

Compilation / Catalog of Old Japanese Photographs from the US and UK Project



Outline of the project

Although many old Japanese photographs are preserved in museums, libraries, and archives around the world, they have never been brought together as a collection. In this research, we aim to create a catalog of the said Japanese photographs using an e-book format. This catalog will then be published on the website of the National Diet Library of Japan, free of charge. We also wish to develop an association that shares catalog information about old Japanese photographs and promotes the research on Japanese history and culture using these photographs.

Background of the project

Old photographs taken in Japan before WWII have been used as important historical and cultural material for research on Japanese folklore and history. Research about these old Japanese photographs was developed as a result of their increasing cultural significance. Originally, research on history and culture was based on physical material (e.g., artifacts). However, graphic material such as photographs and paintings have increasingly been used by researchers as well.

Graphic materials can effectively promote interest in Japanese history and culture to foreigners because they are exempt from any language barriers. Thus, old photographs have the potential to promote academic exchange on a global scale.

However, many old photographs in Japan were unfortunately destroyed due to war and natural disasters. On the bright side, they were unknowingly preserved in the US and the UK. These photographs were taken by high-class and wealthy people like as statesmen, diplomats, and traders; they are important because they illustrate the precious natural and urban landscape, which we can no longer see today.

This research project seeks to compile the unexplored old Japanese photographs preserved in major institutions in the USA and UK. The purpose of this project is to promote the development of catalog information about old Japanese photographs and contribute to the foundation of a stable environment to utilize this material.

Targets of our projects

We are looking for any old photographs that were taken in Japan(not include colonial area) before WWII.
We would gladly accept photos of non-Japanese people as long as these were taken in Japan.

○Main Target

Original prints (i.e., on photographic paper) that are either mounted or preserved in photo albums etc

Original prints on photographic paper

In photo albums

Other types(Stereo Photo for souvenir, etc)



Glass Negatives



○Sub Target

Photograph Book published before WWII

Postcards

