Douglas MacArthur's occupation of Japan| Building the foundation of U.S.-Japan relationship

Mieko Endo

The University of Montana

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation


This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.
Permission is granted by the author to reproduce this material in its entirety, provided that this material is used for scholarly purposes and is properly cited in published works and reports.

**Please check "Yes" or "No" and provide signature**

Yes, I grant permission

No, I do not grant permission

Author's Signature: Mike

Date: 5/19/06

Any copying for commercial purposes or financial gain may be undertaken only with the author's explicit consent.
DOUGLAS MACARTHUR'S OCCUPATION OF JAPAN:
BUILDING THE FOUNDATION OF U.S.–JAPAN RELATIONSHIP

by
Mieko Endo
B.A. University of the Sacred Heart, Japan, 2000
presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts
The University of Montana
May 2006

Approved by:

Chairperson

Dean, Graduate School

Date
Douglas MacArthur's Occupation of Japan: Building the Foundation of U.S.-Japan Relationship

Chairperson: Michael S. Mayer

The United States occupied Japan for seven years immediately after the World War II. Designated as the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, General Douglas MacArthur directed the occupation mission with absolute authority. The primary purpose of the occupation was to disarm Japan and to punish the war criminals so that Japan would never again be a menace to the Allied countries. However, through the research mainly from MacArthur Papers of the MacArthur Memorial, William Manchester's American Caesar, and Embracing Defeat by John Dower, it was found that the humanitarian activities of the American occupation troops and MacArthur's democratization programs saved the millions of Japanese people's lives. MacArthur's wisdom in taking Japanese people's sentiments into account in every decision he made also helped the occupation mission proceed smoothly and successfully.

Although the occupation began as a consequence of defeat in war, it helped to rebuild the nation from devastation. MacArthur reformed the economic structure to encourage the Japanese economy to be self-sufficient, gave food aid for the Japanese suffering from hunger, and liberated them from their slavery status in their feudalistic social system. One of MacArthur's great achievements was revising the Japanese constitution by adopting the American executive system and British parliamentary system. The new constitution liberated women and gave them equal status to men, liberated the education system, and renounced war. After sixty years, this constitution has never been amended.

Within a few years, Japanese economy rebounded, and industry grew rapidly in response to the Korean War. The occupation ended with the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1952, and the Allied countries gave Japan sovereignty. Even though the people of the two countries fought a brutal war in the Pacific, the United States and Japan established a strong tie during the seven years of occupation. Japan emerged from the occupation a strong ally of the United States. Thus, the relationship between the U.S. and Japan, which remains strong and influential, is the great legacy of Douglas MacArthur.
Introduction

Japan is one of the most advanced countries in the world—the second largest economy after the United States, measured on an exchange rate basis. It achieved remarkably rapid success after losing a war with devastating damage. However, one cannot forget the fact that the United States played a significant role in Japan's postwar recovery. It would not have been possible without the aid of the United States and General Douglas MacArthur's guidance during the seven years of occupation after the World War II.

Historians have credited MacArthur with the creation of a stable, democratic government in Japan, with rebuilding its economy, with the modernization of its society, with the liberation of its women, and with forging a close relationship between Japan and the United States that has lasted to this day. Based in research in *MacArthur Papers*, this thesis supports those general conclusions.

After Japan surrendered on August 15, 1945, the Allied countries, led by the United States, occupied Japan for nearly seven years—longer than the actual war between the U.S. and Japan—until the San Francisco Peace Treaty came into force on April 28, 1952. Immediately following the surrender of Japan, American President Harry Truman designated General Douglas MacArthur as the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP). In that capacity, MacArthur directed the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Tokyo and supervised the occupation programs in Japan. Besides the primary aim of demobilization, one of the biggest missions for MacArthur was to bring American democracy into a traditional, imperialistic country, in which people worshipped the Emperor as a living God. The current status of Japan in the

---

modern world is a legacy of MacArthur’s successful democratization, which includes forming the foundation of rapid economic growth and modernization of the constitution.

As the Supreme Commander, MacArthur had absolute authority over all Japanese, even the government and the Emperor. He effectively used his power not only to disarm the Imperial Army and punish the war criminals but also to help the Japanese to recover from the aftermath of the war—poverty, starvation and despair. Moreover, MacArthur supervised the writing of a new modern constitution, which controversially renounced war and the possession of any military capacity other than for self defense. Additionally, the new constitution granted women equal rights to men for the first time in Japanese history.

The two main accounts of MacArthur’s role in this transformation agree that the General had a free hand in formulating policy for the occupation. As Dobbins argues, MacArthur could largely ignore or maneuver around the supervisory commissions. Dower points out the U.S. tendency to focus on the occupation of Germany and the political situation in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe also left MacArthur with a freehand to make decisions. Indeed, on the day of Japanese surrender, President Truman declared that the authority of the Emperor and Japanese Government to rule the state will be subject to MacArthur as a Supreme Commander. He actually took over the initiative of drafting the constitution when he found out that the Japanese Government was incapable to propose revisions that he wanted.

---

5 William Manchester, American Caesar- Douglas MacArthur 1880-1964, New York,
Through all the reconstruction programs, the Japanese economy recovered and got stronger within a few decades, and Japan was remodeled to be one of the most loyal and supportive allies of the United States. Both Dower and Dobbins maintain that Japan's postwar growth was made possible by MacArthur's work during the occupation.\(^6\) That growth would never have happened if the United States had not supported the reconstruction of Japan after the war. Furthermore, the recovery would not have been so dramatic without MacArthur's drastic reforms. MacArthur's tactics enabled the occupation to succeed in a short period of time. Especially right after the barbarous, brutal war in the Pacific, in which people of the both sides hated each other, the success of the occupation of Japan was noteworthy. MacArthur's work made a significant contribution in changing the attitudes of both the Americans and the Japanese toward each other and accomplished to build a new relationship which still remains strong.

In addition to MacArthur's wisdom in conducting the mission, historians have noted several key conditions during the occupation of Japan that contributed to its success: the Japanese culture that emphasized obedience to a divine ruler; the desperate situation Japan found itself in immediately after the war; the practically sole occupation by the United States, and absolute authority of MacArthur, as well as his charismatic personality. All of them helped MacArthur make his mission successful. Also, MacArthur's efforts to rebuild Japan moved the policy makers in Washington to pay more attention to the situation in the Asia-Pacific region, which became one of the great national interests of the United States as the cold war developed.

Dower and Manchester have pointed to the significance of the unquestioned obedience of the Japanese people to a divine ruler. Dower notes that the GHQ

---

instructed their officials about the Japanese people that they were trained to play “follow-the-leader.” 7 MacArthur’s psychological-warfare adviser, Bonner Fellers argued that Emperor worship of the Japanese people was one of the significant aspects that the GHQ officials had to consider. 8 MacArthur also noted, in his reminiscences, that “This God-Emperor was absolute. His word was final.”9

Dower and Dobbins have noted that the devastation of Japan’s industrial base, the devastation of its cities, the scarcity of food, etc. provided MacArthur with favorable conditions to reconstruct Japanese society. Dobbins argues that the U.S. saved millions of the Japanese during the first stage of the postwar years. 10 Manchester noted that the sanitation campaign by a Public-Health section saved 2.1 million Japanese lives. 11 Without the humanitarian aid by the U.S., millions of Japanese people would have died in starvation. Japanese nationals expressed their appreciation by writing letters to MacArthur. 12 Through those activities in the initial stage of the occupation, MacArthur successfully made a favorable impression on the Japanese people and won their cooperation. That made the latter occupation go more smoothly and quickly.

Finally, MacArthur’s broad authority combined with his charismatic personality to make him an ideal figure to head the occupation. His own imperial bearing and style fit perfectly with the Japanese cultural tendency towards deference. Historians such as Dower and Manchester have noted this. Their observations are born out by the Japanese people’s practice of sending letters to MacArthur expressing

7 Dower, p.215.
8 Ibid., pp.283-284.
10 Dobbins, p.37.
11 Manchester, p.601.
their gratitude and respects for him that proved that the Japanese nationals were attracted by MacArthur’s graciousness and charisma.\textsuperscript{13}

MacArthur had spent much of his adult life in Asia, and he thought he knew Asians and, by extension, the Japanese. In fact, as Dower and Manchester have pointed out, MacArthur’s view of Asians was paternalistic and even racist. Dower notes that MacArthur said “Asia was culturally and politically backward.”\textsuperscript{14} Moreover, MacArthur knew Asia in general, and the Philippines in particular, a good deal better than Japan. At least initially, his understanding of Japan depended heavily on briefing papers prepared for him when he got ready to assume his position as commander of the occupation. Bonner Fellers, who wrote several of those papers, gave MacArthur “a fifteen-point mantra” that explained Japanese behavior patterns.\textsuperscript{15} MacArthur was a remarkably quick study, but his ability to absorb briefing papers did not provide him with an in-depth knowledge of Japan or its people. Further, while the \textit{MacArthur Papers} contain no instances of what, at least by the standards of the 1940s, might considered outright racism, they do reveal elements of paternalism and racial stereotyping typical of MacArthur’s time and background. As Dower has pointed out, to MacArthur, Japan was a backward country and the Japanese people needed to be civilized with the idea of democracy.\textsuperscript{16} In a speech he made when he returned to the U.S., MacArthur said the Japanese “would be like a boy of twelve,” and were in a tuitionary condition, compared to “the Anglo-Saxon, [who] was 45 years of age.”\textsuperscript{17} When this statement became public, it diminished the respect and gratitude the Japanese had for MacArthur.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[14] Dower, p.286.
\item[15] Ibid., pp.283-284.
\item[16] Ibid., p.213.
\item[17] U.S. Senate, \textit{Hearings before the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Foreign Relations, Military Situation in the Far East, May 1951}, Part I, esp. p.312.
\end{footnotes}
The seven years of occupation was a significant event for both Japan and the United States because it served as the origin of the foundation of the current U.S.-Japan relationship, which is very important in terms of security, economy, and technology. When Japan regained the sovereignty by signing the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1951, the United States and Japan also signed a Mutual Security Assistance Pact in which the two countries agreed to ensure continued U.S. access to the American bases in Japan in return for U.S. protection of Japan in the event Japan was attacked. This treaty has been a significant pillar of the U.S.-Japan relationship ever since, bonding the two countries together to maintain the security against threats in the Asia-Pacific region.\(^{18}\)

It is worthwhile to ponder MacArthur’s role in Japan because his legacy is still alive. For example, the Japanese have never amended the constitution that MacArthur imposed, though the interpretation of Article 9 has been frequently debated, and dissatisfaction among the Japanese with the American military presence throughout Japan has been growing. Although sixty years have passed since the end of the war and there are not very many survivors of that era alive any more, it is important now to reconsider what people experienced during and after the war, and what we have now because of the hard times they lived through. Thus, it is also a duty of those who survived to tell the story of this significant period to subsequent generations to help them understand the origins of what they have now and reconsider the importance of the U.S.-Japan relationship.

1. The Aims of the Occupation

After the devastation of two cities by atomic bombs, the Japanese Imperial Government finally agreed to surrender on August 10, 1945. Following Emperor Hirohito's acceptance of the surrender, the Allies officially launched an occupation program in Japan. The primary aim of the occupation was to disarm, demilitarize, and democratize Japan to insure that Japan would not again become a menace to the United States or a threat to the peace and security of the world. The United States Initial Post Surrender Policy for Japan stated their objectives:

The ultimate objectives of the United States in regard to Japan to which policies in the initial period must conform are to insure that Japan will not again become a menace to the United States or to the peace and security of the world, and to bring about the eventual establishment of a peaceful and responsible government which will respect the rights of other states and will support the objectives of the United States as reflected in the ideals and principles of the charter of the United Nations. The United States desires that this government should conform as closely as may be to principles of democratic self government but it is not the responsibility of the Allied Powers to impose upon Japan any form of government not supported by the freely expressed will of the people.19

President Harry Truman designated General Douglas MacArthur as the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers on August 14, 1945, with the approval of Clement Attlee of Britain, Joseph Stalin of the Soviet Union, and Chiang Kai-shek of China. President Truman directed MacArthur that:

"From the moment of surrender, the authority of the Emperor and Japanese Government to rule the state will be subject to you and you will take such steps as you deem proper to effectuate the surrender terms. You will exercise supreme command over all land, sea and air forces which may be allocated for enforcement in Japan of the surrender terms by the Allied

Powers concerned."\(^{20}\)

Thus, MacArthur gained absolute authority over Japan. Even the Emperor and the prime minister were subordinate to him, not to mention all Japanese citizens.

American officials made it clear that the Japanese were to take the initiatives in governmental matters with the supervision of the Allied Powers. Since they occupied Japan in order to build a democratic country, it was the official stance of the Allies to respect the will of the Japanese people, and let them lead their own recovery process. However, as soon as the Allies found out the existing political and economical structures had collapsed, MacArthur assumed authority over these areas.\(^{21}\)

As the Supreme Commander, MacArthur pursued a number of objectives of the occupation, including demilitarization, punishing war criminals, building the structure of representative government, modernizing the constitution, holding free elections, enfranchising women, releasing political prisoners, liberating the farmers, establishing a free labor movement, encouraging a free economy, abolishing police oppression, developing a free and responsible press, liberalizing education, decentralizing political power, and separating religion from the state.\(^{22}\) He intended to transform a small, feudalistic country in Asia, into a modern, democratic country.

Within only two months, MacArthur reported on the achievements of initial occupation objectives. Demobilization went unexpectedly smoothly and quickly because of the cooperation by the Japanese government and submissive Japanese nationals under the mandate of the Emperor to obey the occupation troops. In a radio address to the American people on October 15, 1945, MacArthur declared the


completion of the demobilization program. He proudly proclaimed that "Today, the Japanese Armed Forces throughout Japan completed their demobilization and ceased to exist as such. These forces are now completely abolished. I know of no demobilization in history, either in war or in peace, by our own or by any other country, that has been accomplished so rapidly or so frictionlessly. Everything military, naval or air is forbidden in Japan."\textsuperscript{23}

Thus, the most important, urgent aim of the occupation was accomplished surprisingly smoothly and quickly. All the democratization programs followed this in the next seven years.

2. The Structure of the Occupation

Administrative Structure  To accomplish the aims of the occupation, the final terms proclaimed at the Potsdam Declaration on July 26, 1945, the Allies—the United States, the United Kingdom, China, and the Soviet Union—agreed to a joint occupation of Japan, once it surrendered. However, because of its predominant role in the final stages of the war against Japan in the Pacific, the United States took the lead in the occupation of Japan. Immediately, the United States planned to call for 600,000 troops and anticipated that this would include 315,000 American, 135,000 British Commonwealth, 60,000 Chinese, and 175,000 Soviet troops, all under the U.S. command. Yet, these numbers were later revised, and neither the Soviets nor the Chinese ever contributed forces after all. So, in the end, only the countries of the British Commonwealth shared occupation responsibilities with the United States by providing with 45,000 troops.24

The United States agreed to form two international bodies for oversight of GHQ—the Far Eastern Commission (FEC) and the Allied Council for Japan (ACJ). Established in February of 1946, the FEC consisted of representatives from 11 countries that fought against Japan—Australia, Canada, China, France, India, Netherlands, New Zealand, Philippines, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Its role was to formulate policies to enable Japan to fulfill its surrender terms and to review MacArthur's directives and the actions of the occupation forces. In fact, even though designed as a supervisory body, the FEC had no effective power over making policy, because it was dominated by the United States, China, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union. Although the FEC had the power

to override MacArthur on the issue of constitutional revision and exercised some influence on the content of the final document, MacArthur could largely ignore or maneuver around the commission.  

Like the FEC, the ACJ was not an effective instrument. Composed of the United States, the United Kingdom, China, and the Soviet Union, the ACJ was established in April of 1946 to consult and advise GHQ. The ACJ could not function effectively because MacArthur, whose representative served as the ACJ’s chair, was not obligated to consult with it or accept its advice, and in fact chose not to do so. Thus, the occupation of Japan was actually conducted by the American officials. Furthermore, the attention of American policy makers in Washington D.C. tended to focus on the occupation of Germany and the political situation in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the postwar period. It thus left MacArthur with an unusually freehand to make decisions regarding the occupation of Japan. Ultimately, although it was seen as the “Allied occupation,” the United States effectively exercised unilateral control over all the occupation process. In other words, it was MacArthur’s occupation.

**How GHQ Functioned**

MacArthur created a headquarters that was responsible for nonmilitary matters, in particular the democratization of Japan. The headquarters initially had nine sections, including the Government Section, the Economic and Scientific Section, the Natural Resources Section, and the Civil Information and Education Section. These were established to be roughly parallel in structure to the Japanese cabinet, so they could make use of existent institution efficiently with the guidance of GHQ officials. The GHQ staffs were mostly

---

25 Dobbins, p.29.
26 Dower, p.79.
American civil servants and officers who converted to civilian status. At its peak in 1948, it employed nearly 3,500 people.

