specialized field of photographic expression, there exist photographers and news reporters who present photographic works based on their awareness of the issues expressed in SDGs. There are also global events that curate and introduce such works. For example, “The Prix Pictet,” an award for photography and sustainability (Fig. 4.2), decides on a theme each year and nominates and awards photographers for their work (The Prix Pictet 2021). In many cases, the viewers are presented with trends and



**Fig. 4.1** Contribution of photography to SDGs



**Fig. 4.2** The Prix Pictet. The photograph shows the catalog of the 2021 theme “Fire”

conditions of the world that they may not have been aware of. Through these photographs, the viewers are able to imagine the situation and share the photographer’s awareness of issues.

Some well-known photographic works can provide questions to be considered.

Most of us are committed to these photographic expression activities as viewers. Encountering these works at some point in time can open our eyes of interest. In addition to promoting the creation of such works, it is necessary to pick up the works, introduce them to others, and communicate them widely.

### 4.2.2 Discover Through Photography

In the field of education, there are workshop programs and contests in which students think about SDGs by taking pictures of things that interest them in their daily lives. SDG photograph contests, for example, the SDGs Student Photo Contest (Fig. 4.3) launched in 2016, have been held at various locations.

In the classroom, while learning the value of the SDGs, students observe daily life, discover problems, take pictures, and discuss them. By taking photographs, we can build a bigger picture using the fragmented facts embedded in our daily lives. It confirms that we are also a part of the problem and allows for discussion. This can be done through various means—on a smartphone inside or outside your home. The photographs present in the camera roll of a smartphone can also be analyzed.

Having a camera as a medium encourages discovery, and looking at these photographs further imparts values and views.

### 4.2.3 Thinking Through Archived Photographs

The use of archived photographs makes it possible to consider the history of how humanity acquired the values set forth in the SDGs. I attempt to establish the role of these photographs in this chapter. By comparing old photographs to those of the present, we can confirm the gaps and connections between them. For example, most of the photographs of the occupation period presented here were taken around 1950, but we can

ask the following questions: What were the values of the world 70 years ago? What has improved and what has not changed over the past 70 years? What were the common problems? What are the new problems that have emerged?

Many digital archives of photographs are available on the Internet. For example, Japan Search is a leading portal site for digital archives in Japan (Fig. 4.4), and we can very easily view these archives on our own desktops.

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## 4.3 Effectiveness of Using Photo Archives and How to Utilize Them

The values set forth in the SDGs are historical initiatives based on the history of human struggle, and without an attitude to learn from history work toward the future, the significance of the goals cannot be shared. If we do not know the depth of the historical background or have a “historical perspective” on the problems we face, it is difficult to reach the goals.

In order to realize the SDGs, various factors must be coordinated. These factors include the relationship between humans and the earth, the development of material civilization and its relationship with nature, changes in lifestyles, the increase in entropy, and the benefits and sacrifices of the cultural framework. As we learn more about these factors, we can also discover questions that we can commit ourselves to, and continue to work on them as our own research themes. Photography gives us a chance to think about the connection between ourselves and the big questions that humanity is facing.

### 4.3.1 Why Photography?

With the promotion of digitalization in society, digitized data is being provided for various uses. The digital image in the form of a photograph is one of the targets of this trend. In the field of humanities, there is a subfield called “digital humanities.” Research using digital images has also become increasingly common.

**Fig. 4.3** Photo contests on “SDGs” in Japan

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伊藤忠青山アートスクエア オキュアールオーヴル記念

**SDGs** Sustainable Development Goals

**学生フォトコンテスト**

**受賞作品写真展 2016&2017** | 入場料 無料

2018年9月3日(月)→10月31日(木)

開催時間 11:00~19:00 (※要予約)

〈主催〉伊藤忠商事株式会社  
〈協力〉葛城広瀬センター/上智大学

〈会場〉伊藤忠青山アートスクエア  
東京都港区芝浦2-2-1 (Shiba Garden B1F)  
TEL. 03-5773-3772 | URL: https://www.itochu-art-square.jp

SDGsとは? 2016年9月の国連サミットで採択された「持続可能な開発のための2030年持続可能な開発目標(SDGs)」は、持続可能な開発を推進し、地球規模課題を解決するための17の目標を掲げ、2030年までに達成を目指す国際目標です。SDGsは、持続可能な開発目標の略称です。

SDGsの17の目標は、持続可能な開発目標(SDGs)の略称です。SDGsは、持続可能な開発目標の略称です。

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First, what does a photographic archive mean as a historical document?

A photograph is a material that provides an opportunity to relive the long experience of humanity. We own the experience in the form of photographs and share it by preserving it as an archive. Photography was invented in the 1820s. In the 200 years since, various landscapes and

situations have been photographed, and these photographs belong to the human race.