In August of 1945, MacArthur ordered the Japanese government to establish a liaison office to interact with GHQ. The Central Liaison Office was established in Tokyo and staffed by the Foreign Ministry of Japan. Liaison offices were also set up in each prefecture to serve local military government teams. The Central Liaison Office functioned as the primary channel for communication between the special staff sections of GHQ and the Japanese government so that the staff sections could communicate directly with the Japanese ministries and agencies they oversaw.\(^7\)

As for security, MacArthur initially estimated he would need between 200,000 and 600,000 troops in the first six months of occupation to disarm and patrol Japan. He ordered the occupation troops to arrive in Japan in two stages. Following the Supreme Commander’s landing on August 30, the main forces of the U.S. Eighth Army, led by General Robert Eichelberger, began coming ashore on September 1 and rapidly took up positions in the northern half of the country, from Nagoya to Hokkaido. On September 4, the Sixth Army began to arrive at the naval port of Sasebo and assumed positions at former Japanese military bases in the southern half of the country, led by General Walter Krueger. At the end of 1945, approximately 354,675 U.S. troops were stationed throughout Japan.\(^8\)

**Food and Public Health** Japan had been severely damaged by daily bombing raids by the Allies, and people suffered from hunger and material shortages, particularly housing. Food and supplies such as clothing and medicines from the United States saved millions of the Japanese during the first stage of the postwar

---

\(^7\) Dobbins, p.32.

\(^8\) U.S. War Department, Office of the Adjutant General, Machine Records Branch, Washington, D.C., December 1, 1945. in Dobbins’ *America’s Role in Nation-Building*. 12
The food shortage was exacerbated by the fact that Japan, which was overpopulated and had limited arable land, had largely depended on imported food. Japan used to import basic food like rice and sugar from Korea, Formosa (Taiwan), and China. Imports accounted for 31 percent of Japan's rice consumption, 92 percent of its sugar, 58 percent of its soy beans, and 45 percent of its salt. During the war, Japan squeezed food from the nations it occupied, especially from Korea. As a result, Korea suffered from starvation. The Japanese used Korea as a "bread basket" and Formosa as a "sugar bowl."

However, with the outbreak of the war against the Allies in the Pacific, Japanese lines of trade were blocked by the Allied countries, creating shortages of food and raw materials which were essential for fighting a war. The shortage of supplies was one of the main reasons for Japan's defeat. Possessed of a strong militaristic spirit, Japanese soldiers were still eager to fight to the end of their lives, but, physically, it was impossible for them to keep fighting any longer. Starvation became a major cause of death among Japanese soldiers. On the home front as well, the Japanese people suffered from malnutrition and starvation. Crime rates were noticeably higher in the first post surrender years than ever before, because of hunger and material shortages, people committed robbery and theft all over Japan. The yearly average for arrests counted 9,485 for robbery and 1,177,184 for theft in the period between 1946 and 1949.

In 1945, food supplies were severely limited worldwide, not only in Japan. The U.S. Air Force began dropping relief supplies of food, medicines, and clothing

---

29 Dobbins, p.37.
30 Dower, p.91.
over the camps that held Allied prisoners in Japan as early as August 25, even before the occupation troops started landing. However, feeding the Japanese, the former enemy, was a low priority for the Allies. The White House ordered MacArthur to limit Japanese food relief to what was needed to prevent a level of disease and unrest that could endanger the occupation forces and interfere with GHQ operations. Imports of fuel and medicines were also kept at subsistence levels. Opposing this order of the government, MacArthur insisted that Japan must get back on its feet, with the standard of living of 1926 to 1930—a peaceful, non-militaristic period in Japan. To avoid possible chaos and opposition to the occupation programs stemming from hunger and material shortages, the General asked the U.S. Government to give more money for the food relief or more forces. “Give me bread or give me bullets,” he demanded. His budget request of 1946-47 included $250 million for food, fertilizer, petroleum products, and medicines, and, indeed, he got it.

Occupation troops were forbidden to consume local food or supplies; they would eat only their own rations. The Japanese were surprised because they never thought the enemy would help them out; instead they thought the Allied troops would take away their food and scarce supplies just like their own troops did in countries the Japanese had occupied. MacArthur said, “The first step in the reformation of Japan would be an exhibition of generosity and compassion by the occupying power.” The attitude was evident on street corners, where children were soon playing and running around American soldiers who gave away chocolates and chewing gum from the jeeps. It did not take long for kids to learn a phrase of English “Give me chocolate!”

Besides providing food aid, MacArthur created a Public-Health section

---

34 Dobbins, p.37.
35 Manchester, p.524.
36 Dower, p.110.
headed by an army physician, Dr. Crawford Sams. Sams conducted a national sanitation campaign, followed by a massive immunization and vaccination program. At the end of the campaign, cholera had been wiped out; deaths from tuberculosis were down by 88 percent, from diphtheria by 86 percent, from dysentery by 86 percent, and from typhoid by 90 percent. In the first years of the occupation, Sams estimated, the control of communicable diseases alone had saved 2.1 million Japanese lives—more than the country’s battle deaths during the war, and over three times the number of Japanese civilians killed in the wartime bombings including Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Thanks to the nation-wide sanitation campaign, the life expectancy of Japanese men increased by eight years and of women by nearly fourteen years. The Public-Health section also instructed schools to teach proper dietary principles and served pupils balanced meals.\(^37\)

In addition to the aid from the occupation troops, Japan received huge amount of financial help from the United States Government. This included $1.6 billion of aid from Government Appropriation for Relief In Occupied Area (GARIOA), which provided civilians of the occupied countries with financial aid by the U.S. Ministry of Army for the use of medicine and food; $200 million from Economic Rehabilitation in Occupied Area (EROA) which was to help them obtain raw materials such as coal or mine, in order to support economic and industrial rehabilitation of the occupied countries.\(^38\) Japanese residents in the United States also sent food gifts to Japan through Licensed Agencies for Relief of Asia (LARA). The food aid from the U.S. saved more than 11 million Japanese from malnutrition and possible starvation during the hardest time of the postwar.\(^39\)

\(^{37}\) Manchester, p.601.
\(^{39}\) MacArthur Papers, SCAP, Food Report, 1946, RG-25, Reel #960.
Through this humanitarian assistance, MacArthur won appreciation of the Japanese people and gave them a highly favorable initial impression of the occupation forces. The occupation started effectively through this humanitarian work and helped subsequent democratization programs proceed smoothly.
3. Japanese Reaction after the War

Towards the Surrender

The people of Japan were filled with mixed feelings of grief, despair, and disillusionment at the nation's defeat. Some had anger against the militaristic leaders for losing the war and others against themselves for failing in the war effort. In addition, some had a feeling of intense sympathy for the Emperor Hirohito.  

Not until the beginning of Tokyo Tribunal did most of the Japanese people know anything about the barbarous atrocities conducted by Japanese soldiers in areas they conquered, such as the Philippines and China. When they heard the detailed report of the truth for the first time at the opening of the trial, Japanese people were shocked. Then, intellectuals began criticizing the militaristic leaders and government officials for oppressing the people with nationalistic propaganda. Intellectuals also began blaming themselves for being too weak and blind to authority. They argued that the Japanese public lacked the courage to oppose or fight against oppression, and that the majority of Japanese, deceived by the militaristic leaders, had to bear responsibility for “having been stupid.” They also blamed themselves, arguing that “the leaders alone could not have fought such a large-scale war; we were manipulated, and went along into a wrongful war of aggression, and invited miserable defeat. The crime is not that of the leaders alone, but rather all of us must bear responsibility.”

The Japanese press also felt ashamed for failing to disclose the nation’s barbarism abroad. A column of a newspaper noted that “It is shameful that not one line of truth was reported in the papers.” The Imperial Government controlled media coverage and suppressed the expression of political thought against the

---

41 Dower, p.505.
government. The people were made to believe that the war was for the Emperor and preservation of their holy country. Thus, they knew nothing about what was really going on, did not know what they were fighting for, and remained ignorant of what the war was like. They were even told that Japan was winning until shortly before its surrender. Therefore, Japanese citizens experienced profound shock at the news of their country’s surrender.\(^{43}\)

**From Fear to Trust** Initially, Japanese people were afraid to have the occupation troops come to their land. As the nationals of a defeated country, they had no choice but to obey the new authority of the Allied officials, but they were afraid. Various rumors and gossip circulated about the occupation, such as “American soldiers would loot Japan,” “Americans would rob Japan of all the food,” “Women and girls would be violated,” “All men would be killed,” “What was left of Tokyo would be devastated.”\(^{44}\)

However, being submissive to authority by nature, Japanese public welcomed the occupation troops by saluting and bowing at their arrival, which surprised the conquerors. Although women and children ran into hiding, there was no sign of civil disturbance or resistance against the occupation troops. MacArthur recalled that on the day GHQ moved from Yokohama to their new headquarters “Dai Ichi Building” in Tokyo, the convoy seemed more like a triumphant parade of troops returning home to receive the victor’s plaudits. The Japanese along the road waved, shouted, bowed, and saluted.\(^{45}\)

While they were interacting with the occupation troops, the Japanese public gradually became to trust and appreciate their activities in Japan. Contrary to the prior

\(^{43}\) Dower, p.505.
\(^{44}\) *Tokyo Yomiuri, Tokyo Shimbun*, August 19, 1945
rumors and gossip, the unexpected friendliness, kindness, and generosity of American soldiers impressed the Japanese population. The Japanese especially appreciated MacArthur’s order at the beginning of the occupation that the Imperial palace, temples, shrines, and historical art objects were off limits to the occupation troops. Initially, the U.S. planned to use the bodies of the Japanese war criminals for post mortem brain research by the U.S. Army to investigate the correlation of pathological or abnormal behavior with certain disease states or processes. But MacArthur also countermanded it, insisting that using “the similar methods by the Germans,” would unquestionably shock public opinion not only in Japan, but also back home.

Considering the psychology of Japanese people, MacArthur insisted at every occasion that the occupation troops should learn from the Japanese as well as teach them. He considered the occupation troops as “ambassadors of good will.” He later recalled this approach “had a great deal to do with restoring a sense of dignity and purpose in Japanese people, and as they regained self-respect and pride, they approached an exchange of ideas with avidity and good will. This mutual respect became the foundation of the basic esteem our two peoples came to have for one another—and enabled the occupation to write a unique and warmly human chapter of world history.” That attitude of the General and his troops appealed to the “face saving” tradition of the Japanese. Even though Japan was initially a very foreign country to MacArthur, he had a strong belief in the people of Japan and felt that if American troops treated them with respect, they would respond with respect and trust

---

47 MacArthur Papers, radiogram dated March 10, 1946, RG-9, Reel#324, radiogram between Commander in Chief, United States Air Forces, Pacific (CINCPAC) and U.S. Army.
48 Ibid., March 14, 1946.
49 MacArthur, Reminiscences, p.283.
and obey the occupation authorities. With his analysis supported by his advisers such as Bonner Fellers, who specialized in Japanese people's psychology, MacArthur ordered his troops to treat the Japanese with respect, even though they were former enemies. The old authoritarian background of the Japanese contrasted with the free, liberal philosophy of the American forces. Adjustments had to be made and sometimes led to misunderstanding and confusion. However, because of the eagerness of the Japanese to adapt themselves to occidental methods and recover during the war's aftermath, MacArthur later noted that "the adjustment proved far less difficult than had been anticipated."\(^{51}\)

MacArthur's effective attempts to respond to the Japanese psychic, with useful suggestions by Fellers, helped to sustain mutual respect and trust between the Japanese and the occupation forces after the onset of the occupation. On the third anniversary of the end of the war, Prime Minister Hitoshi Ashida declared that Japanese people saw hope in the future of their country and expressed gratitude to the occupation work. "While our living is not by any means easy, it is steadily improving... This situation has been made possible by the combined efforts of all the Japanese people. At the same time, we must never forget the thorough and painstaking guidance and colossal material aid of the Allied powers."\(^{52}\)

The other reason Japanese nationals received the victors submissively was they were ordered to do so by the Emperor. His word was absolute for Japanese citizens, "his loyal subjects." Long imbued with a belief he was divine, they loyally obeyed the Emperor's directions that the Japanese people must obey the terms of surrender and must work toward regaining the trust and faith of the world by

\(^{51}\) Ibid., p.49.
\(^{52}\) Ibid., p.22.
"enduring the unendurable, bearing the unbearable."

The Emperor's admonition was part of an imperial rescript issued on the day of surrender, August 15, 1945. It was broadcast nationwide by radio, and the Japanese citizens heard him speak for the first time.

To our good and loyal subjects,

......We have ordered Our Government to communicate to the Governments of the United States, Great Britain, China and the Soviet Union that Our Empire accepts the provisions of their Joint Declaration.

......But now the war has lasted for nearly four years. Despite the best that has been done by everyone...the war situation has developed not necessarily to Japan's advantage, while the general trends of the world have all turned against her interest.

......The hardships and sufferings to which Our nation is to be subjected hereafter will be certainly great. We are keenly aware of the inmost feelings of all of you, Our subjects. However, it is according to the dictates of time and fate that WE have resolved to pave the way for a grand peace for all the generations to come by enduring the unendurable and suffering what is unsufferable [sic].

Having been able to safeguard and maintain the structure of the Imperial State, We are always with you, Our good and loyal subjects, relying upon your sincerity and integrity.

Beware most strictly of any outbursts of emotion which may engender needless complications, or any fraternal contention and strife which may create confusion, lead you astray and cause you to lose the confidence of the world.

Let the entire nation continue as one family from generation to generation, ever firm in its faith in the imperishability of its sacred land, and mindful of its heavy burden of responsibility and of the long road before it.

Unite your total strength, to be devoted to construction for the future. Cultivate the ways of rectitude, foster nobility of spirit, and work with resolution--so that you may enhance the innate glory of the Imperial State

53 Japanese Imperial Rescript, August 15, 1945, G-2 Historical Section, GHQ, FEC.
and keep pace with the progress of the world.\textsuperscript{55}

Hirohito called for calmness, self-discipline, and assistance to the families of soldiers as well as others who suffered as a result of the war.\textsuperscript{56} Despite the shock and despair that accompanied learning of the nation’s defeat, Japanese people accepted the fact without riots or disorder, and obeyed the directives of the Emperor to obey the new ruler.

As the trust in MacArthur and his troops deepened, Japanese people began to admire them as saviors. They said the GHQ liberated them from death, and the occupation was a relief from despair and exhaustion. The food shipments from the Americans were, for them, like “merciful rain during a drought.”\textsuperscript{57} Many of Japanese nationals wrote letters to MacArthur at the GHQ to express their feelings of gratitude and respect.\textsuperscript{58} Prime ministers showed their gratitudes on every anniversary of the day the war ended. The Liberal Party made a statement on August 15, 1946 expressing the appreciation toward the Allied powers “for their generous relief measures extended in the present food crisis.”\textsuperscript{59} Thus, Japanese people became to think that the Supreme Commander was admirable, and so was democracy.

\textbf{MacArthur Fever} MacArthur received respect from the Japanese people like that accorded to the Emperor. Because the Emperor had been considered divine, the citizens were not even allowed to look at him. They had never heard him speak until they heard the surrender announcement over the radio on August 15. On the other hand, people could actually see MacArthur and listen to him speak on a regular basis.

\textsuperscript{55} Imperial Rescript on Surrender, August 15, 1945. http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Imperial_Rescript_on_Surrender
\textsuperscript{57} Dower, p.93.
\textsuperscript{59} MacArthur Papers, Reel #24, a governmental news item, “Japanese Press.”
He was for real. In fact, during the occupation period, MacArthur was the most popular man in Japan. His strong image and absolute authority appealed to a Japanese people in despair. They wanted a new, strong leader to rely on and to follow. People even joked that if a man was dominated by a strong-minded wife, his neighbor would say "Too bad, she's a MacArthur." MacArthur attracted Japanese people with his "electrifying presence." To the Japanese, he was handsome, tall, bold, confident, and he had personal aura and charisma. Some of Christian Japanese, after Hirohito renounced his divinity, looked to MacArthur as the "second Jesus Christ." There were even rumors that he had royal blood, that he was descended from Japanese ancestors, and that he had a Nisei daughter. Some East Asian specialists were afraid his monocracy might undermine the concept of democratization and self-rule, but others believed that the General's "imperious aloofness and lordly graciousness" established the prestige of the occupation. In truth, his personal characteristics fit perfectly with what the Japanese wanted in a leader.

Letters to the GHQ

One measure of the success of the occupation was the flood of letters and gifts the Japanese people sent the General and his staff of the GHQ to show their gratitude. About 500,000 letters were counted in the seven years of the occupation period. A section called Allied Translator and Interpreter Service (ATIS) took charge of translating letters written in Japanese, and they analyzed, and classified them. The cover of the ATIS file stated that:

The advent of the Allied Occupation of Japan in August 1945 offered the Japanese people the new freedom of thought and expression of opinion without fear of governmental retaliation. This new freedom was manifested in vast volumes of letters from the people to SCAP. The analysis contains an

60 Manchester, p.556.
61 Sodei, p.5.
62 Manchester, p.556.
accurate insight on current political, economic and sociological opinions of the Japanese people.\textsuperscript{63}

The ATIS forwarded letters directly to MacArthur and, according to occupation veterans who served in the ATIS, MacArthur read every letter that was addressed to him personally, and every writer who enclosed the address received a reply.\textsuperscript{64}

Most of the letters showed their support for the policies of the occupation and gratitude for benevolent work of the occupation forces in Japan. Some complained that the police were too weak, corrupt and discourteous and asked for improvement. Others asked for the early conclusion of a peace treaty, arguing that if the Allies stayed too long, Japan would become too dependent on the United States. But at the same time, there were those who were afraid of losing MacArthur’s guidance. One writer, fearing the expansion of communism, requested that the Occupation Forces remain in Japan after the signing of the peace treaty until Japan became able to take care of itself. Many requested permission to emigrate to the United States “the land of freedom and individual rights.” Surprisingly, some even asked the General to annex Japan or turn it into a permanent colony of the United States.\textsuperscript{65}

In addition to letters, people sent numerous gifts to the GHQ. The Americans were surprised by the Japanese traditional practice of gift giving. In spite of losing their possessions during the war, there was no end to the number of people sending gifts of thanks to MacArthur and his staffs. They received kimonos, sashes, dolls, bonsai, armor, and swords. At harvest times, vegetables, fruits, flowers, and rice were sent from all over Japan.\textsuperscript{66}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\item MacArthur Papers, \textit{ATIS: Letters to SCAP}, RG-5, Reel #116.
\item Sodei, p.9; Manchester, p.557.
\item \textit{Ibid.}, anonymous letters
\item \textit{Ibid.}, p.123.
\end{thebibliography}
MacArthur recognized that he gained understanding and support by the Japanese by receiving this flood of gifts and letters of appreciation from them. That practice by Japanese nationals satisfied him proving that the occupation was proceeding smoothly and satisfactorily for both the Allies and the Japanese. He concluded that the first period of the occupation went so smoothly because of the good cooperation of both the population and the officials of Japan. The Japanese reaction to the initial occupation was so favorable that MacArthur issued an official report in September 1945 in which he estimated the total occupation force could be cut to 200,000 men by July 1, 1946.\(^6^7\) The ATIS file also analyzed their accomplishment from the letters and concluded with satisfaction that:

The press has been unshackled, the man on the street is not afraid to speak his mind, the government is breaking away from the old traditions, a new philosophy of education is developing, political status of Japanese subjects has been broadened, and the principles of democracy are beginning to make themselves felt throughout the land.\(^6^8\)

Oppressed by the authorities, nobody in Japan had expressed their opinion towards policy makers by writing letters directly before the end of the war. By writing to MacArthur to convey their thoughts or gratitude, they began practicing the principles of democracy.

In sum, treated by the occupation troops with an unexpected generosity, the Japanese responded and cooperated with them submissively. Because of MacArthur and his advisers’ wisdom in taking Japanese public opinion and psychology into account when they made decisions, Japanese nationals found them favorable and reliable. The Japanese obeyed the occupation authorities without causing major opposition against them. Thus, the first period of the occupation went smoothly.


4. Preserving the Emperor

Most of the people of the Allied countries wanted to punish Emperor Hirohito as a war criminal. Many people on the Allied side also expected to abolish the imperial system itself, arguing that it was too old-fashioned in the modern world and that Shintoism, in which people worshiped the emperor as a living God, was the cause of their militarism that led them fanatically into the war. Nevertheless, MacArthur preserved the system, believing that retaining the emperor, at least during the initial stages of the occupation, would be a low-cost, low-risk method of providing a vital transition for the Japanese. This judgment must have been a key of MacArthur's success in the occupation of Japan.

MacArthur understood that the Japanese people had always needed a spiritual ruler to worship and hold on to. He predicted it would have brought anarchy, chaos, and guerrilla warfare if they had abolished the Emperor, especially in time of such crisis. MacArthur wanted to avoid that, because it would require a larger contingent of occupation forces to maintain order. Actually, Hirohito was of great use to the occupation forces. MacArthur wisely concluded that if the Emperor ordered his subjects to obey the occupation forces, they would obey. MacArthur preserved the Emperor and the government machinery, because he and his staffs judged that utilizing the existent authority was the most effective and easiest way to rebuild Japan—at least for the first few years. Thus, the occupation plan was predicated upon the ability of the Emperor to maintain psychological control over his people and any potentially rebellious elements.

Preserving the Emperor and the imperial institution were also of utmost importance to the Japanese leadership. The initial reply of the Japanese government to

---

the Potsdam Conference, communicated to the Allies through the Swiss, made acceptance of surrender conditional on a guarantee of the Emperor’s continued rule. Specifically, the Japanese government said they were ready to accept the terms declared at Potsdam “with the understanding that the said declaration does not comprise any demand which prejudices the prerogatives of His Majesty as a Sovereign Ruler.” However, they were refused by U.S. Secretary of State James F. Byrnes. He responded by noting that the surrender would be unconditional and that both the Emperor and the Japanese government would be subject to MacArthur upon surrender.

American Public’s Sentiment against Hirohito Contrary to MacArthur’s decision, 77 percent of Americans wanted the Emperor to be severely punished according to an opinion poll conducted 6 weeks before the Japanese surrender. Because of the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese and the ferocity of the war in the Pacific, there was strong anti-Japanese sentiment among the American public, and most of it was directed at Emperor Hirohito, in whose name Japan fought. The Stars and Stripes described him as “a toothy, bandy-legged, thin-chested and bespectacled little man who liked coffee, bacon, and eggs for breakfast. He wrote sorry poetry and he studied biology with a Western-made microscope, but to 70 million Japanese he was Mr. God in person.” MacArthur’s biographer, William Manchester, also described how Emperor Hirohito looked to Western observers:

Hirohito was a very ordinary man, a short, absentminded, forty-four-year-old father of six children who had inherited his father’s position nineteen years earlier and had been struggling ever since to make a

---

72 DOS, pp.57-58.
success of it. His appearance was anything but imperial. On the streets of New York or London he wouldn't have attracted a second glance. He was shy and round-shouldered, with a Chaplinesque profile and a weak, receding chin. His coordination was so shaky that he always seemed about to tumble over. His mustache was straggly, his face covered with moles, his spectacle lenses so thick that his eyes looked as though they had been put in by a taxidermist. Around the house he wore shabby clothes and scuffed shoes. Often he needed a shave: frequently he forgot to fasten his trousers. As a youth he had toured Europe, where he had been introduced to jazz, whisky, and golf, all of which he still enjoyed. His only known passion, however, was marine biology. He had published several scholarly, if dull, books on marine life, and he loved to disappear into his modest home laboratory for an afternoon with his microscope and his slides. He probably preferred fish to people.\textsuperscript{75}

These were the general impressions of the Japanese Emperor in the Allied countries. The former ambassador to Japan, Joseph Grew, believed that there was no way the Emperor could avoid responsibility for having signed the declaration of war. Within the U.S. government, the postwar status of the Emperor and the imperial institution were the focus of particularly intense debates before Japan's surrender.\textsuperscript{76}

\textbf{Reading the Psychology of the Japanese} MacArthur did not need advisers around him to make decisions, but Brigadier General Bonner F. Fellers was exceptional. Fellers was MacArthur's military secretary and chief of psychological-warfare operations. He advised MacArthur on affairs related to the Emperor and Japanese psychology. Fellers had researched "The Psychology of the Japanese Soldier" when he was attending the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth as an army captain from 1934 to 1935. Through his study, he predicted that the Japanese would adopt the suicidal "kamikaze" tactics once the war situation got severe. His report "Answer to Japan," a revised version of his psychological study of the Japanese, was used as an orientation guide for the Allied

\textsuperscript{75} Manchester, p.532.
\textsuperscript{76} Dobbins, p.38.
intelligence personnel. He concluded the report that:

Years of blood baths may possibly be avoided if we understand clearly our enemy and handle him intelligently. After Japan is totally defeated, American justice must be the way and light. An independent Japanese army responsible only to the Emperor is a permanent menace to peace. But the mystic hold the Emperor has on his people and the spiritual strength of the Shinto faith properly directed need not be dangerous. The Emperor can be made a force for good and peace provided Japan is totally defeated and the military clique destroyed. The Government must have a system of checks and balances. The Emperor must be surrounded by liberal civilian leaders. The military must be limited to an internal police force, responsible to civil authority... Once the Tokyo gangster militarists are dead, once the armed forces are destroyed and a liberal government formed under the Emperor, the Japanese people—sadder, fewer, and wiser—can begin the reorientation of their lives.

Fellers sent a second memorandum directly to MacArthur on October 2, 1945. The emperor worship of the Japanese people was totally foreign and hard to understand for people from any Christian country, and that included MacArthur. Fellers studied the sentiment of the Japanese public toward the Emperor in depth, and tried to convince MacArthur to keep the Emperor.

Memorandum To The Commander-In-Chief:

The attitude of the Japanese toward their Emperor is not generally understood. Unlike Christians, the Japanese have no God with whom to commune. Their Emperor is the living symbol of the race in whom lies the virtues of their ancestors. He is the incarnation of national spirit, incapable of wrong or misdeeds. Loyalty to him is absolute. Although no one fears him, all hold their Emperor in reverential awe. They would not touch him, look into his face, address him, step on his shadow. Their abject homage to him amounts to a self abnegation sustained by a religious patriotism the depth of which is incomprehensible to Westerners.

To try him as a war criminal would not only be blasphemous but a denial of spiritual freedom.

77 Dower, p.280.
78 Bonner Fellers, Answer to Japan, Bonner F. Fellers papers, Hoover Institution of War and Peace, Stanford University, box 1. pp.22-23. in Dower, pp.280-286.
The Imperial War Rescript, 8 December 1941, was the inescapable responsibility of the Emperor who, as the head of a then sovereign state, possessed the legal right to issue it. From the highest and most reliable sources, it can be established that the war did not stem from the Emperor himself. He has personally said that he had no intention to have the War Rescript used as Tojo used it.

The masses are especially devoted to Hirohito. They feel that his addressing the people personally make him unprecedently close to them. His rescript demanding peace filled them with joy.

By his order seven million soldiers laid down their arms and are being rapidly demobilized. Through his act hundreds of thousands of American casualties were avoided and the war terminated far ahead of schedule. Therefore having made good use of the Emperor, to try him for war crimes, to the Japanese, would amount to a breach of faith. Moreover, the Japanese feel that unconditional surrender as outlined in the Potsdam Declaration meant preservation of the State structure, which includes the Emperor.

If the Emperor were tried for war crimes the governmental structure would collapse and a general uprising would be inevitable. The people will uncomplainingly stand any other humiliation. Although they are disarmed, there would be chaos and bloodshed.

American long range interests require friendly relations with the Orient based on mutual respect, faith and understanding. In the long run it is of paramount, national importance that Japan harbor no lasting resentment.79

Thus, despite the general hatred against Hirohito, MacArthur stuck to his and Fellers' belief and enforced his policy of retaining the Emperor as a symbolic head of the state.

Criticism against MacArthur's "Soft Policy" MacArthur's decision was criticized by Americans and other Allied countries, which said his occupation policy was too soft. As noted, MacArthur's goal was not to provoke the enemy by attacking the Emperor. However, to most Westerners, Christians in particular, the notion of emperor worship was incomprehensible. To speak of the emperor as the Son of

79 MacArthur Papers, Memorandum to the Commander in Chief from Bonner F. Fellers, October 2, 1945. RG-5, Reel# 23.
Heaven, as he was commonly termed in English, seemed close to equating him with Christ, the Son of God. American observers did not want to accept this notion and devoted a great deal of attention to this issue. To counter such views and gain support for his occupation policy, MacArthur had to make sure that the Japanese officials would separate Shintoism and the state strictly, and launch a campaign to change the Emperor’s public image.

The General also worked hard to change the public image of the Emperor into a democrat and peacemaker who had been duped by the militarist leaders into waging a war he had not desired. MacArthur always mentioned his gratitude toward Hirohito for cooperating with the occupation forces at every occasion. MacArthur maintained that “the smooth occupation was really due to the Emperor’s leadership.” His appreciation for Hirohito was widely reported in the Western press. In an interview with the president of the United Press on September 21, 1945, MacArthur said “this bloodless occupation would have been impossible without the retention of the Emperor for surrender purposes and declared the maintenance of the Emperor during disarmament resulted in “untold saving of American lives, money and time.”

**Becoming a Human** Although the Emperor remained on the throne, MacArthur assumed the sovereign authority to rule the state, in accordance with the Potsdam Declaration. Then, on the first New Year’s Day after the war ended, Hirohito issued a statement, known as “declaration of humanity,” renouncing his divinity. It was the first formal address to his subjects since August 15, the day of surrender. Revising his constitutional status drastically and becoming a human, Hirohito managed to satisfy many of his foreign critics that he no longer claimed divinity. Following that

---

80 Dower, p.295.
announcement, he began touring the country. He visited almost every prefecture in order to boost morale and support the objectives of the occupation. Dressed in a Western suit, the Emperor walked toward and talked to the people for the first time in Japanese history. He was no longer a living God, he had become a human. This dramatic change had a great impact not only on the Japanese but also on foreigners, proving that the status of the emperor had really changed.

**Emperor and the War**  
The Allies never seriously investigated the responsibility of the Emperor for the war. However, *Reports of General MacArthur* filed an unpublished manuscript by Marquis Yasumasa Matsudaira, *The Japanese Emperor and The War*, in which he emphasized Hirohito's pacifism and lack of responsibility for the war. It was written in December 1949 in response to a request from the G-2 Historical Section of the GHQ. The GHQ intended to encourage better understanding about the Japanese emperor among Westerners by crediting the important role played by Hirohito in the termination of the Pacific War and his influence in bringing hostilities to an end.

Matsudaira was one of the Emperor's trusted advisors and wrote that the Emperor was a pacifist, that he tried to prevent the war but could do nothing, and that he tried to end the war as soon as possible for the sake of his nation and mankind. Matsudaira also revealed that there was a wide divergence of views between the Cabinet and the military. Military leaders, led by War Minister Hideki Tojo, were firm believers in "total war," which would be fought not by soldiers alone but by gearing up the national economy, politics, and public opinion. Oppressed by the military leaders who were eager to go to war for the nation's imperialistic expansion, he said,

---

civilian officials in the Cabinet were too weak and powerless to oppose them; the Imperial conference of December 1, 1941 attended by all ministers of state as well as the Chiefs of the Army and Navy commands unanimously decided on war.\footnote{Matsudaira expanded on two major reasons}

Matsudaira described the first part (1926-1936) of the Showa Era, the period when Hirohito was in throne, as representing a great change in Japanese thought and in the economy. The economic depression after the World War I heavily impacted the lives of Japanese people and engendered extremist movements both to the right and to the left. It was, Matsudaira analyzed, an era of political instability when the military clique raised its head and Japanese foreign policy took on a markedly aggressive character.

Matsudaira also noted that the position of the emperor in the Japanese governmental scheme had no right to deny the decisions made in the Cabinet; all he could do was to sign the final form and take all responsibility for the outcome. “The King reigns but does not rule.” This English proverb, Matsudaira wrote, was literally translated into action by Hirohito.\footnote{From Meiji Era, it had been an unwritten law that the Emperor would approve any decision of the Government, never would he veto it. Despite the experience of Japanese expansionism, Matsudaira saw this practice as the most appropriate means of safeguarding monarchy from falling into dictatorship and fitting it into the system of a constitutional government. The principle under the old constitution that the Emperor shall always rely on the advice and assistance of his ministers in all matters of state, had established a rule that the Emperor was not to exercise the veto as an Imperial prerogative.}

\begin{itemize}
\item Ibid., p.771.
\item Ibid., p.768.
\end{itemize}
why Hirohito could not prevent the war. First, the military—especially the Army—was extremely high-handed and intractable, and ignored the wishes of the Emperor. Second, the Government and the Diet, and public opinion itself were all powerless before the military because of their aggressiveness toward the war and the public education encouraging to back their points of view. Japan was a deeply militarized society, and the discipline of small boys was Spartan, with the object of turning them into tough soldiers. The Emperor’s role was to sign the final form and be responsible for the decision: an unwritten law made the Emperor approve any decision of the Government, he would never veto it, even though he was determined to prevent the war from the beginning to the end.

Matsudaira also noted that the Emperor was pessimistic about the course of the war, seeing no hope of victory over the highly mechanized Allied forces, at the same time he was sympathetic for the war dead and their families. Thus, the Emperor thought the war should be stopped, and he favored a diplomatic solution with acceptable conditions to end the war before the Soviet Union could join the war in the Pacific. Ultimately, things did not go the way the Emperor wanted, and he could not announce the acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration until his country was attacked by two devastating atomic bombs. Finally, Hirohito could approve the surrender, saying that “I cannot bear to see my innocent people suffer any longer. Ending the war is the only way to restore world peace and to relieve the nation from the terrible distress with which it is burdened.”