Additionally, photographs show facts as well as perspective. When photographing a person, the difference between taking a close-up of the person alone or framing the image to include the background is not just a difference in photographic technique, but also a difference in the

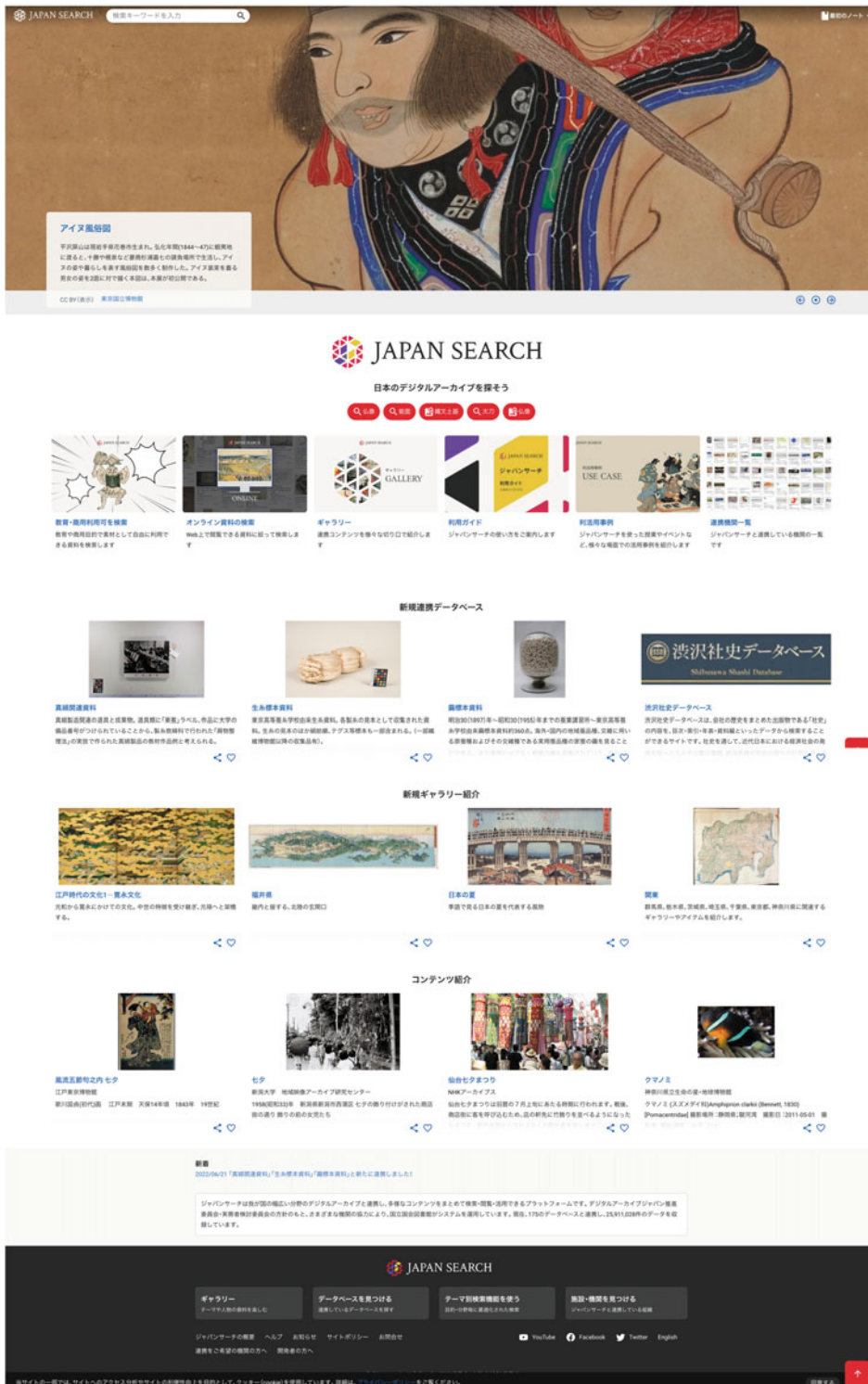


Fig. 4.4 Japan search: a leading portal site for digital archives in Japan

way things are perceived. In addition to information about the other side of the picture, it is also possible to consider the differences in the way we perceive things by reading information about the distance from the subject, the height of our gaze, and the framing.

With these points in mind, we will consider what can be known from old photographs in the next section.

### 4.3.2 How Can Old Photos Help?

By using photographs from the past, the analysis of SDGs can take three forms (Fig. 4.5).

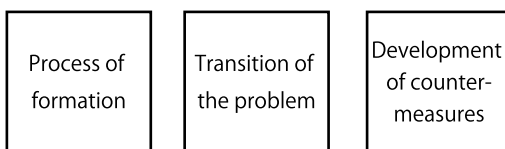
#### 4.3.2.1 Tracing the Process of Formation

How were the environment and society formed? Using photographs, we can trace the process. In particular, we can ask the question of what changed and how it did not change during the milestone period of the social transformation.

Additionally, how have perceptions of the environment and society been shaped? How have our perceptions of the environment and society changed? These questions can be answered by looking at actual photographs.

#### 4.3.2.2 Reading the Way Issues Are Recognized

The SDGs are based on the recognition of various social and environmental problems. Photography has also been used as a direct means of documenting and sharing (or denouncing) such issues. How long have the problems been recognized? What was the occasion? In what ways were the problems captured in photographs? The



**Fig. 4.5** Information that can be read from old photographs on SDGs issues

photographic document provides us with clues to infer the answers to these questions.

#### 4.3.2.3 Knowing How to Improve or Develop a Response

If a problem has been recognized, and measures have been taken to improve or respond to it, how these methods have developed and evolved can also be analyzed. Specific remedial measures can change and evolve depending on the social institutions, laws, and even technologies of the time.

Not all measures bring about improvements and forward movement. There are many examples of cyclical behavior, or remedial measures that lead to other problems. A critical retrospect is necessary, and suggestions for further improvement can be made using photographs.

### 4.3.3 Proposal of Two Methods Using Photographs

Based on the discussion in the previous section, I propose two historical methodologies using photographs as historical documents.

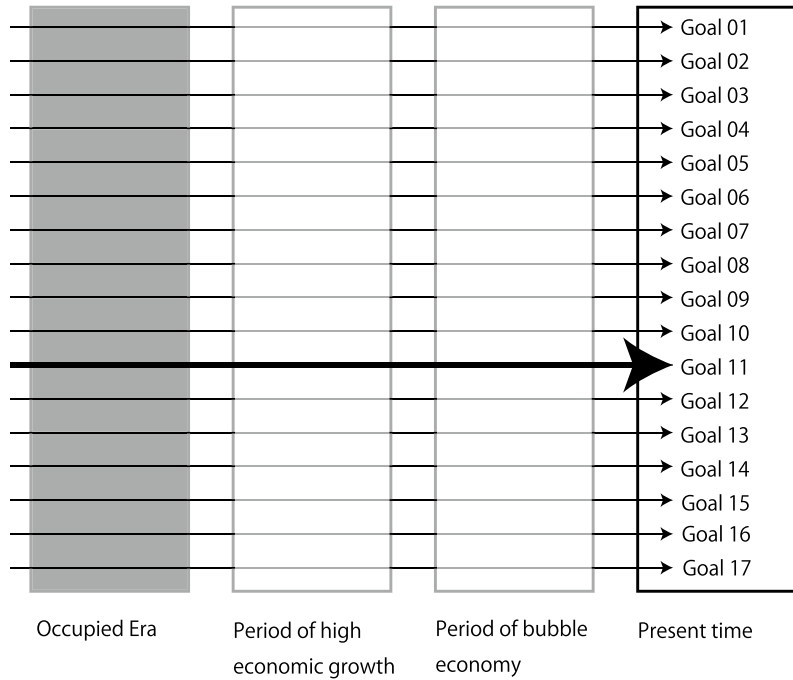
One method is to use the framework of the SDGs to understand the situation of a certain period of time in a certain society and compare it to the present to understand the history of the mission of the SDGs.

The other method involves tracing the transition of a single issue in the SDGs through photographs to understand how the issues have been recognized and solved (Fig. 4.6).

#### (1) Understanding the historical situation

For a hypothetical purpose, we can frame the period as one in which the foundations of the current state were formed, various problems surfaced, and responses and reforms were undertaken. In the case of postwar Japan, we can frame the period of occupation (1945–52), the period of rapid economic growth (1955–1972), the bubble economy period (1986–1991), and the present day as periods of reform and value change. Through the photographs of each of these periods, we can

**Fig. 4.6** Two approaches to the SDGs challenges: to understand the situation at a specific time and evolution of individual issues



consider the reality of society and how they perceived social issues.

- (2) Understanding the transition of the problem Let us look back at how society has responded to specific SDGs by using multiple photographs and connecting them. For example, if you have three photographs, A, B, and C from different times, think about what changed from A to B to C, and what the social response was during those times. Take up a specific issue from the objectives and think about its transition through photographs.

many of the issues addressed by SDGs came to the forefront. Before looking at specific photographs, let us summarize the characteristics of photographs taken in Japan during the occupation.

**4.4.1.1 Photographs of Occupied Japan**

In postwar Japan, the number of photographs taken by Japanese civilians was extremely small due to the scarcity of photographic materials and economic deprivation. Under these circumstances, it was the occupying forces who were trying to observe Japanese society and understand its problems, with the USA playing a central role. The photographs taken in Japan by the occupying forces and their associates can be divided into the following three categories in terms of the subjects photographed:

**4.4 Practice from the Archives Photographed in Occupied Japan**

**4.4.1 Description: Photographs Taken in Occupied Japan and Their Archives**

The occupation period was important in that it that defined the present state of Japanese society, and

- (1) Official photographs  
Photographs were taken by the occupying forces in an official capacity. Photographs have undergone several stages of screening and are archived in the US National Archives and are available to the public.

- (2) Press photographs  
Photographs were taken for business purposes by organizations such as newspapers and news agencies.
- (3) Personal photographs  
Occupation forces personnel also took many personal photographs. Some of these photographs are held in libraries around the USA and are available for viewing.