GHQ officials asked Matsudaira to prepare this manuscript to add as an appendix of Reports of General MacArthur because it served their intention of raising

---

86 Iriye, p.284.
88 Manchester, p.533.
Americans' understanding of MacArthur's decision to retain the Emperor by explaining Japan's political circumstances and promoting Hirohito's positive traits and behavior. Also, Matsudaira's description of the collapsed Japanese political system helped to prove that GHQ needed to transform the Japanese Imperial Government into democratic political institution as one of the work of democratization. The occupation officials determined to reform the structure of the Japanese political system into a democratic one in which checks and balances would function and to resituate the Emperor as the center of their new democracy.

**Japanese People's Concerns for the Emperor**

Most of the Japanese favored and appreciated MacArthur's decision not to punish the Emperor. Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida praised MacArthur as the "great benefactor" of Japan, referring to his preservation of the throne and protection of the Emperor in a time of unprecedented events. The Liberal Party of Japan made a statement on the first anniversary of the end of the war, expressing their gratitude toward the Allied powers, especially to General MacArthur's headquarters, for understanding the Japanese people's need to continue the imperial system, as well as for their generous relief measures extended in the serious food crises.

A majority of the Japanese public in fact favored the preservation of the Emperor and the imperial system. Public opinion polls conducted on December 9, 1945 revealed that 95 percent of the Japanese favored preserving the imperial system. Reflecting this sentiment, many Japanese people sent letters to GHQ to appeal MacArthur for clemency for the emperor and the maintenance of the imperial system.

---

89 Dower, p.279.
91 *Yomiuri Hochi Shim bun*, December 9, 1945
system. The National Archives in Washington D.C. holds collection of some of the important documents and correspondence during the occupation. Among them are 164 letters expressing concerns about the Emperor. A majority of the letters were sent to GHQ between November 1945 and January 1946. GHQ received a great many letters after Emperor Hirohito visited MacArthur at the American embassy in Tokyo on September 27, 1945, asking that the Emperor be saved from punishment as a war criminal. The Japanese people were shocked to see the picture of MacArthur and Hirohito in newspapers. MacArthur was dressed casually with his hands on his waist; the Emperor dressed formally and stood next to General, dwarfed by the larger American. For some people, this photo finally triggered a recognition that Japan had lost the war. The picture made it obvious that the General was the new ruler and the Emperor was the head of the defeated country. Thereafter, the Japanese people had some kind of sympathy for the humbled Hirohito, who now had to call on MacArthur. To the Japanese, it was inconceivable before that the Emperor would visit someone, he had to be visited. Even the tour around the country after his declaration of humanity made the nationals feel sympathetic for Hirohito.

Reflecting this sympathy, most of the Japanese people hoped that Hirohito would not be punished at the Tokyo trial. Some of the letters expressed the fact that, for the Japanese, Hirohito was a parent, the object of their faith, and if something happened to him, the people would lose their purpose of living. They begged in the letters, "Please, General MacArthur, I ask you again and again, do not put the emperor on trial." In extreme cases, they wrote petitions with their blood. These letters made MacArthur aware of the extreme nationalism that might be unleashed if he punished

---

92 Sodei, p.64.
93 Ibid., p.65.
94 Ibid., pp.69-73.
the Emperor. MacArthur had already decided to retain the Emperor before he met Hirohito, but, surely, those letters from the Japanese helped him and his staff better recognize the people's desire to preserve the Emperor.95

Again, retaining the Emperor was one of the factors that made the occupation of Japan successful. MacArthur analyzed the status of the emperor for the people of Japan as well as their psychological patterns. And he made a great use of the Emperor. MacArthur could govern the Japanese effectively with the support of the Emperor, instead of causing the chaos and bloodshed by punishing him. The Japanese people obeyed the occupation troops submissively because the Emperor ordered them to do so. Thus, the occupation mission went smoothly. MacArthur and his adviser wisely predicted it.

95 Manchester, p.577.
5. Americans’ View of Japan

Sentiment Against the Japanese  To gain the support and understanding from Americans toward the occupation mission of democratizing Japan, MacArthur had to change the propagandistic view that persisted in American people’s mind not only about the Emperor but about Japan as a whole. Ever since the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, newspapers had kept reporting the brutal battles and fanatic fighting style of Japanese soldiers such as “kamikaze pilots” and “hara-kiri” by Japanese POWs. The American people were told that all Japanese were treacherous, brutal, children, apes, sadistic, fanatical, savages, madmen, robots, monkey-men, and the most militaristic nationals in the world. Since the notion of emperor worship was blasphemous to Christians, they perceived the imperial system and Shinto, which encouraged militarism and imperial expansion, as superstitions that should be abolished. To speak of the emperor as the Son of Heaven (as he was commonly termed in English) they thought, seemed perilously close to equating him with Christ and that was unacceptable for Christians.

The Victory Edition of The Stars and the Stripes exemplified U.S. views of Japan. “Japan, the little nation that removed a smiling, obsequious mask to reveal the face of a gorilla,” it repeated, “with that beast’s strength, instincts and demeanor, lay in utter defeat today before the United States and its Allies.” It also described Japan as a totally alien place, and the “strangest country in the world.”

Japan has a deceptive appearance of being quaint. Actually the people are suspicious of one another, gregarious and mass conceited but individually humble. They regard everything about their country as holy.

96 Dower, p.213.
97 Ibid., p.309.
As a nation the Japs lack imagination, copying much from other countries. Traditional art, literature and architecture were results of steals from China, yet now Nipponese culture is a homogeneous blend drawn from many foreign civilizations.

In some ways Japan is the strangest country in the world. White is the color of mourning and black the color of ceremony. Newspapers are read from right to left and when tea is brewed, masks are worn over the mouth to "safeguard the aroma of the tea."

The Japanese take baths of 140 degrees, hotter than any other people can endure, and instead of sleeping in comfortable beds they prefer a straw mat on the floor with a hollow porcelain pillow for a head rest.

Such exaggerated images of Japan were reported continuously by American media. Thus, it was necessary for the occupation officials to give American people a positive impression of the Japanese to gain support and understanding for the occupation mission. The instructional film for GHQ officials, "Our Job in Japan" emphasized that the Japanese were a people trained to play "follow-the-leader."99 They were victims of the nation, it said, so the occupation forces had to liberate them from their state of slavery. Joseph Grew, ambassador to Japan from 1932 to 1942, published a collection of his diaries and official documents in 1944, in the midst of the war in the Pacific. He described the great strength and fanatical determination, the utter cruelty and brutality of the Japanese military. However, his true aim was to ease the tension between the peoples of the two countries for the latter days when they had to deal with the postwar reconstruction. He thus informed Americans that there were innocent people in Japan who bitterly opposed the war with the United States.100

While Americans’ hatred of the Japanese grew during the brutal war, the Japanese people were also taught that their enemies, the Americans and the British in

particular, "were devils: hardly human at all, barbaric beyond belief." Japan’s leaders took pains to set Japan apart from others. During the war, the Japanese routinely referred to themselves as the leading race of the world. On the day of the Pearl Harbor attack, the Japanese government approved a document entitled “An outline of Information and Propaganda Policies for the War between Japan and the Anglo-American Powers.” It stated that “the enemy’s selfish desire for world conquest made war unavoidable, and Japan’s cause was a moral one. The country’s goal was to create a new world order which would enable all nations and races to assume their proper place in the world, and all peoples to be at peace in their own sphere.”

It was one of MacArthur’s accomplishments that he helped remove the hatred between the peoples of Japan and the U.S. through the work of the occupation. MacArthur’s willingness to help the enemy country recover was particularly remarkable in light of his personal experience of many brutal battles. Putting aside any personal feelings, throughout the occupation, MacArthur left a good impression of the Americans through the generosity of their troops and his leadership and dignity. He also reported the positive reactions from the Japanese toward the occupation to the people of the United States.

**MacArthur’s Perception of Japan**

Because of the strong hatred felt toward the Japanese after Pearl Harbor, the American public did not support the work of the occupation of Japan to the extent they backed the same mission in Germany. Thus, MacArthur initially had difficulty getting attention, understanding, and material

101 Harvey, p.276.
104 Manchester, p.598; Dower (1999), p.79.
support for his mission in Japan. He thus had to work to promote the positive image of the Japanese and show the progress he had made in Japan. In a radio address to the people of the United States after the surrender ceremony on September 2, 1945, MacArthur expressed the belief that the people of Japan needed to be liberated:

We stand in Tokyo today reminiscent of our countryman, Commodore Perry, ninety-two years ago. His purpose was to bring to Japan an era of enlightenment and progress by lifting the veil of isolation to the friendship, trade and commerce of the world. But, alas, the knowledge thereby gained of Western science was forged into an instrument of oppression and human enslavement. Freedom of expression, freedom of action, even freedom of thought were denied through supervision of liberal education, through appeal to superstition and through the application of force. We are committed by the Potsdam Declaration of Principles to see that the Japanese people are liberated from this condition of slavery. It is my purpose to implement this commitment just as rapidly as the armed forces are demobilized and other essential steps taken to neutralize the war potential. The energy of the Japanese race, if properly directed, will enable expansion vertically rather than horizontally. If the talents of the race are turned into constructive channels, the country can lift itself from its present deplorable state into a position of dignity...\(^{105}\)

He also explained that "during the progress of the war, these seventy million heard of nothing but Japanese victories and the bestial qualities of Japan's opponents. When they suddenly felt the concentrated shock of total defeat, their whole world crumbled. It was not merely an overthrow of their military might—not merely a great defeat for their nation—he explained; it was the collapse of a faith, the disintegration of everything they had believed in and lived by and thought for. It left a complete vacuum morally, mentally and physically."\(^{106}\)

Unlike his public statements, however, MacArthur seemed, in his own mind,


\(^{106}\) *Statement on the first anniversary of the signing of the Japanese surrender agreement, September 2, 1946,* Washington D.C., Government Printing Office,

41
to harbor images of Japanese as belligerent and natural warriors. His psychological-warfare adviser, Fellers, researched Japanese behavior patterns and identified "a fifteen-point mantra": inferiority complex, credulousness, regimented thought, tendency to misrepresent, self-dramatization, strong sense of responsibility, super-aggressiveness, brutality, inflexibility, tradition of self-destruction, superstition, face-saving tendency, intense emotionality, attachment to home and family, and Emperor worship. Even after the return to the United States in April 1951, MacArthur publicly described the Japanese as "a boy of twelve" compared to 45 years-old Germans. In his view, Japan resembled the feudalistic European nations of four centuries earlier, and in some aspects of their way of living was more old-fashioned than that. To him, the people's worship of the emperor as God and absolute sovereign was more like ancient Sparta than a modern nation.

In his later reminiscences he reiterated his original perception of Japan but admitted it was a false conception.

Supposedly, the Japanese were a twentieth-century civilization. In reality, they were more nearly a feudal society, of the type discarded by Western nations some four centuries ago. There were aspects of Japanese life that went farther back than that. Although theocracy was a system of government that had been thoroughly discredited by 3,000 years of progress in the Western world, it still existed in Japan. The Emperor was considered a divine being, and the average Japanese subject dared not even lift up his eyes to view his ruler. This God-Emperor was absolute. His word was final. There was no such thing as civil rights. There were not even human rights. The property and produce of the average Japanese individual could be taken

away from him in whole or in part as it suited the ruling cliques. Between 1937 and 1940 more than 60,000 people were thrown into prison for "dangerous thinking" by the secret police. Indeed, an American viewing Japan would be inclined to class it as more nearly akin to ancient Sparta than to any modern nation.

For almost four years the Japanese people had expected nothing but victory. Every bulletin blared of success. Not only that; the people had been told they were fighting a kind of holy crusade against barbarians who had no respect for anything. The war must be won to prevent rape, murder, and other unspeakable crimes. As a leader of the American forces, the Japanese government concentrated on me. When American troops landed in Japan in August 1945, the image of the sadistic commander and his rapacious soldiery was in every Japanese mind.

From the very beginning I tried to erase this false conception. In my speech aboard the Missouri I had very carefully tried to reassure the Japanese people, and a few days later, when I moved my headquarters into the Dai Ichi Building, I made a public statement that "SCAP is not concerned with how to keep Japan down, but how to get her on her feet again." I underlined again and again that we had several missions. It was true that we intended to destroy Japan as a militarist power. It was true that we intended to impose penalties for past wrongs. These things had been set out in the surrender terms. But we also felt that we could best accomplish our purpose by building a new kind of Japan, one that would give the Japanese people freedom and justice, and some kind of security. I was determined that our principles during the occupation would be the same principles for which our soldiers had fought on the battlefield.110

**Democratizing From Within**  
One of the Japanese systems that looked so feudalistic to MacArthur was the family structure in Japan. GHQ officials studied the system from a report sent to Bonner Fellers by a former professor of Tokyo Imperial University who was discharged for liberal tendencies.111 This professor explained the old-fashioned Japanese family system and requested that the General democratize the

---

family. The writer argued that the essence of the Japanese family was the succession of family-chiefs like the ancient dynasties. Children were not allowed to form their own opinions, the position of women was that of half-slaves, and there was no financial independence to subordinate males and female members of the family. Inequality between husbands and wives was extraordinary. Women had no educational, social, or economic equality, not to mention political equality. In this writer’s view, obedience, not love was the cement of the Japanese family. He insisted love and mutual respect needed to be introduced to democratize this small feudal society called the family.

The writer also argued that the strong patriarchal tendency of the Japanese family system should be altered to favor women’s influence in the family. Women were taught in old-fashioned families to endure silently the misconduct of the husband. While wife’s adultery was always criminal, for example, a husband’s was criminal only when it was committed with a married woman. Moreover, children had no freedom in choosing a marriage partner, and men under the age of 25 and women under 30 could not marry without permission of their parents.

This report must have shocked GHQ officers and other Westerners, because it was so different from the Western experience. MacArthur was eager to revise the constitution to emancipate Japanese women from their slave status of men. He believed that “women, like men, had souls. Therefore, they should be treated equally.” Thus, he launched that reform right away and, indeed, Japanese women achieved suffrage in December 1945, in just 3 months after the occupation started. Marriage and divorce statutes were also rewritten, contract marriage and concubinage were prohibited, high schools became coeducational, and twenty-six women’s universities
MacArthur perceived his role not as a conqueror but as a protector and a guardian of the Japanese people. He understood the Japanese needed spiritual leadership as well as material administration, since they suffered from “shell shock” and faced the despair of the massive defeat. MacArthur said, “never in history had a nation and its people been more completely crushed” and “the bitter sting and humiliation of defeat had left the people dazed, tottering, and numb with shock.”

MacArthur played a role of a strong dictator with his understanding that the Japanese were used to being governed by force and authority. MacArthur’s biographer, William Manchester, revealed that MacArthur later said of Asians that “even after 50 years of living among these people, I still don’t understand them.” However, publicly, as a commander, he had to show the confidence that he completely understood the Japanese. It was true that he spent many years before in the Philippines and he understood the Filipinos. However, Japan was initially exotic and very foreign country for him. So, MacArthur had studied Japanese folklore, politics, and economy. Most of all he had researched how Hirohito’s people lived, worked, and thought. He was astute and quick to learn things, and he could sense what he should do and what the Japanese people needed. One of his closest advisers, General Courtney Whitney, revealed that despite the commander’s own misgivings, “MacArthur knew the Orient, the basic Japanese character, and their national spirit of

---

112 Manchester, p.594.
113 Words by George Kenney, Commander of the Far East Air Force, in Manchester, p.544.
114 Manchester, p.544.
115 Ibid., p.537.
And in hindsight MacArthur said he was "thoroughly familiar with Japanese administration, its weaknesses and its strengths," and that the reforms he contemplated were those that would bring Japan abreast of modern progressive thought and action. Thus, he did not need much advice from his staff. Reflecting his understanding of Japanese hierarchy, he never allowed Japanese officials to meet him except for the Emperor Hirohito and a few prime ministers and high-ranking cabinet members. In that way, he tried to keep a certain distance from the Japanese and behaved like a charismatic and unapproachable ruler, as if he had assumed the emperor's throne.

From the moment of his appointment as supreme commander, MacArthur recognized his mission was to become an economist, a political scientist, an engineer, a manufacturing executive, a teacher, even a theologian of sorts, in order to rebuild a nation that had been almost completely destroyed by the war. His perception of his duty and his demeanor as a charismatic leader with absolute authority proved effective in ruling the Japanese citizens.

MacArthur also worked hard to let American people know the importance of the survival of Japan and stability of this region for the national interests of the United States. He understood Japanese people's tremendous energy and vast potential and that the fate of this country would matter to Americans in the future. He knew that, although most people thought of Japan as small, it was considerably larger than Italy and half the size of the United Kingdom, with roughly twice the population of each of the four big countries in Western Europe--West Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, and France. He argued that Japan was "the bulwark of freedom, the springboard of

---

117 Ibid., p.282.
118 Ibid., Reminiscences, pp.281-282.
119 Manchester, p.537.
the future, and Americans had not begun to realize its vast potentialities." After he returned to the United States in 1951, he gave speeches all across the States and enthusiastically told people the significance of maintaining peace and stability in the Asia Pacific region. His address before the House of Representatives on April 19, 1951 at which he reported his accomplishments in Japan and the situation in the Far East, was typical. He insisted that Americans had to understand the importance of this region for the United States, and that they must understand about the Asian people, their background, and the conditions under which they were suffering, rather than just hating them and clingning to past negative impressions:

While Asia is commonly referred to as the gateway to Europe, it is no less true that Europe is the gateway to Asia, and the broad influence of the one cannot fail to have its impact upon the other...

Mustering half of the earth's population and 60 percent of its natural resources, these peoples are rapidly consolidating a new force, both moral and material, with which to raise the living standard and erect adaptations of the design of modern progress to their own distinct cultural environments. Whether one adheres to the concept of colonization or not, this is the direction of Asian progress and it may not be stopped. It is a corollary to the shift of the world economic frontiers, as the whole epicenter of world affairs rotates back toward the area whence it started... What they seek now is friendly guidance, understanding, and support, not imperious direction; the dignity of equality, not the shame of subjugation. Their prewar standards of life, pitifully low, is infinitely lower now in the devastation left in war's wake. World ideologies play little part in Asian thinking and are little understood. What the peoples strive for is the opportunity for a little more food in their stomachs, a little better clothing on their backs, a little firmer roof over their heads, and the realization of the normal nationalist urge for political freedom.

The Pacific was a potential area of advance for any predatory force intent upon striking at the bordering land areas. All this was changed by our Pacific victory. Our strategic frontier then shifted to embrace the entire Pacific Ocean which became a vast moat to protect us as long as we hold it. Indeed, it acts as a protective shield for all of the Americas and all free lands

---

120 Manchester, p.566.
of the Pacific Ocean area. We control it to the shores of Asia by a chain of islands extending in an arc from the Aleutians to the Marianas held by us and our free allies.¹²¹

MacArthur made every decision without Japanese officials' involvement and he believed in his judgment, despite the general opinion of the American public. He played a role of strong dictator and enforced his policy, and that approved worked out well with the Japanese. Whether it was his natural personality or his intention, his strong attitude as a commander suited well his duty of Supreme Commander of the occupation of Japan. MacArthur often intimated that his only guides were George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and Jesus Christ, and he seemed to operate on the assumption that the four of them together could—with help from the emperor—democratize Japan.¹²² As Washington and Lincoln had fought wars and saved the nation, MacArthur attempted to save Japan with his charismatic leadership and absolute authority, even though it was not his own country. As Jesus Christ guides people spiritually, MacArthur tried to be a leader to guide a former enemy, the Japanese, and support them in their recovery from material and spiritual defeat.

6. Why the U.S. Helped Japan: Messianic Zeal for Civilizing Japan

After demobilization, democratizing Japan was the second most important mission of the occupation. In the Potsdam Declaration, the Allies stated that they did not intend to destroy or just punish the Japanese by force. Instead, their aim was to democratize feudalistic Japan and liberate its people from their old fashioned social system, and to help them rebuild their devastated country. The Potsdam Declaration stated:

We do not intend that the Japanese shall be enslaved as a race or destroyed as a nation, but stern justice shall be meted out to all war criminals, including those who have visited cruelties upon our prisoners. The Japanese Government shall remove all obstacles to the revival and strengthening of democratic tendencies among the Japanese people. Freedom of speech, of religion and of thought, as well as respect for the fundamental human rights, shall be established.123

After GHQ completed the demobilization, they could have left Japan without helping their reconstruction. Yet they stayed and continued humanitarian activities. United States officials, especially MacArthur, must have had a messianic zeal for the occupation of Japan. In addition to demobilizing Japanese forces and building up the U.S. military presence in the Pacific through the occupation, MacArthur devoted himself to liberate the Japanese from the imperialistic state by injecting American values of democracy and Christianity. He was committed to emancipating women from inequality, to liberalizing and modernizing the social system, and to democratizing education.

In truth, MacArthur perceived the democratic reform of Japan as a God-given mission.124 It was the white men's duty to civilize the Oriental. Just like his father,

124 Sodei, p.4.
who saved the Filipinos from the Spanish invasion in 1898, MacArthur was also a hero in the Philippines, where some of the most brutal atrocities by the Japanese took place during the World War II. The Philippines was a U.S. Commonwealth from 1935 to 1946. MacArthur supervised the Filipinos’ creation of a Philippine Army. As the gratitude for that contribution, Filipino President, Manuel Quezon granted Douglas MacArthur the rank of Field Marshal of the Philippines in 1937, the highest rank ever conveyed to an American.

The American movement of expanding the frontier on the American continent and imperialistic expansion overseas in the late nineteenth century stemmed from a belief in Manifest Destiny—a belief that the United States has a God-given mission to expand to spread democracy and freedom in the world. MacArthur’s mission of saving East Asian civilians and promoting American democracy in the Pacific had a similarity to that belief. He wrote later that his democratization mission of Japan was an experiment. “Japan had become the world’s great laboratory for an experiment in the liberation of a people from totalitarian military rule and for the liberalization of government from within. It was clear that the experiment in Japan must go far beyond the primary purpose of the Allies—the destruction of Japan’s ability to wage another war and the punishment of war criminals.”

However, it was contradictory that while MacArthur was calling for freedom of belief, he forced the Japanese to reform their system with the American value of democracy from above. While he was encouraging his troops to learn some aspects from Japanese culture, they believed Western culture and its values were superior to those of the Orient and forced the Japanese to adopt them.

For example, GHQ officials seriously considered abolishing the use of

---

“kanji,” Chinese characters that the Japanese used as one of their alphabets, and allowing only “katakana,” another alphabet which is simpler than kanji, in order to make it easier for GHQ officials to screen and investigate documents written in Japanese. They were in urgent need of personnel who could read Japanese writing to monitor their publications and documents, but training Americans in kanji was extremely difficult and time consuming. They found that katakana would be simpler and easier to learn in a short term. Some even called for abolishing all the Japanese alphabets and replacing them with anglicized “romaji.” The supporters of this plan argued that teaching kanji to Japanese children was wasting time that could be spent on learning other things. American intellectuals who opposed this idea argued that it would ruin Japan’s cultural and intellectual heritage and might also cause serious social chaos. Eventually, one idea of changing Japanese writing system was dismissed because MacArthur wanted to avoid changing something so close to their daily lives so drastically.\footnote{126 Toshio Nishi, \textit{Kuni Yaburete MacArthur}, Tokyo, Chuokoron-Shinsha, Inc., 2005, pp.360-370.}

Thus, the fate of Japan was in MacArthur’s hands, from small reforms such as writing system to comprehensive ones like drafting a new constitution. Japanese citizens were no longer subjects of the Emperor, but they still remained subjects of the occupation. It was inevitable that there be inequality between the victors and the vanquished. However, the occupation reflected Americans’ belief in their superiority to the Japanese, and white supremacy to the Asian. MacArthur himself said that “Asia was culturally and politically backward, and that the Oriental mind had been socialized to obey authority,”\footnote{127 Dower (1999), p.286.} and took for granted that the nations of the Far East still had to be led into this new era by such authority figures as himself. Ultimately, as
noted, MacArthur was right about reading the patterns of Japanese people's behavior and his tactics of being a dictator worked effectively in handling the Japanese nationals.

Christianization as a Way of Democratization One thing that MacArthur attempted but could not accomplish was the Christian conversion of the Japanese. A devout Christian himself, MacArthur strongly believed that making the Japanese believe in Christianity would keep them from despair. Through the mission of separating Shinto strictly from politics and education, he enthusiastically brought over 2,500 Christian missionaries from the United States to Japan during the occupation period, and provided them with military planes, trains, and residences. MacArthur said “The more missionaries we can bring out here, and the more occupation troops we can send home, the better.” He also requested that the Pocket Testament League distribute 10,000,000 Bibles translated into Japanese. MacArthur believed that Christian ideal must be instilled to change the belligerent, nationalistic Japanese spirit that stemmed from Shinto. MacArthur thought that one mission of the occupation was to build “Christian highways” in Japan. He believed that every member of the occupation force was a missionary, and they were communicating a noble influence to the Japanese mind.

MacArthur further believed in the close connection between Christianity and democracy and insisted that believing in Christianity would help the Japanese accept the value of democracy. “We need to emphasize with clarity the essential usefulness of Christianity in human progress,” he argued, “democracy and Christianity have much in common, as practice of the former is impossible without giving faithful

---

129 MacArthur, Reminiscences, p.311.
service to the fundamental concepts underlying the latter.” Thus, he welcomed the
election in May 1947 of a new Prime Minister, Tetsu Katayama, who happened to be a
Christian. MacArthur stated that “of possibly even greater significance than the
political implications of Mr. Katayama’s emergence as Prime Minister of Japan are its
spiritual implications. For the first time in history, Japan is led by a Christian
leader—one who throughout his life has been a member of the Presbyterian Church. It
reflects the complete religious tolerance which now dominates the Japanese mind and
the complete religious freedom which exists throughout this land.” MacArthur
found it significant for the international community of the Asia-Pacific region that
Christians led the three important nations in the region: Chiang Kai-shek of China,
Manuel Roxas of the Philippines, and Tetsu Katayama of Japan. MacArthur must
have felt hopeful of establishing a coalition through Christian values with all these
Christian leaders, believing that expanding democracy combined with Christianity
would bring peace in the Pacific when they were facing communist influences in the
region.

Further, MacArthur found it encouraging when Tokyo Imperial University
elected a Christian, Shigeru Nanbara, for the president in December, 1945. TIU was
the top national university of Japan and was very influential in Japanese society.
MacArthur might have thought he could Christianize the whole country with the
influence of the university and support by Nanbara. However, when Nanbara’s effort
to start teaching a course of Christianity at his university ended in vain because of the
budget problem, MacArthur and his Christian colleagues came up with an idea to
establish a new Christian university instead on their own. The former ambassador to

---

131 Ibid., May 24, 1947. RG-25, Reel #960.
Japan, Joseph Grew became the president of the committee to found International Christian University. The creation of ICU reflected a belief that only Christianity could save the Japanese from the old spirit of militaristic feudalism, and it would lead to a bright democracy instead of communism.\footnote{Nishi, p.321.} MacArthur supported their fund raising as an honorary chairman. International Christian University was established in Mitaka, Tokyo in 1953.

Christianity was to be the core pillar of most of MacArthur’s occupation policies. In his personal correspondence to Dr. Roy G. Ross, MacArthur wrote “The principles underlying the Christian faith furnished the moral force for the defeat of the Japanese empire and provided the philosophy for the treatment of the fallen foe… Christian faith has formed the sturdy cornerstones upon which has rested our national strength… Thereafter, it became those same high principles of human relationship--tolerance and justice, the basic dogma of our Christian faith--that formed the very key arch to the philosophy underlying all policy governing the treatment of our vanquished foe in the occupation of Japan.”\footnote{MacArthur Papers, January 13, 1947. RG-25, Reel #960.}

Accordingly, MacArthur seemed to want to convert all the Japanese into Christians. Yet despite MacArthur’s efforts and those of other enthusiastic Christian movements, Japan did not become a Christian country. The number of Christians in Japan before the war was believed to be around 200,000. After the occupation, the number only grew to be 250,000, out of all the population of 80,000,000.\footnote{Sodei (1976), pp.261-262.} This was one of a few things MacArthur did not accomplish.

It is worth arguing whether MacArthur’s policy of promoting Christianity conflicted with his policy of freedom of religion. As noted, while GHQ strictly
separated Shinto from Japanese politics and education, they encouraged the Japanese people to believe in Christianity. Christian Japanese praised MacArthur as the second Jesus Christ, however, some intellectuals began to point out this contradiction. MacArthur legitimized his policy by arguing that the occupation troops had the right to promote Christianity as far as no other specific religions were suppressed. MacArthur, with a tendency to be blind about things he did not do well, insisted the estimate of the number of Christian Japanese after the occupation as 2,000,000, adding an extra zero to the real number.

**Differences from the German Occupation**

T.V. Soong, a Chinese politician, pointed out that “It’s ironical, but the victor has to help get the vanquished back on his feet.”^137 That applies to the case of World War II. The Allies occupied Germany, as well. They launched the occupation in Germany after Hitler committed suicide and Germany surrendered unconditionally on May 7, 1945. The world needed both countries to be rebuilt, because Japan was the hub of East Asian industry and commerce (China wanted to restart trading with Japan), and Germany had been the hub of continental European industry and commerce and had supplied coal to European nations. Now they had both collapsed. The primary aims of the occupation of Germany were initially the same as that of Japan—disarmament and punishment of war criminals, and both then changed to emphasize rebuilding. However, the conditions of the occupation of two countries were fundamentally different from each other.

First, and most important, while the United States operated Japan’s occupation unilaterally, the occupation of Germany was operated multilaterally by the

---

^137 *MacArthur Papers, RG-5, Reel#25, T.V. Soong, Nichi Bei Times*
Allied four powers—the United States, England, France, and the Soviet Union, which divided the country into four zones and administered them separately. The capital of West Germany, Berlin, was occupied jointly, with each power administering a sector of the city, and was governed by an inner-Allied authority. There were also agencies that coordinated the occupation by four powers—the Council of Foreign Ministers and the Control Council. Unlike the Far Eastern Commission in Japan, which was supposed to monitor the occupation of Japan by the representatives from each Allied country, these agencies for Germany functioned well to ensure appropriate uniformity of action by the Commanders-in-Chief in each zone of occupation and to reach agreed decisions on the chief questions affecting Germany as a whole. However, this system caused delays in the decision making process and mitigated against a smoother transformation of Germany.

Second, while MacArthur was able to make use of existent Japanese institutions such as the government and the presence of the Emperor as a symbol of the state head to facilitate cooperation and the smooth implementation of policy, the German occupation was required to establish the government from scratch. This process was time consuming. Since the first and foremost mission there was the “denazification” of German society, the Allies had to dismantle the political and legal structures that the Nazi party had created in Germany, and they had to arrest, punish, and exclude active Nazis from public life. This left no governmental institutions operating.

Third, tensions among the four occupying powers, especially between the Soviet Union and the Western allies, prevented a harmonious occupation and disturbed the establishment of central German institutions. The multilateral

---

occupation effort had become hopelessly deadlocked by 1947.\textsuperscript{139}

Thus, some historians have considered the occupation of Japan as more successful than the one of Germany, noting that Japan’s transformation was quicker, smoother, and in many ways, easier than Germany’s.\textsuperscript{140} Things also went more slowly in Germany because the German occupation lacked the focused intensity that came with America’s unilateral control over Japan, where occupation authority was centered in one nation and, indeed, one man--MacArthur. This made the reconstruction process less troublesome than in Germany, since neither MacArthur nor GHQ were obligated to consult with other countries. In fact, Germany did not receive complete sovereignty until the end of the Cold War and German reunification in 1989 and 1990, whereas Japan regained sovereignty in 1952 with signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty.\textsuperscript{141}

Although the primary aims of occupation were the same, their goals seemed different. As MacArthur later referred to the Japanese as 12 years-old, compared to the Germans as mature as 45 years-old, the Allied officials saw the Japanese and the German differently and treated them differently. The Allies, Westerners, looked down on the Japanese, the Orientals, as an uncivilized race and were enthusiastic about civilizing Japan with Western values. Thus, the democratization program was enforced more intensively in Japan, and the transformation of social system focused on a wide range of issues, from the constitution to education and religion.

This notwithstanding, people and governments of the Allied countries paid more attention to and were more supportive to German situation. In fact, MacArthur initially received only limited economic aid from the U.S. government for his mission.

\textsuperscript{139} Ibid., 43p., 177-178p.
\textsuperscript{140} Dobbins, p.51.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., p.14.
in Japan and for the entire occupation of Japan, he only got $2 billion. The American
zone in West Germany, with one-fifth the population of Japan, received, per capita, 3
times the money sent to Tokyo. Fellers described that “the war in the Pacific was
racial, whereas the war in Europe was political and social.” So, too, was the
postwar treatment. While the German occupation focused on political and economic
reform, GHQ went further in an effort to transform the Japanese people’s culture and
spirit. The Germans had some experience with democracy in the years prior to the
World War II and they, like the Allies, were Westerners. Japan, on the other hand, was
perceived as a feudalistic empire, and most of all, they were “Oriental.” Thus, the U.S.
officials thought Japan needed to be civilized and be transformed to the core by the
Westerners.

That MacArthur accomplished the aims of occupation in Japan more quickly
and smoothly than the mission was accomplished in Germany was a great
achievement particularly as he had to transform a nation whose people were
completely alien to Westerners. It worked out well for him, because he could
administer Japan by himself with absolute authority, and his sole leadership was what
the Japanese needed at the time of defeat. It does not mean that it would have been
quicker and worked better if another single commander, perhaps Eisenhower,
operated the occupation of entire Germany unilaterally. The German nationality is
different from that of the Japanese. MacArthur’s mission was successful because all
the aspects—Japanese national character, the timing of emergency after the war,
MacArthur’s personality, and his tactics—matched perfectly.