In the following sections, I introduce some of these photographs, including (1) and (3).

#### 4.4.1.2 Who Took the Photographs and for What Purpose?

The main task of the occupying forces was to dismantle and democratize the warlord regime in Japan. A certain percentage of the official photographs taken by the occupation forces were taken as surveys of the situation in order to promote this mission. This is symbolized by the photographs taken by the Strategic Bombing Survey Group, in which the camera focuses on how the wartime regime was organized, how the military industry functioned, and how it was damaged by the war. Photographs related to democratization have been taken in a variety of locations, not only in political situations such as elections, but also in labor movements and school education (Robin 2015).

While these major regime changes were underway, the people of Japan were still faced with serious issues related to their own survival. The realities of the homeless and war orphans were not only documented in official photographs, but also in personal photographs. There are many photographs documenting these measures to cope with life, especially in the early postwar period.

As the motives and purposes of some photographs are personal, the images contained in them are very diverse (Morris 2015; Satō 2020). These personal photographs contain images that could not be captured or preserved in official photographs.

#### 4.4.2 Photographs of Occupied Japan in Relation to the 17 SDGs

In the following section, I reconsider the historical photographs of the occupation period in the context of the 17 SDGs, showing the relevant photographs in the order of the SDGs and explaining what can be considered from them.

##### Goal 1: No poverty

Poverty is one of the biggest challenges of the present, and there is no shortage of photographs depicting this (Fig. 4.7); for example, personal photographs in places like Ginza, the central shopping district of the capital city of Tokyo. The image of the homeless living on the streets is easily caught by visitors to the city. Similar images can be found in official photographs (Fig. 4.8), but these are intended for research or propaganda purposes.

##### Goal 2: Zero hunger

Extreme food insecurity was also a major challenge, and photographs of food rationing, which was an official measure, frequently appeared in official and press photographs (Fig. 4.9). Rationing alone was not enough to provide food for the people, so urban residents went to the countryside to buy food, which was illegal, but done openly. There are not many photographs of such activities, probably because they were subject to control. Similarly, there are few photographs of the black market, which was an informal source of food, because the occupying forces were forbidden from entering it (Fig. 4.10).

##### Goal 3: Good health and well-being

Sanitation was also a major issue, and photographs of dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT), an insecticide sprayed in public places to prevent epidemics, are symbolic images of this era. In addition, the photographs (Fig. 4.11) of social improvement projects, such as a survey on sanitation in a so-called bad housing area (slum), may be in line with the SDGs perspective (Fig. 4.12). The images illustrated above can also be considered as interrelated with SDGs 1–3.



**Fig. 4.7** Homeless on Sukiwabashi Bridge, Tokyo, 1952. From the collection of Taichi Kinugawa (original in color). Taichi Kinugawa is a Japanese photograph collector



**Fig. 4.8** An orphan lying on the street. Ueno, Tokyo, August 11, 1948. US Army Signal Corps (USASC) photo. 111SC-293123, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). The photographs in NARA's collection are official photos. This photograph is one of the more well-known signal photos



#### Goal 4: Quality education

As school facilities were destroyed in the war, public education was offered in different locations. The photograph of the “open-air classes” is one such example (Fig. 4.13). Many photographs of war orphans and orphanages can be seen in both official and personal photographs. Some of the personal photographs are taken by people who supported the operation of the individuals (Fig. 4.14), suggesting that the occupation officials were aware of their “savior” status.

#### Goal 5: Gender equality

Prostitutes working for occupation forces personnel, known as “pan-pan,” were also a social problem due to the perception that they were disruptive to public morals; but they were also deeply rooted in society because of poverty. Because the occupying forces were forbidden to set foot in the areas where prostitution was tolerated (red-light district), photographs taken in those areas are few, but do exist (Fig. 4.15). Such images speak eloquently of the situation women

**Fig. 4.9** Flour ration. Location unknown (Japan), June 11, 1946. USASC photo. 111SC-237386. NARA. In effect, rationing of major grains was in place until around 1950. It was not until 1981 that rationing was legally abolished



**Fig. 4.10** A black market in front of the railroad station. Shinbashi, Tokyo, 1946. From the collection of Taichi Kinugawa (original color). The black market gradually disappeared as Japan's economy began to recover after the special demand from the Korean War in 1950



found themselves in, but to make them public was a matter of hesitation, and there is the issue of portrait rights in photography. Gender issues in the contemporary sense have also been taken up in policy as women's labor issues, and many photographs have been taken to investigate the working conditions of women workers (Fig. 4.16).

#### Goal 6: Clean water and sanitation

The sewerage system in the capital city of Tokyo was not built in earnest until after World War II, with a penetration rate of 49% in 1970 and 100% in 1995. The occupation forces conducted a survey of drainage systems and public toilets during the postwar survey of areas lost to air raids, and photographs of these facilities have been preserved (Fig. 4.17).