142 Manchester, p.598.
7. The New Constitution

**State under Meiji Constitution** Under the old constitution, which was established in 1889, during the Meiji era, Japan did not have a parliament constitution. Rather, it vested sovereign power in the emperor and divided political power among a small set of competing elites. The political parties competed for power with the military, the bureaucracy, the leading industrialists (“zaibatsu”), and groups close to the emperor. Beginning in 1925, all men over the age of 25 were granted the right to vote, but their representatives in the Diet could easily be outmaneuvered because the majority party in the Diet did not automatically have the right to form a government. Instead, the emperor appointed the prime minister. Nor was the military legally subordinate to civilian control. The military exploited this structural failure to the fullest. Political freedoms necessary to sustain a democracy, such as freedom of speech and assembly, scarcely existed.

MacArthur later said the new constitution was the single most important accomplishment of the occupation of Japan, since it brought Japan freedoms and privileges they had never known. The Japanese had never experienced political freedom, equality between the sexes, freedom of speech, or Western style human rights until May 3, 1947, when the new constitution came into effect. Basic to this approach, the constitution declared that the Emperor was not a God but merely the symbolic head of the state. It also established that Japan would not participate in war for any reasons, and that the feudalistic hierarchy would be abolished. The new constitution has directly affected Japanese people’s lives ever since. In fact, in over sixty years, it has never been amended. No other country in history has a constitution made by an other nation. While it is still controversial whether GHQ created it or Japanese government did, it is clear that MacArthur ordered, screened, and directed...
its drafting and implementation. It is also clear that this new constitution helped dramatically to change Japan. The Japanese now enjoy freedom and democracy that would have been unheard of before the occupation. One would also argue that the constitution helped Japan to achieve economical and technological success and a high standard of living.

Thus, establishing the new constitution was significant for both the United States and Japan. MacArthur credited this accomplishment to the insistence that checks and balances, the fundamental element of democracy, had been established in the new political system. "If Japan proceeds firmly and wisely upon the course now set, its way may well become the Asian way, leading to the ultimate goal of all men--individual liberty and personal dignity--and history may finally point to the Japanese Constitution as the Magna Charta of free Asia."^144

Revising Process MacArthur ordered the Shidehara Cabinet to take charge of revising Meiji Constitution. The occupiers did not force the Japanese to take the American constitution but encouraged them to create their own. So the task was initially left in the hands of the Japanese government. However, they took a long time and did not include enough change. MacArthur found the proposed revisions unsatisfactory and concluded that the government was incapable of proposing revisions that would meet the Potsdam requirements.145 Thus, MacArthur took over the initiative and directed GHQ's Government Section, under General Courtney Whitney, to draft a constitution to guide the Japanese cabinet. MacArthur wanted to include three key principles in the new constitution:


^145 Manchester, p.588.
1) The Emperor is at the head of the State. His succession is dynastic. His duties and powers will be exercised in accordance with the Constitution and responsible to the basic will of the people as provided therein. 2) War as a sovereign right of the nation is abolished. Japan renounces it as an instrumentality for settling its disputes and even for preserving its own security. It relies upon the higher ideals which are now stirring the world for its defense and its protection. No Japanese Army, Navy, or Air Force will ever be authorized and no rights of belligerency, will ever be conferred upon any Japanese forces. 3) The feudal system of Japan will cease. No rights of peerage except those of the Imperial family will extend beyond the lives of those now existent. No patent of nobility will from this time forth embody within itself any National or Civic power of Government. Pattern budget after British system. 146

MacArthur urged extreme haste and secrecy, and the Government Section in fact completed the entire document in just 2 weeks, presenting a draft to the Japanese on February 19, 1946.

As MacArthur insisted, the draft reduced the emperor from a sovereign to a mere symbol of the Japanese state and placed the Diet, as representatives of the will of the people, at the center of national sovereignty. Equal rights were also granted to women with regard to property, marriage, inheritance, and other aspects of family life. The most innovative aspect of the constitution was Article 9, which declared the full and complete disarmament of Japan and the renunciation of war. The Japanese government accepted this document, and on March 6, 1946, MacArthur announced that the Emperor and the government of Japan were presenting a new constitution to the Japanese people. The constitution’s origin was deliberately kept quiet, but the awkward phrasing of the document, translated from the original one written in English, showed it was thoroughly directed by GHQ. 147

Thus, unlike the initial policy of the United States, which indicated that the

146 Dower (1999), pp.360-361.
147 Dobbins, p.44.
Japanese government should take the initiative in any reform process according to its people’s will and an inclination to intervene as little as possible, MacArthur effectively used his authority in leading the Japanese government to establish their new constitution.¹⁴⁸

**Key Provisions of the New Constitution**

MacArthur made it a priority to liberate Japanese women from their state of slavery in a male-dominant social system. Prior to the revision of constitution, he immediately revised the election law to give women the right to vote on December 17, 1945. At the same time, the voting age was lowered from 25 to 20. In Japan, men and women had never been equal. Concubinage and family contract marriages, consigning wives to servility, had been lawful. Women had been forbidden to own property and they had no economic, legal, or political rights. Boys and girls were separated in education. Public school courses had been segregated by sex—with the curriculum and texts pitched lower for girls—and there had been no colleges for women. Adultery had been lawful for husbands but not for wives. The new Diet had to face this form of sexism squarely in an early session.

Under the new constitution, contract marriage became illegal, and so did concubinage. Marriage and divorce statutes were rewritten and liberalized to dictate equality for both men and women: women gained equal rights with regard to property, inheritance, and other aspects of family life.¹⁴⁹ Public high schools became coeducational, and 26 women’s universities opened. Women were for the first time eligible to be elected for public office, and were to serve as social workers and police officers in increasing numbers. Before MacArthur left Japan, two Diet committees

---

would be chaired by women.\textsuperscript{150} As an immediate effect, the first free election held on April 10, 1946, recorded high turnout rate—78.5% for men and 67% for women—and elected 39 female members in the Lower House.\textsuperscript{151} MacArthur later said with satisfaction, “Of all the reforms accomplished by the occupation in Japan, none was more heartwarming to me than this change in the status of women.”\textsuperscript{152}

Supreme power was vested in the Diet, and three separate branches of government were established. The prime minister, elected by the upper house of the bicameral legislature, would serve for four years; if defeated on an issue, he could either ask the lower house to choose a successor or call for new elections. MacArthur saw this provision would provide a degree of stability in the government and said that “no group within the Diet is going to question the administration of a prime minister in an idle fashion if they are going to be forced to stand the expense of a new election campaign as a result of their capriciousness.” MacArthur regarded the provision for amendment by national referendum as one of the significant factors of the new constitution. It stated that “if two-thirds of the Japanese electors decide that a change needs to be made, it goes into effect.” The people themselves thus control their own constitution and are, in the final analysis, the sovereigns in their own land.\textsuperscript{153}

Educational reform was another essential component of the new constitution. The Board of Education Law, passed in July 1948, freed education from the direct control of the Ministry of Education and vested authority in the hands of local school boards, as was the case in the United States. Decentralization of education was viewed as essential to permanent removal of the ability of the government to indoctrinate Japanese students in the narrow form of Japanese nationalism that was

\textsuperscript{150} Manchester, p.594.


\textsuperscript{152} MacArthur, \textit{Reminiscences}, p.305.

\textsuperscript{153} \textit{Ibid.}, p.302.
believed to have sustained support for the war. Thus, early efforts also focused on removal of all traces of emperor worship and militarism from the classrooms and curriculum. Lacking funds and the time to replace textbooks, teachers and students were initially directed to rip out or line through offending languages. Saluting the flag, singing the national anthem, and bowing to the emperor’s portrait were also prohibited. Local occupation troops were dispatched to schools in their districts to ascertain that these directives from GHQ were being carried out. GHQ also reformed the elementary and secondary school system along U.S. standards and extended compulsory, and free, education from 6 to 9 years. GHQ officials knew that the effect of education would play out decades later. Thus, in order to make the democratization reform long lasting, they concentrated on educating the next generation as they wanted future Japanese to be.

**Praise for the New Constitution**

On the day the constitution came into effect, celebratory ceremonies were held nationwide. One hundred thousand people gathered in front of the imperial palace, and a Japanese brass band performing in the plaza celebrated the occasion by playing *The Stars and Stripes Forever*. George Atcheson, Jr., MacArthur’s chief political adviser, referred to willingness of the Japanese to adopt an American directed constitution as “the dawn of the age of Japan’s imitation of things American—not only of American machines but also American ideas.”

At the completion of the draft, MacArthur proudly wrote, “It is undoubtedly the most liberal constitution in history, having borrowed the best from the constitution of many countries” and “the best standards of a truly parliamentary democracy.” The form of government was “a combination of American executive system and the

---

British parliamentary one.\textsuperscript{155}

In his New Year's remark of 1946, MacArthur mentioned the democratization by revising the constitution that "the removal of this national enslavement means freedom for the people, but at the same time, it imposes upon them the individual duty to think and to act each on his own initiative. It is necessary for the masses of Japan to awaken to the fact that they now have the power to govern and what is done must be done by themselves."\textsuperscript{156} Further, in the first New Year's remark after adopting the new constitution, MacArthur congratulated the Japanese for achieving the freedom:

Your new constitution is now in full effect, and there is increasing evidence of a growing understanding of the great human ideals which it is designed to serve. Implementing laws have reoriented the entire fabric of your way of life to give emphasis to the increased responsibility, dignity and opportunity which the individual now holds and enjoys. Government has ceased to be totalitarian and has become representative, with its functions decentralized to permit and encourage a maximum of individual thought and initiative and judgment in the management of community affairs. Control of every political segment has been shifted to permit the selection of a new leadership of your free choice capable of advancing democratic growth...

Every Japanese citizen can now for the first time do what he wants, and go where he wants, and say what he wants, within the liberal laws of his land. This means that you can select your own work, and when you have completed it you can choose your own method of relaxation and enjoyment, and on your day of rest you can worship as you please, and always you can criticize and express your views on the actions of your Government. This is liberty...

The future therefore lies in your hands. If you remain true to the great spiritual revolution which you have undergone, your nation will emerge and go on--if you accept only its benefits without its obligations, it will wither and go under...The way is long and hard and beset with difficulties and dangers, but it is my hope and belief and prayer this New Year's Day that you

\textsuperscript{155} MacArthur, \textit{Reminiscences}, p.302.
\textsuperscript{156} MacArthur Papers, \textit{New Year's Remark, January 1, 1946}. RG-25, Reel #960.
Joseph Keenan, chief prosecutor of the Tokyo Trial, sent a letter congratulating MacArthur. "It seems to me," Keenan wrote, "to be a sound combination of the American and British systems of government, leaving necessary refinements to the development of the Japanese themselves." In fact, the new constitution had borrowed many aspects from other countries' constitutions. Beate Sirota Gordon, an Austrian who grew up in Tokyo, was educated in America and worked for Time Magazine as a Japan specialist, came back to Japan after the war as a member of the Government Section to draft the new constitution. She made strenuous efforts to include equality of the sexes in the constitution of Japan. In an assessment written in the 1990s, she revealed that she gained various ideas from the constitutions of countries such as Sweden, Germany, and the Soviet Union especially about matters on social welfare. Then she made sure that laws concerning marriage, divorce, and adultery were to be revised as part of the program for equality between the sexes in Japanese society and family structure. Thus, the old custom of contract marriage was forbidden, concubinage was abolished, and Japanese women even became able to ask for and receive maternity leave.

MacArthur noted there was much criticism of his speedy move to ensure the enfranchisement of women in light of male sentiment and a perception that women were too steeped in the tradition of subservience to their husbands to act with any degree of political independence. However, in his reminiscences, MacArthur proudly noted that he had enough support from important people to take such a step. President

157 MacArthur Papers, Speech to the People of Japan January 1, 1948. RG-25, Reel #960.
158 Ibid., Correspondence from Joseph B. Keenan to Douglas MacArthur, March 11, 1946. RG-5, Reel #23.
160 Takako Doi and Beate Sirota Gordon, p.37.
Truman, for example, said, “I am behind MacArthur a hundred percent, that I think he’s doing an excellent job and he can be absolutely certain I’ll back him to the finish.” Secretary of State Byrnes proclaimed, “I think he is doing a magnificent job and that all of us back here are and will continue to support his efforts to the limit of our ability, we are all mighty proud of him.” Herbert Hoover, commenting on MacArthur, said “I think I have a realization, as perhaps no one else has, of the difficulties with which you have been confronted and of the amazing service you have been to the American people.” Finally, historian Mary R. Beard effusively praised MacArthur’s efforts on behalf of women.

“There is something in General MacArthur’s determination to enfranchise the women of Japan indicative of his conception of the family as the core or heart of society, and of woman as its prime guardian, which I would almost have to go back to Confucius for comparison. That he should associate the care and nutrition of the family with political democracy—and do this in his own mind, not just by pressure from another mind—gives him a standing in my mind—which is at the top of my judgment of statecraft. The whole procedure in Japan is so superior in intelligence to the occupation in Germany that General MacArthur’s leadership shines with brilliant illumination.”

Despite the doubters, Japanese women embraced this reform. More than 13,000,000 women registered to vote for the first general election of April 10, 1946. They were quick to take advantage of other aspects of their new status under the constitution. This included finding jobs in professions from which they had been previously excluded. For example, in the next five years, about two thousand women became police officers.

The Controversial Article 9 Not only to Japan, but also to the world, the “no-war” clause of Article 9 was the most striking feature of the new constitution. The

---

debate over whether Article 9 permitted or prohibited limited armament for the purpose of self-defense has emerged every time Japan faced the possibility of participating in any war, from the Korean War till the current war in Iraq. Article 9 reads as follows:

Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.162

This provision clearly achieved the American goal of demobilization, but disputes arose over whether Japan could rearm for the purpose of self-defense. The origin of Article 9 has itself been fiercely debated. From MacArthur’s note to the Government Section, it was clear that he ordered its inclusion in the draft. However, MacArthur later insisted that Prime Minister Shidehara proposed it to MacArthur. Impressed by unexpected idea from Japanese side, MacArthur happily agreed. Later, when MacArthur had to rearm Japan in the face of the growing threat of communism and the outbreak of the Korean War, he asserted that Shidehara was the origin of Article 9, thus avoiding the criticism for changing the policy. In his reminiscences, MacArthur intentionally explained in his 1950 New Year’s remarks to the Japanese people the details of how he accepted Shidehara’s idea, noting that he recommended that, in case of need, a defense force be established consisting of ten divisions with corresponding sea and air elements.

Should the course of world events require that all mankind stand to arms in defense of human liberty and Japan comes within the orbit of immediately threatened attack, then the Japanese, too, should mount the maximum defensive power which their resources will permit. Article 9 is

based upon the highest of moral ideals, but by no sophistry of reasoning can it be interpreted as complete negation of the inalienable right of self-defense against unprovoked attack. It is a ringing affirmation by a people laid prostrate by the sword, of faith in the ultimate triumph of international morality and justice without resort to the sword.\textsuperscript{163}

\textit{Asahi Shimbun} reported on August 14, 2005 that a correspondence dated December 10, 1945 was found that was written by a former ambassador to Italy, Toshio Shiratori (who was accused as a war criminal and sentenced to life in prison) to Foreign Minister Shigeru Yoshida. Shiratori purportedly sent it from the Sugamo Prison to propose the idea of renunciation of war to Prime Minister Shidehara.\textsuperscript{164} If Shidehara read this correspondence before he met MacArthur on January 24, 1946 to discuss the draft, it is possible that MacArthur's account was right. Although a detailed investigation has not been made yet, this report shows that the origin of Article 9 and its interpretation are still a controversial matter and continues to get Japanese people's attention even after sixty years.

\textsuperscript{163} MacArthur, \textit{Reminiscences}, p.304.
\textsuperscript{164} \textit{Asahi Shimbun}, August 14, 2005.
8. The Turning Point of the Occupation

Dawn of Communism and the Korean War

Once GHQ accomplished demobilization smoothly, the priority of the occupation shifted from military matters to political ones. MacArthur, as a missionary of democracy, strongly opposed communism. And when the Red Scare gripped the United States, MacArthur also strictly regulated Japanese communists. For example, he suspended the publishing of the journal of the Japanese Communist Party, “Aka Hata,” which meant red flag, and also suppressed any kind of publication which expressed support for communism.

Facing the emergence of communist threat nearby, pressure began to build on Japan to consider some level of rearmament, because Japan was vulnerable to an enemy attack under the Peace Constitution which renounced war. MacArthur was determined to shield Japan from neighboring threats and maintain it as a democratic country. The United States needed a friendly power in the Far East because Chiang Kai-shek’s Nationalists were steadily losing ground to Mao Zedong’s communists in China. GHQ gradually increased civilian and coastal police forces to handle domestic security matters. By the time the war broke out in Korea in 1950, MacArthur decided to allow Japan to rearm despite the “no-war” clause. Thus, on New Year’s Day of 1950, he announced a new interpretation of Article 9, arguing that Japan needed to rearm for self-defense to protect itself from the communist threat in Asia. In July 1950, Japan agreed to the U.S. request that they establish a “National Police Reserve” of up to 75,000 men, which would function as a paramilitary force to fill the gap created by the rapid dispatch of the U.S. occupation forces to Korea. Ironically, MacArthur, who devoted all his effort in Japan’s demilitarization in the initial period

165 Nishi, p.450.
166 Dobbins, p.35.
of occupation, now found himself overseeing the creation of a small army.

In 1952, the National Police Reserve was renamed “National Safety Forces.” Two years later, it became the “Self Defense Forces” with three branches: Ground, Maritime, and Air. For years, the Self Defense Forces helped the U.S. defend Japan against a Soviet threat during the Cold War. Beyond self defense, they have engaged in disaster relief and United Nations peacekeeping efforts. However, the activities of Self Defense Forces abroad have always been controversial among Japanese people: should they participate in fighting as a member of international community, even in regions where Japan was not involved, or simply stay home and guard the homeland?

Now that Japan faces a nuclear threat from North Korea, the question whether Self Defense Forces can act preemptively has become a serious and urgent debate. Issues over Japan’s defense still remains problematic because of the vagueness of the interpretation of Article 9.

Economic Recovery   Economically, too, the Korean War provided Japan with a new start. MacArthur had made efforts in the first stage of the occupation to open economic opportunities and spurred the creation of many new companies by breaking up the family-owned “zaibatsu,” such as Mitsubishi, Mitsui, Sumitomo, and Yasuda, which controlled 75 percent of the country’s commerce, raw materials, and transport. But it was hard to see the effect immediately. Facing taxpayers restless with the huge costs of the occupation, the U.S. government ultimately instructed MacArthur to direct the Japanese government to undertake an economic stabilization program designed by Joseph Dodge, a banker from Detroit. The U.S. attempted to ease the burden of financial assist to Japan by encouraging the Japanese to promote economic development and support themselves. The Dodge Plan, launched in 1949, was

167 Manchester, p.539.
followed by massive layoffs of government and industrial employees, increased taxes, wage freezes, higher prices for rice, transportation, and other government-subsidized goods and services, and reduced public services. This economic recovery program had made significant progress by the mid-1950s. In three years, Japan’s commerce expanded rapidly and Japanese imports from the United States were cut in half. Dodge also established a fixed exchange rate of 360 yen to the dollar, undervaluing the yen somewhat to stimulate exports by making Japanese manufactures cheaper on the world market. In five years, national income had passed the prewar level despite a wave of strikes, demonstrations, and sabotage against all these drastic reform.

However, restrictions on Japan’s external activities caused serious problems in the expansion of Japan’s international trade. Because of the absence of a peace treaty, the Allies did not allow Japan to trade internationally, which undermined efforts to achieve a self-supporting economy. The lack of trade with China was particularly devastating. MacArthur argued that the world must allow Japan to trade. “If we keep this economic blockade up, more and more will we have to support this country. The job of occupation is to restore Japan’s production to self-sufficiency. Our problem is to keep Japan up.”

Ultimately, U.S. orders for military supplies to support the Korean War provided the Japanese economy with the boost in external demand needed to accelerate economic growth. During 1951 and 1952, U.S. military purchases of Japanese products amounted to nearly $800 million per year. By the end of 1954,

---

169 Dobbins, p.48; Manchester p.599.
170 MacArthur Papers, Article Appearing in Nippon Times, Tokyo, March 19, 1947 RG-25, Reel #960.
these purchases totaled about $3 billion. This military spending benefited almost every sector of the Japanese economy, from vehicle manufacturing to textiles. Consequently, the United States saved Japanese economy not only by reconstructing the base of economic structure but also by purchasing war supplies from Japan for the war in Korea.

**Toward the Peace Treaty** The Korean War provided an impetus to Washington to move towards a peace treaty with Japan and accelerated the end of the occupation. In fact, MacArthur and State Department had been calling for a peace treaty since 1949 because they believed that the continued presence of the U.S. forces throughout Japan served as an irritant rather than a force for stability. American public opinion, which favored bringing the troops home, also encouraged them to move forward on a treaty. As early as in March 1947, MacArthur mentioned in an interview with foreign correspondents that “the time is now approaching when we must talk peace with Japan.” He insisted that the job of occupation was coming close to completion, and democracy seemed established in Japan. He also favored having the United Nations substitute supervision over Japan. Comparing it to the German situation, MacArthur said “in Japan there is a functioning Government. But in Germany the Government had to be built from the ground up and there is no Government to sign the Peace Treaty... Over here there is no problem of what to do with Japan.”

In exchange for a peace treaty, the Defense Department and the Joint Chiefs of Staff demanded that Japan accept rearmament and the U.S. bases indefinitely. Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida agreed to the U.S. demands to create a military force

---

171 Schaller, p.288.
of 300,000 to 350,000 men. Thus, in September 1951, the peace treaty and a separate security treaty were signed in San Francisco. Representatives of 48 democratic countries witnessed the event. In April 1952, with the enforcement of the treaty, Japan regained its sovereignty.

The U.S.-Japan Security Treaty  

The security treaty, officially named the "Mutual Security Assistance Pact" has been the pillar of the U.S.-Japan relationship ever since. It ensured continued U.S. access to bases in Japan in return for a pledge of U.S. protection of Japan in the event Japan was attacked. In order to strengthen Japan's ties to the West during the Cold War, the treaty of 1952 was revised in 1960, and the U.S. and Japan signed the "Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security." Under the new treaty, both parties assumed an obligation to maintain and develop their capacities to resist armed attack in common and to assist each other in case of armed attack on territories under Japanese administration. Significantly, these terms stood in contradiction to Article 9 of the Japanese Peace Constitution, which forbade the maintenance of "land, sea, and air forces." It also expressed the Japanese people's renunciation of "the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes." It was thus generally understood that Japan could not come to the defense of the United States because it was constitutionally forbidden to send armed forces overseas.

The treaty also contained a status-of-forces agreement on the stationing of United States forces in Japan, with specifics relating to the provision of facilities and areas for their use and regarding the administration of Japanese citizens employed in

---

the facilities. The Agreed Minutes to the treaty specified that the U.S. wanted to consult the Japanese government prior to major changes in the American force deployment in Japan or to the use of Japanese bases for combat operations other than in defense of Japan itself. The treaty also covered the limits of the two countries' jurisdictions over crimes committed in Japan by United States military personnel.

Having American bases all over Japan was always controversial in Japan, even though the Japanese remained under U.S. protection. There were massive demonstration and rioting by students and trade union members opposing the treaty in the 1960s. Currently, there are 47,000 U.S. military personnel in Japan--Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps--and another 5,500 American civilians employed there by the U.S. Department of Defense. Every incident of misconduct by U.S. servicemen, such as raping Japanese women, has given rise to demand that the United States diminish its presence in Japan.

Tensions have risen especially high in Okinawa, strategically crucial islands in the Pacific, which the U.S. occupied until 1972. Okinawa has been a center of debates over the American bases in Japan in past because the prefecture of Okinawa is densely populated (it has 1,300,000 people) yet, with 27,000 U.S. military personnel, is the biggest of all the American bases in Japan. Following a number of incidents between Japanese residents and American servicemen, the residents of Okinawa have long demanded moving the bases into a less densely populated area or diminishing their size.\(^\text{174}\) The two sides in fact recently agreed to move 8,000 U.S. troops from Okinawa to Guam.

As a result of the occupation and the security treaty, the United States maintains the presence in Japan. It has worked effectively as a stabilizer of peace in

---

the East Asia, but, at the same time, it remains problematic because of continuing conflicts between local residents and the U.S. military and its servicemen.

**Truman Dismisses MacArthur**  The Korean War brought another change into the occupation of Japan when President Harry Truman designated MacArthur Commander of all United Nations forces in Korea. Then on April 11, 1951, shocking news struck Japan: Truman had dismissed MacArthur from his position on grounds of insubordination. MacArthur was removed from all his commands, including the occupation of Japan.

The *Mainichi* newspaper described MacArthur’s dismissal as “the greatest shock since the end of the war.” By this time, the Japanese had come to trust MacArthur, and they thought they needed his guidance to recover completely. Thus, people felt uncertain at the prospect of sudden independence from the General. Many believed they were not simply ready. Even *Asahi Shimbun*, a liberal newspaper which initially opposed MacArthur’s policy and once suspended publication on orders of the General, indicated doubts. In an editorial entitled “Lament for General MacArthur,” published on the day after Truman’s announcement, the paper stated:

> We have lived with General MacArthur from the end of the war until today... When the Japanese people faced the unprecedented situation of defeat, and fell into the condition of exhaustion and despair, it was General MacArthur who taught us the merits of democracy and pacifism and guided us with kindness along this bright path. As if pleased with his own children growing up, he took pleasure in the Japanese people, yesterday’s enemy, walking step by step toward democracy, and kept encouraging us.

The whole country was filled with a combination of sorrow and gratitude when the time came for MacArthur’s departure on April 16. Prime Minister Yoshida visited the General to thank him for his great contributions to Japan’s reconstruction.

---

175 Manchester, p.782.
176 *Asahi Shimbun*, April 12, 1951; Dower (1999), pp.548-549.
Yoshida made a statement on a national broadcast that “the General’s accomplishments in Japan were one of the marvels of history. It is he who has salvaged our nation from post-surrender confusion and prostration, and steered the country on the road to reconstruction. It is he who has firmly planted democracy in all segments of our society. It is he who has paved the way for a peace settlement. No wonder he is looked upon by all our people with the profoundest veneration and affection. I have no words to convey the regret of our nation to see him leave.”

Even the Emperor paid a last visit to the embassy to share a farewell. Two million Japanese people lined the route from the embassy to the airport, waving to MacArthur and his family with American flags. Some wept. The speakers of both houses of the Diet praised the General’s righteousness, sympathetic understanding, and intelligent guidance. Further, legislators discussed making the General an honorary citizen and erecting a MacArthur Memorial, or a statue in Tokyo Bay.

The Japanese people deeply respected and appreciated MacArthur’s intense devotion to the reconstruction of Japan. Indeed, MacArthur turned down a million-dollar offer to publish a memoir because he wanted to devote all his energies to Japan’s recovery. During the six years of his mission in Japan, he never left Tokyo except to attend the proclamation of independence ceremonies in Manila and Seoul and for his meeting with Truman on Wake Island to discuss the strategy for the Korean situation. Mainichi wrote:

“MacArthur dealt with Japanese people not as a conqueror but a great reformer. He was a noble political missionary. What he gave us was not material aid and democratic reform alone, but a new way of life, the freedom and dignity of the individual... We shall continue to love and trust him as one of the Americans who best understood Japan’s position. We wanted his further help in nurturing our green democracy to fruition. We wanted his

177 Manchester, p.782.
leadership at least until a signed peace treaty had given us a send-off into the world community."

Asahi followed that "We feel as if we had lost a kind and loving father." 179

Following his dismissal by the President, MacArthur was not even allowed to attend the signing ceremony of the peace treaty in San Francisco on September 8, 1951, because he was no longer the supreme commander. But making a peace treaty with Japan and ending the occupation would not have been possible so quickly without MacArthur's tremendous contribution.

For all the outpouring of respect and gratitude on his departure, however, MacArthur's statement at the hearings before the Senate on May 5, 1951 changed the way the Japanese people felt about the General. Japanese nationals felt insulted by the words of MacArthur expressing his view on the Japanese when he was asked if the Japanese could be counted on to defend the freedoms they had gained under the occupation:

Well, the German problem is a completely and entirely different one from the Japanese problem. The German people were a mature race.

If the Anglo-Saxon was say 45 years of age in his development in the sciences, the arts, divinity, culture, the Germans were quite as mature. The Japanese, however, in spite of their antiquity measured by time, were in a very tuitionary condition.Measured by the standards of modern civilization, they would be like a boy of twelve as compared with our development of 45 years.

Like any tuitionary period, they were susceptible to following new models, new ideas. You can implant basic concepts there. They were still close enough to origin to be elastic and acceptable to new concepts.

The German was quite as mature as we were. Whatever the German did in dereliction of the standards of modern morality, the international standards, he did deliberately. He didn't do it because of a lack of knowledge of the world. He didn't do it because he stumbled into it to some extent as the Japanese did. He did it as a considered policy in which he believed in his

179 Manchester, p.782.
own military might, in which he believed that its application would be a shortcut to the power and economic domination that he desired...

But the Japanese were entirely different. There is no similarity. One of the great mistakes that was made was to try to apply the same policies which were so successful in Japan to Germany, where they were not quite so successful, to say the least. They were working on a different level.¹⁸⁰

The Japanese people considered this statement insulting, and it effectively brought end to “MacArthur fever” in Japan. Although MacArthur publicly ordered his troops to treat the Japanese equally and with respect and to learn from them, the testimony indicated that he saw the Japanese differently in his mind. The Japanese people felt terribly disappointed by his private view, because they thought of him as a father figure, not just a political figure. They felt ashamed about how thoroughly they had trusted him and how submissively they had obeyed him, while he held such negative views of the Japanese people. The shock in Japan was so great that the plan for building his memorial was abandoned; no statue was ever built, and designation of honorary citizen had never come to pass. Thus, although MacArthur had made a great contribution to Japan’s recovery from the war, he diminished the reputation and admiration he had built in Japan for six years by his demeaning statement.¹⁸¹

The U.S. occupation left an ambiguous legacy in Japan. However, Japan has never amended what many perceive as an artificial constitute, and continue to struggle with the interpretation of Article 9. At the same time, the Japanese do not know how to deal with controversies over the U.S. military bases throughout Japan. Japan’s economy has become strong enough to compete with the U.S., but Japanese prime ministers have always been loyal to American leaders and have tried to get along with them, even if public opinion in Japan opposed them, for example for the recent

¹⁸⁰ U.S. Senate, Hearings before the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Foreign Relations, Military Situation in the Far East, May 1951, Part I, esp. p.312.
decision to send the Self-Defense troops to Iraq. Since the end of the war, the Japanese have worked hard trying to catch up the American level of economy, technology, modern culture, and standard of living. And the Japanese exceeded the Americans at some sectors such as automobile industry, but Japan continues to look up to the United States. Ultimately, Japan has remained MacArthur’s children even fifty years after achieving sovereignty.
9. The Meaning of the Occupation

Why It Was Successful

The occupation of Japan was successful in large part because of MacArthur’s ability to read the mind and psyche of the Japanese people. As he handled every situation he considered the psychology of the humiliated and defeated people of Japan and made proper decisions, the most significant of which was preserving the Emperor. Second, the occupation was a success because MacArthur had the authority to make policies without interference. If he had to consult other Allies, he might not have been able to enact his policies, no matter how wise. Given a free hand to act, he accomplished all the initial aims smoothly and in a short period. Third, the occupation went smoothly because of the foresight of the Allies in utilizing the existing Japanese institutions of government and the Emperor. They made effective use of existing authorities, which was impossible in Germany because the Allies had to abolish all Nazis that led all the German authorities, and that was why it took longer there. Finally, the unexpected cooperation of Japanese officials and the general population, in response to the tolerant policies and the generous activities of the GHQ, made the reconstruction process easier. Whether as nationals of a vanquished country, or by their nature to obey authority, the Japanese submitted to orders of the occupation forces.

The occupation succeeded because each role was distinguished clearly, and both parties understood and played their roles properly—the Allies as rulers, and the Japanese as the conquered. MacArthur’s charismatic and strong authoritarian personality provided precisely the ruler that the Japanese needed. In an address to the House of Representatives of the United States on April 19, 1951, MacArthur showed his respect toward the Japanese and praised their cooperation with the occupation forces:
The Japanese people since the war have undergone the greatest reformation recorded in modern history. With a commendable will, eagerness to learn, and marked capacity to understand, they have, from the ashes left in war's wake, erected in Japan an edifice dedicated to the primacy of individual liberty and personal dignity, and in the ensuing process there has been created a truly representative government committed to the advance of political morality, freedom of economic enterprise and social justice. Politically, economically and socially Japan is now abreast of many free nations of the earth and will not again fail the universal trust. That it may be counted, upon to wield a profoundly beneficial influence over the course of events in Asia is attested by the magnificent manner in which the Japanese people have met the recent challenge of war, unrest, and confusion surrounding them from the outside, and checked communism within their own frontiers without slightest slackening in their forward progress... I know of no nation more serene, orderly, and industrious—nor in which higher hopes can be entertained for future constructive service in the advance of the human race.\(^\text{182}\)

MacArthur believed one of the things that made the occupation a success was the public respect he gave them: "my insistence that we wanted to learn from the Japanese as well as teach them. It had a great deal to do with restoring a sense of dignity and purpose in their people, and as they regained self-respect and pride, they approached an exchange of ideas with avidity and good will. This mutual respect became the foundation of the basic esteem our two peoples came to have for one another—and enabled the occupation to write a unique and warmly human chapter of world history."\(^\text{183}\) Even if he held racially-biased and paternalistic attitudes toward the Japanese privately, his official attitude appealed to and was appreciated by the Japanese people. His public approach made them willingly cooperate with the occupation forces.