**Fig. 4.11** Spraying children with DDT, 1945–1947, George C. Mergens photograph collection, US Army Heritage and Education Center (USAHEC). George C. Mergens was a US Army officer. He graduated from the United States Military Academy (USMA), West point, in the class of 1923. After the World War II, he was stationed in Japan and Korea



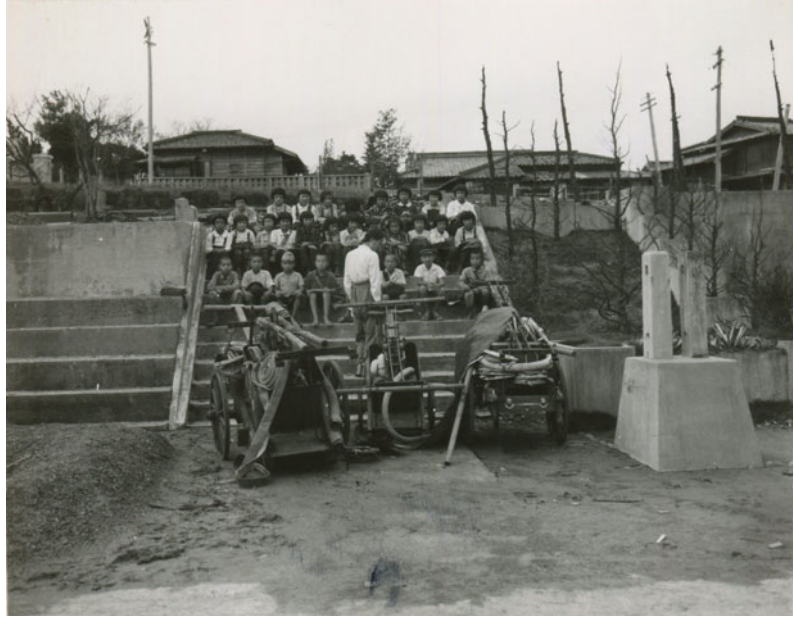
**Fig. 4.12** Sanitary survey of a poor housing area. Fukagawa, Tokyo, March 17, 1947. USASC photo. 111SC-286158. NARA



Many of the photographs taken by the occupation forces show “honey buckets,” or manure buckets, and people collecting them (Fig. 4.18). It is likely that the occupation forces learned of the existence of these buckets from the odor and captured it on camera. In any case, human waste

generated in urban areas was purchased and transported to farming villages in the suburbs for use as fertilizer, but the occupying forces adopted the hydroponic method for growing vegetables for their own food because of the risk of parasites and other hygiene problems.

**Fig. 4.13** An empty classroom in an elementary school that no longer has a school building. Sasebo, Japan, October 2, 1945. US Marine Corps photo.127-150422. NARA



**Fig. 4.14** Children digging a well at an orphanage in Setagaya Ward, Tokyo, 1950. Kenneth Kantor papers, Hoover Institution Archives. Kenneth Dwight Kantor was an American journalist who spent most of his career in Japan and Korea. He and his wife personally provided support and cooperation for the operation of the orphanage





**Fig. 4.15** Yoshiwara, Tokyo. One of the areas where prostitution was legal, May 1950, Kenneth Kantor papers, Hoover Institution Archives. The author added blur to a part of the photograph. Kenneth Kantor covered

post-World War II Japan and the war in Korea, including subjects such as the status of women's rights in Japan and refugees in Korea



**Fig. 4.16** Photograph of a visit to the Fuji Spinning Oyama Factory, Shizuoka, 1946–1949. Mead Smith Karras papers, 0011-GWP, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Maryland. Mead Smith Karras was instrumental in advancing the rights of women and minor laborers in post-World War II Japan.

She was recruited to work as an economist for the labor division of the economics and scientific section during the allied occupation of Japan from 1946–1949. While a part of the labor division, she worked with US and Japanese officials to develop and implement occupation policies on problems affecting women and children in the workforce

**Fig. 4.17** A temporary toilet built in a burned-out area, November 3, 1945. Tokyo, Japan. US Strategic Bombing Survey (USSBS) photo. 243-GM-1G06. NARA



#### Goal 7: Affordable and clean energy

The depletion of commonly available fuels was severe to the extent that gasoline for automobiles was not generally available, and coal was used as a fuel for power (Fig. 4.19). Fuel for household use was charcoal and coal, but since the period of rapid economic growth, fossil fuels were replaced by kerosene stoves and other fuels for ordinary households.

#### Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth

The trade union movement was banned during the war, but resumed, and the occupying forces worked to improve the inhuman working environment caused by unfair exploitation. The labor

movement also gained momentum in many parts of the country, and the occupation forces supported the movement while carefully watching over political developments. The May Day march in Hibiya Park, Tokyo, was captured in various photographs (Fig. 4.20).

Photographs of surveys conducted by labor policymakers in various parts of the country (Fig. 4.21) also show that the working environment at that time was problematic.

#### Goal 9: Industry, innovation, infrastructure

The occupying forces' efforts to dismantle the warlords and munitions industries, and to replace them with peaceful industries, have left behind a



**Fig. 4.18** An ox cart carrying a manure trough passing by with a sign at the entrance to Grant Heights, 1949. Narimasu, Tokyo. From the collection of Taichi Kinugawa (original in color). Grant Heights was a residential

area for the families of the occupation forces, and there was a huge disparity in terms of the size of the housing and sanitary conditions from those of ordinary Japanese residential areas at the time

variety of symbolic photographs. These include abandoned munitions factories and scenes of fighter jets being burned (Fig. 4.22). Some of these factories were later taken over by heavy industries, while others were cleared for public use, and it is only in modern times that the SDGs have begun to address the issue of sustainable industry.

#### Goal 10: Reduced inequalities

The improvement of the status of former colonists was a major theme of the postwar process. The movement by the natives themselves was one of the targets of the occupation policy, and there exist various records (Fig. 4.23). Some problems were resolved during the occupation and some were not, and this is one of the issues that have remained unresolved since. There has also been researched into the Ainu ethnic minority in the country, and both official and personal photographs exist (Fig. 4.24).

#### Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities

Immediately after the end of the war, barracks and shelters were the predominant living spaces in burnt-out urban areas (Fig. 4.25), and the focus turned to residential environmental issues, along with sanitation and disaster prevention issues. Urban housing construction in the context of war reconstruction proceeded, followed by the rapid construction of housing complexes. A symbolic topic in the issue of intra-city housing is that of people living on the water, “floating population.” Their hygienic conditions were poor, and while surveys were conducted in light of these conditions, they were also recognized as an extremely Asian urban landscape (Fig. 4.26). Although many other urban planning issues existed, the occupation forces had little touch with urban planning itself, and it was only in the later phases of the occupation that urban development with new values began to take off.

**Fig. 4.19** Cleaning up the coal cinders that power this car. Tokyo or Yokohama. US Marine Corps (USMC) photo. 127-135403. NARA. Coal-powered vehicles can frequently be found in photographs taken by the occupying forces



**Fig. 4.20** Workers' rally on May Day, probably 1948, Mead Smith Karras papers, 0011-GWP. Special Collections and University Archives, University of Maryland







**Fig. 4.21** Photograph of a visit to a sewing factory, 1946–1949. Mead Smith Karras papers, 0011-GWP. Special Collections and University Archives, University of Maryland



**Fig. 4.22** Destroyed Nakajima Aircraft Co. Musashi Plant, November 3, 1945. Tokyo, Japan. USSBS photo. 243-GR-1T06,07. NARA. Panoramic photograph created by merging two photos by the author. The USSBS has taken many photos of large munitions factories that have been burned to the ground. NARA. (Panoramic photograph created by merging two photos)

**Fig. 4.23** Chinese people in a parade, February 25, 1946. Sasebo, Japan. USMC photo 127-146758. NARA



Goal 12: Responsible consumption, production

The Natural Resources Section (NRS) of Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (GHQ/SCAP), a section of the occupation forces, was in charge of managing the natural resources that were devastated during the war, and its policies include researching new natural resources and protecting the existing environment. For example, the NRS started to protect wild birds that were almost extinct due to mass captivity caused by food shortages, especially during and after the war, as can be seen from the photograph of the person in charge (Fig. 4.27).

Goal 13: Climate action

Flood damage caused by heavy rainfall due to typhoons and other causes was a frequent occurrence in Tokyo, and there exist photographs of rescue operations and other activities at the time (Fig. 4.28). In response to such heavy water damage, the city implemented flood control measures during the period of economic growth by strengthening the levees of rivers in the capital with concrete; however, the rivers became

“backspaces” in the city, and the connection between water and land was severed. This fragmentation of environmental ecosystems due to robust infrastructure has continued ever since.