It was also important that the Japanese appreciated the work of the

---


\(^{183}\) MacArthur, Reminiscences, p.283.
occupation authority, even though it came about as a result of losing the war. The occupation forces benevolently helped the Japanese with supplies of food, clothes and medicine when they were suffering from starvation, poverty and exhaustion. The new constitution liberated Japanese people from their state as "subjects" of the empire. Over time, the Japanese came to enjoy freedom in a civilized environment and a high standard of living.

**Why It Was Necessary**

Occupying Japan was necessary for the United States not only to punish the defeated country and secure control there but to establish a friendly country and the presence of the U.S. military bases in the Pacific. By occupying Japan and painting Japan with American colors, America successfully transformed Japan from a menace into one of America's strongest allies. The alliance with Japan gave the U.S. an expanded presence in the Pacific. As MacArthur insisted, "the U.S. frontier lay in Asia."\(^{184}\) This became increasingly important as American relations with the Soviet Union deteriorated and the cold war took shape. The Korean War, in particular, focused the American government's attention in the need to establish Japan as a model of a democratic government and an outpost of American influence in Asia.

For Japan, in hindsight, occupation was necessary. Being occupied was very humiliating, but the Japanese had no option as a consequence of losing the war. Beyond that, however, Japan needed help to recover. The Japanese needed to rebuild the country from a circumstance of despair after the devastation of the war. They also needed a new government and a new leader. In addition, Japan needed aid by the Allies to feed its people at a time of serious hunger and poverty. If the Allies did nothing but disarm the Japanese and punish war criminals, the whole nation of Japan

\(^{184}\) Manchester, p.566.
might have collapsed. If MacArthur had not changed the old feudalistic social system, it would have been impossible for Japan to be a respected member of international community and one of its most industrialized countries, as they are now.

Although there remain several problems and controversies as a legacy of the occupation, overall, the occupation of Japan was necessary for both the United States and Japan, because it established the foundation of close ties between the two countries, which now share the realm of superpowers and lead the world in areas of economy and technology. For the Americans, the occupation of Japan was successful because they changed Japan in the direction they wanted, by disarming, demobilizing, and democratizing a formerly militaristic and imperial enemy. Within a few years after its defeat, Japan had recovered from devastation and despair, established a growing and successful economy, and become one of America’s most cooperative allies. America successfully established its presence in the Pacific, at least in part through keeping a large number of military bases throughout Japan.

**Looking Ahead**      Fifty years have passed since the independence from the occupation, and some problems persist. First, the interpretation of Article 9 in the new constitution, which has always generated controversy, has resurfaced now, as Japan faces the nuclear threat of North Korea. Whether or not Japan can take preemptive action varies depending on how one interprets the clause which ambiguously declares the renunciation of war. Secondly, the generation that experienced the occupation blames America’s influence for what they perceive as the absence of “Japanese morality” among Japan’s young people. They complain that America’s democratization program replaced the Japanese people’s spirit with an American standard. They criticize the younger generations for being individualistic, for showing no respect to elders or parents, and for lacking a harmonious approach with others.
However, it is incumbent on the Japanese people to adjust to the framework established by the occupation. They must be able to teach younger generations if something important if missing for them. The Japanese should not blame everything on the occupation and American influence.

Now that over sixty years have passed, it is getting difficult for the World War II generation to keep telling young people about the war and the experiences they had in post-war years. Many people who survived the war are now getting old and dying, and young generations are not interested in the war and the occupation. However, this is very important especially for the Japanese to keep telling the stories to the next generations to let them learn how their country had changed by the war, by the involvement of the United States, and how their country has grown with Americans’ guidance. The loss of World War II and the following occupation represent the most significant turning point of modern Japanese history. This period is significant for the United States as well, because this is when they established the basis for the present U.S.-Japan relationship.

A Japanese movie “MacArthur’s Children”\(^{185}\) portrays the life in a small town on an island called Awajishima during the early period of occupation. Based on a novel by Yu Aku, which was a fictional account of his own experience, the movie starts with a scene in a classroom with children around ten years old. They are erasing some parts of their textbooks using ink and brushes, which were usually used for calligraphy, with the teacher’s instruction. This scene represents the implementation of the GHQ’s order that all schools erase “inappropriate” phrases from the textbooks, such as expressions praising the Emperor as a God, passages encouraging militaristic or nationalistic ideas, or the ones opposing the Allies. On the day when the occupation

troops landed on the island, children were excited to see “Yankees” coming, but adults were anxious and fearful. A young female teacher tells her students “Our nation is occupied now because we lost the war. But, please do not let your spirit get occupied by them.” And she starts teaching English with tears in her eyes. “I am a boy, I am an American...” and the children repeat the phrase. It shows that children were just enjoying the changes without knowing what was really going on, but adults, like this teacher, had to deal with feelings of humiliation and sorrow of the defeat and with their pride as Japanese.

People of the old generation who lived through this period have complex feelings about the war and the following occupation. Yet they have not, in general, discussed or expressed their thoughts in public. For the most part, as noted, the conquered Japanese people appreciated the humanitarian activities and democratization programs by the occupation forces. At the same time, they wish they could have maintained some aspects of their traditional Japanese morality instead of replacing it totally with American values of freedom and individualism. The following stories are personal experiences and thoughts about the occupation from three individuals who experienced the war and the occupation. From my observation, the people represent views common to their generation:

Izumi Mogi, 80 years old now, was 19 when General MacArthur and his troops landed in Japan. She was Tokyo native, but was evacuated to an outskirt of the city, avoiding the massive raids that struck the heart of Tokyo. She barely realized the nation’s defeat on the day of surrender, she recalls. Although she heard the Emperor speaking to the people for the first time on the radio, and knew that Japan lost the war, she could not believe it because she still saw B-29 airplanes flying above on the day of surrender. She lost two brothers in the war; her house was burned by an air raid;
food was scarce, and she just remembers the hardship of every single day. To her, MacArthur’s arrival seemed like something happening somewhere outside of her world.

Izumi believes she learned to cooperate with and help others through the war time experience. But she admits that she still wonders why all these innocent young people, including her brothers, had to die. That feeling makes her visit Yasukuni Shrine, a monumental shrine in Tokyo where the war dead are buried, every year to mourn for them. She blames the Japanese government of the time for accepting every order the Americans made during the occupation, although she understands they had to. She did not like seeing Japanese people change their attitudes and values so quickly or their following, or copying, the Americans. She thinks that Americans occupied not only the land, but also the core of the people’s spirit. As noted, she is among many Japanese nationals who believe that the country lost traditional values of Japanese morality, which embraced unity and harmony among people, when they adopted the American values of democracy, freedom, and individualism. Now many Japanese argue that Japan lost its nationality with the loss of the war. It was good to adopt democracy and equality in society, Izumi says, but she wishes the Japanese people could have maintained some traditional values and national characteristics. Instead, she thinks, they were just totally Americanized. She insists this has had a bad effect on the young generations who will control the future.\(^{186}\)

Indeed, the Japanese have acted exactly the way MacArthur predicted; the Japanese followed the leader. They always needed authority to follow, and they would do what majority did. The Emperor ordered his people to listen to MacArthur, so they did. Putting so much focus on adopting a new, democratic social system following the

\(^{186}\) Izumi Mogi, *Thoughts on the Postwar Experience*, January, 2006, correspondence to the writer.
guidance by the occupation authorities, the Japanese people failed to preserve their traditional way of thinking or values.

Shigeru Kobayashi, now 75 years old, is only a bit more sanguine in his interpretation. He recalls that GHQ officers often came over to his school to inspect and instruct his teachers. He believes that GHQ tried to pursue their aim to demobilize and democratize Japan mainly by reforming education. They focused on teaching young generations with new idea of democracy so that Japan would not become an America’s enemy again in the future. Now, Shigeru thinks, the Japanese people of his generation can see the remains of the GHQ’s education in current Japan. In that sense, he thinks America’s occupation policy was proved successful for Americans in maintaining Japan as a favorable ally of the United States.

But like Izumi, Shigeru is pessimistic about the current situations in Japan. He complains that people of younger generations have become more individualistic and do not seem like to care about others or respect elderly people any more. He insists that the Japanese way of thinking, which valued family and respected ancestors and parents, worked well to keep the order of society as well as to hold family ties. But GHQ saw that kind of social structure as feudalistic and they took it away in their democratizing program. Thus, the Japanese ceased to value those ideas.

During the occupation period, the people of Japan had no rights to criticize or oppose to the occupation policies as citizens of the defeated country. Even though they achieved a constitutional freedom of expression, opposing activities or publications were strictly controlled by the GHQ. They could not express their dissatisfaction at the time. They had no choice but to obey everything the GHQ ordered. In the long term, by and large, Shigeru thinks that majority of the Japanese have appreciated the United States for bringing democracy to Japan and helping to
Ronald Vanderschaaf, a native of Iowa then 23 years old, was stationed in an Army base called Camp Drake outside of Tokyo during the occupation. His duty at Camp Drake was to handle office work dealing with the repatriation process of Korean nationals in Japan. Although he had no direct involvement with MacArthur during his mission, Ronald recalls the negative impression about the General as an “American dictator in foreign land,” who had a free hand to rule a defeated foreign country. However, Ronald thinks MacArthur’s attitudes were necessary and suited well in the situation. Japan needed a strong dictator to follow in the period of despair. When the Emperor lost his divine power, they needed someone to replace him. To fit that spot, the leader of the occupation had to be a dictator, and MacArthur’s strong personality suited that spot perfectly.

Ronald appreciates the opportunity to live in Japan in that period. Because of the Japanese atrocities during the war, he says, all Americans hated the Japanese, and they believed all the Japanese were bad. However, by going to Japan, he found the people of Japan “were just like us. We were the same human beings.” Getting close to his 80s now, he still thinks it was one of the most important things he did in his life. While he was serving in Japan, he says, he also learned a lot from the Japanese and their life styles, including how to appreciate the natural beauty of the seasons, flowers, plants, and rocks, from Japanese ways of arranging those things with state of simplicity. Thereafter, he became interested in different cultures and peoples. Now after retiring as the principal of a middle school, he has been taking care of and

---

making friends with people from all around the world—Mexico, Hungary, Romania, South Africa and of course, Japan through his volunteer work of teaching English in a little town Holland, Michigan.¹⁸⁸

Each individual who experienced the war and postwar days has his or her own thoughts and opinions; some should be shared, some should be discussed, and some should be reconsidered. Yet, as noted, many people who lived this period have not expressed themselves well. Perhaps it was because the experience was so personal or too sad to recall. However, it is necessary to share those thoughts and keep telling the stories of their valuable experiences to the people of subsequent generations in various ways—by telling, writing, or making films—to inform young people about one of the most significant events of their country’s history.

¹⁸⁸ Ronald Vanderschaaf, Thoughts on the Postwar Experience, February, 2006, correspondence to the writer.
Conclusion

General MacArthur was wise to maintain the institution of the emperor. He understood that the Japanese people needed a spiritual leader during a period of traumatic change and despair. By his wise judgments, his mission to disarm and democratize Japan was accomplished quickly and smoothly. MacArthur guided the Japanese through reconstruction of the aftermath of the war providing them with food and medicine. Within a few years, the United States achieved the transformation of a former enemy into an ally. Some elements of the occupation remain controversial and problematic, including the interpretation of Article 9 of the new constitution; the move to rearm to respond to the threat of communism and the Korean War; the decision of not punishing Emperor Hirohito as a war criminal; the issue of keeping American bases throughout Japan, and the influence of American values on Japanese culture. Nevertheless, MacArthur established the foundation for the reemergence of Japan and the current U.S.-Japan relationship through his six years’ work in Japan. This is why MacArthur’s occupation of Japan was significant.

MacArthur deserves credit for introducing the American values of democracy, freedom and equality into Japan, and for establishing the base for the country to become one of the most affluent and industrialized countries in the world. For Japanese women, achieving opportunities to participate in the society with equal rights with men was an especially significant event. It is hard to imagine what it would have been like had the Allies not occupied and reformed Japan. If the commander had not been MacArthur, Japan might also be very different today.

As noted, not all Japanese people would praise his work entirely. The elder generations who experienced and remember the hardships of the wartime, still have complex feelings for America’s occupation; they witnessed the nation changed
dramatically after the war. But it is the task of those who mourn the loss of traditional values to keep telling subsequent generations of Japanese the stories of their hard times—what they lost, what they gained, what the Allies changed—and teach young generations what they want to maintain in Japanese values. Furthermore, it is up to the Japanese government and policy intellectuals to adjust MacArthur’s legacy if there is something they think does not fit in the current world situation. Five decades later, it is not appropriate to keep blaming every negative aspect of Japanese society on the occupation by the United States.

Historian John Dower says “World War II did not really end for the Japanese until 1952.” In the sense that the Japanese are still debating over legacies of the occupation continue to face accusations regarding their actions in the Pacific during the war, their World War II might not be totally over yet. The Japanese government has to tell people the truth about the history and admit everything Japanese military leaders and troops did abroad during the war. The failure to do so is causing hostility among the Chinese people against the Japanese even now. The Germans have been honest about the Nazis’ wrongdoings. The Japanese citizens should also know the facts, honestly admit past mistakes, and show respect and sincere contrition to the victims. That is the key to building better relationships in the future. Japan must learn from history to improve attitudes and progress.

When considering the relationship between the U.S. and Japan, the Japanese cannot ignore MacArthur’s accomplishments. He is one of the most significant Americans in Japanese history. The rapid growth of Japan’s economy and industry might never have happened without MacArthur’s guidance during the occupation. Unfortunately, MacArthur ultimately diminished the respectful relationship he had

---

with the Japanese, but, we should value his contributions to Japan’s reconstruction and for building the base of the firm relationship between the two big countries in present world. The latter contribution is particularly noteworthy following a brutal war in which peoples of both sides demeaned and hated each other. MacArthur’s work during the occupation helped to remove that sentiment from the people’s minds, helped the Japanese recover, and liberated them from a feudalistic social system.

In sum, the occupation of Japan and MacArthur’s contribution were significant in the history of both Japan and the United States, and it remains meaningful to the present day, as it established the foundation of the U.S.-Japan relationship and for Japan’s role as a leader of the world’s economy and guardian of security in the Pacific. Sixty years have passed since the end of the war, and the legacy of the occupation is still alive. Some aspects remain controversial, some should be adjusted to the current situation. It is important now to reconsider the meaning of the occupation. MacArthur’s legacy includes Japan’s conversion from a militaristic monarchy to a stable democracy, its mixed form of parliamentary democracy, the liberation of Japanese women, and the peace constitution. MacArthur also laid the foundation for Japan’s phenomenal post-war economic growth and its close relationship with the United States. Historians have pointed to the irony of a right-wing military commander with a decidedly imperial style bringing democracy and the liberation of women to Japan. Perhaps as much as anything else, however, it was his imperial bearing that enabled him to effect such changes. In the end, he was the right man for the job.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

CIA, *The World Factbook*


Department of War, Office of the Adjutant General, Machine Records Branch, *Strength of the Army* (Washington, D.C., December 1, 1945)

Dobbins, James, *America's Role in Nation-Building: From Germany to Iraq* (California, Rand, 2003), coeditors: John G. McGinn, Keith Crane, Seth G. Jones, Rollie Lal, Andrew Rathmell, Rachel M. Swanger, Anga Timilsina


Fellers, Bonner, *Answer to Japan*, Bonner F. Fellers papers (Hoover Institution of War and Peace, Stanford University)

______________, *Basic Military Plan for Psychological Warfare Against Japan, with appendices and minutes of the Conference on Psychological Warfare Against Japan* (Manila, 1945, Hoover Institution of War and Peace, Stanford University)


MacArthur Papers, RG-5, 9, 25, (Norfolk, Virginia, The MacArthur Memorial)
Mears, Helen, Mirror for Americans: JAPAN (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company 1948)
Nichi Bei Times
Nippon Times
The Stars and Stripes
Wikipedia, GARIOA
Imperial Rescript on Surrender, August 15, 1945.
http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Imperial_Rescript_on_Surrender
Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan
United States Forces Japan
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Forces_Japan

Japanese Sources:

Asahi Shimbun
Doi, Takako and Gordon, Beate Sirota, Secret Stories behind Establishing Equal Rights for both Sexes (Tokyo, Iwanami, 1996)
Nishi, Toshio, Kuni Yaburete MacArthur (Tokyo, Chuokoron-Shinsha, Inc., 2005)
Sodei, Rinjiro, Dear General MacArthur (Boston, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001)
Sodei, Rinjiro, MacArthur's 2000 Days (Tokyo, Chuokoron-Shinsha, 1976)
Shinoda, Masahiro, MacArthur's Children (Japan Herald, 1984)
Tokyo Shimbun
Tokyo Yomiuri
Yomiuri Hochi Shimbun

95