Goal 14: Life below water

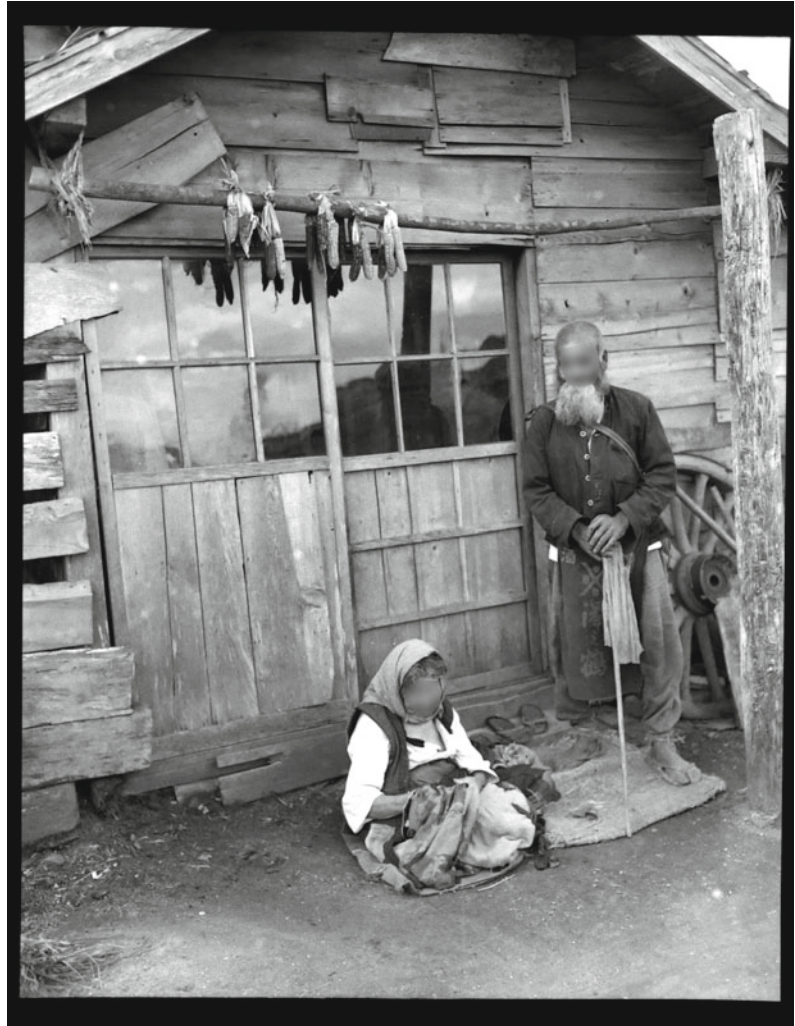
The NRS conducted research on Japan’s fisheries in relation to marine resources. For example, laver fishing was conducted in Tokyo Bay, which was rapidly reclaimed during the period of rapid economic growth (Fig. 4.29), and it can be understood that the coastal ecosystem that was subsequently lost was still alive.

Goal 15: Life on land

During the war, trees were cut down in many areas for material use, resulting in serious degradation of forest resources. This situation can be clearly seen in the photographs of the bald mountains (Fig. 4.30). As a result, coniferous trees such as cedar, which were planted at a rapid pace after the war, were the main cause of pollinosis.

Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective,

**Fig. 4.24** Ainu couple, Dimitri Boria collection, MacArthur Museum. The author added blur to a part of the photograph. G. Dimitria Boria was the supervisor of the color photographic laboratory of the far East command during the occupation of Japan, 1947–1952. He traveled around Japan mainly to take photographs for the US military’s publicity. It is believed that this photograph was taken as a part of such activities



accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

The photographs taken by the occupation officials include many pictures of children carrying their siblings on their backs (Fig. 4.31). In these photographs, children were portrayed as being forced to work. These scenes were commonplace, but disappeared with declining birthrates, economic growth, and changing lifestyles.

Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation for sustainable development and revitalize the global partnership.

Assistance during this period was provided by Licensed Agencies for Relief in Asia (LARA), which focused on food, and was supported by private organizations in many countries (Fig. 4.32).

#### 4.4.3 Transition of the Problem

Here are some examples of how the issues related to Goals 7 and 11 have evolved from several pictures.

**Fig. 4.25** A burnt-out shelter. The roof was dug into the semi-underground, September 17, 1945. US Navy photo. 80G-495627. NARA



#### 4.4.3.1 SDG 7

Postwar Japan was severely depleted of commonly available fuels (Fig. 4.13). Earlier, charcoal and coal, but since the period of rapid economic growth, fossil fuels have been replaced by kerosene stoves in general households (Fig. 4.33).

Nuclear power has been in operation since the period of high economic growth: in a photograph taken in the 1960s, the six letters of “Nuclear Energy Research Institute” written as an assignment in calligraphy, a traditional Japanese art form, indicating the values of this era (Fig. 4.34).

This was followed by the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011, which led to the shared need to revise that value system.

#### 4.4.3.2 SDG 11

After the defeat of Japan in World War II, barracks buildings appeared in the burned areas (Fig. 4.25).

In order to solve housing difficulties, apartment complexes were built (Fig. 4.35), such that the houses became non-combustible, larger, and taller. Among the postwar housing complexes, those built in the 1960s and 1970s are being rebuilt and have already been replaced by a new generation. In recent years, high-rise residential complexes (tower condominiums) have been built in former factory areas such as the bay area (Figs. 4.36 and 4.37), but it is questionable whether they are sustainable in terms of the life span of the building and the urban environment.



**Fig. 4.26** Boats of “floating population” at the mouth of the Sumida River, Tokyo. July 15, 1947. USASC photo. 111SC-295446 NARA. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, as the size of cargo ships calling at ports around Japan increased and barges became a popular means of shipping and harbor logistics, some dockworkers who owned barges and moved from place to place began to

turn a corner of their barges into housing for their families. In the latter half of the 1960s, the shift to containerized cargo ships reduced the demand for barges in logistics, leading to a decline in the number of barges and a sharp drop in the number of people living on the water due to job changes



**Fig. 4.27** Photograph of a haze net hunter, not visible in the photograph, which has been banned in principle under the wildlife protection act since 1947, 1948, Courtesy of Annika A. Culver, Curator, Oliver L. Austin Jr.

photographic collection, at the Institute on World War II and the human experience at Florida State University. Oliver L. Austin Jr. first came to Japan in 1946 and stayed there until 1950, when he temporarily returned to Japan



**Fig. 4.28** Flood damage caused by the Kathleen Typhoon in September 1947. Arakawa River Basin, Suburb of Tokyo, A. Laflamme photograph collection, USAHEC. A. Laflamme was a photographer for the US Army Signal Corps



**Fig. 4.29** Fishing for seaweed in Tokyo Bay. Omori, Tokyo, May 23, 1947, Hubert Gregory Schenck papers, Hoover Institution Archives. The industrialization of Tokyo Bay since the 1950s has led to rapid land

reclamation, which has completely changed the nature of the inland sea. He was a geologist and Chief of the Resources Division of the Occupation Forces in Japan from 1945 to 1951



**Fig. 4.30** The Bald mountains in the background are probably caused by excessive logging during the war. From the collection of Henry H. Soulen Collection, Taichi Kinugawa, Gunma Prefecture, Japan (original color)



**Fig. 4.31** Two girls giving piggyback rides to their siblings, October 1945. Location unknown. USMC photo. 127-140131 NARA



**Fig. 4.32** Float made by a town's community to show appreciation for food aid, September 15, 1946. Kanda, Tokyo. USASC photo. 111SC-279683. NARA. Float mimics the shape of bread that is commonly eaten in Japan

## 4.5 Concluding Remarks

As established in the previous chapter, although some issues have been resolved, others remain unresolved. In postwar Japan, we can see that the issues considered in SDGs 1–4, which fulfill basic human requirements, have already been solved, but there is still room for discussion regarding SDGs 6–9 and 13–15, which are relevant in the context of the transition to an industrialized society.

Progress regarding SDGs 5, 10, and 16, related to gender equality, seem to have remained stagnant since the end of World War II.

This chapter is not intended to present an in-depth discussion of each of these goals, but rather introduces various photographs of occupied Japan and focuses on the images left behind by the era as a whole. It is based on photographs I have personally researched, and it has limitations as a source of historical material. However, I wanted to demonstrate the act of looking at photographs from the perspective of the SDGs

during a period of great historical change. This is to rediscover the potential value of photography. From the standpoint of researchers involved in archiving, it is a way to discover and revive photographs that may be buried under the mountain of historical records.

I want to recommend that attention be paid to photographs of the past social changes in certain regions of interest and that they are examined. The photographs should raise a variety of questions and overlap with other interests.

In this chapter, I have presented photographs related to all 17 goals; however, you can explore the photographs while framing the issues based on your interests. As you look through the numerous photos, you will get a clearer picture of where the present problem originated and how it has changed since.

Furthermore, if future studies can consciously create opportunities to “take pictures” based on this foundation, the connection between historical background and contemporary issues can be better clarified.





**Fig. 4.33** Charcoal briquettes and an oil stove coexist in a show window of a fuel store in Minami Inari-cho, Taito Ward, Tokyo, December 1961. From the collection of the Shitamachi Museum of Taito Ward, Tokyo

A final point must be made.

Some of the photographs reflecting the past are abhorrent scenes or dark chapters in history from the perspective of today's values, such as Fig. 4.15 and Fig. 4.24 in this chapter. These are records of the past that we have been struggling

with, but at the same time, these issues are connected to various issues of the present. It is important to be conscious of how these photographs, as a source of knowledge, will be made available when considering the historical background of the SDGs.



**Fig. 4.34** School lunchtime at a public junior high school in Tokyo. The words “Atomic Energy Research Institute” are pasted on the back. 1965. Collection of Taito City, Tokyo

**Fig. 4.35** Construction of public housing by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government. Built on former military land, January 13, 1949. USASC photo. 111SC-317993. NARA





**Fig. 4.36** Ishikawajima shipyard damaged in the war. Toyosu, Tokyo, October 17, 1945. USASC photo. 111SC-215969 NARA

The sanctuary of archival records should be made available for any possible future activities and should not be modified or abolished due to contemporary values. Of course, they should not

be entirely destroyed, but they should not be circulated openly either. I would like to emphasize that these images must continue to be introduced with care.

**Fig. 4.37** Image from the same location where the photograph in Fig. 4.36 was taken. Toyosu, Tokyo. 2021 by Google Map



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## Website

The following website is a collection of photographs taken by researchers who were in Japan. You can view the photographs online and use them in your research. The Oliver L. Austin Photographic Collection at the Institute on World War II and the Human Experience at Florida State University. Oliver L. Austin() was an ornithologist. <https://austin.as.fsu.edu/>. (Accessed 04 Jan 2021)

John W. Bennett Collection, in the Rare Book Room, Thompson Library, Ohio State University, USA. John W. Bennett (1915–2005) was a sociologist. <https://library.osu.edu/site/japanese/2005/04/08/john-w-bennett-digital-collection/>. (Accessed 10 Jan 2022)

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