

## **Chapter 10 - What The Japanese People Accomplished**

### **Japan's role in human history**

September 2015 marked the seventieth anniversary since the Instrument of Surrender was signed in Tokyo Bay aboard the American battleship *USS Missouri*.

My father Kase Toshikazu participated in the surrender ceremony accompanying plenipotentiary Shigemitsu Mamoru.

My father was standing right beside Foreign Minister Shigemitsu as he held back his tears and signed the Instrument of Surrender at the table placed directly in front of General MacArthur.

The night before, his mother Katsu beckoned him to "Please sit beside me, dear."

When my father sat down, she spoke in a firm tone of voice and scolded him. "Your mother did not raise you to become an envoy for a surrender mission. Please don't go."

My father replied, "Mother, I have no choice but to do this, or else Japan will not survive." He told her the whole story straight and explained his reasons.

Still, Katsu was not persuaded.

"This is too much for me to bear," she whimpered as she stood. While sobbing, she prepared a new set of undergarments for my father.

When I was in middle school, I asked my father what was going through his mind while he was on board the *USS Missouri*.

At that time, my father told me, "Although Japan had been defeated in battle, we had liberated the people of Asia from hundreds of years of oppression and enslavement. As I stood on the deck of the *USS Missouri*, I knew in my heart with pride that Japan had actually won the war, insofar as we had led Asia into a great new era of history. Shigemitsu felt the same way."

When he was on the deck, my father noticed that seven or eight small images of the Japanese rising sun had been painted on the battleship's grey hull. Evidently, these represented the number of kamikaze aircraft which the *USS Missouri* had downed. Suddenly, he felt a surge of emotion welling up from inside him, but he knew that he could show no tears in front of an enemy general.

"Never in my life have I had to try so hard to fight back my tears," my father recalled.

As I grew up, I felt the same pride and sorrow that my father did the day that he stood on the deck of the *USS Missouri*. These feelings have still not left me.

The impact of Asia's liberation, which Japan had won at such a high price, was soon felt on the African continent as well. The peoples of Africa, who had been oppressed by Western powers, achieved their independence, one after another.

Japan played a monumental role in human history. Today's world of racial equality was forged through battles fought by Japan.

### **The unbreakable spirit of the Japanese people**

I was in the third grade in elementary school on August 15, 1945 when Japan surrendered to the Allies.

On October 2, my mother Sumako brought me back to Tokyo from Nagano Prefecture where we had evacuated. Tokyo had been reduced to a field of ashes as far as the eye could see.

Our own home, which was located in Shinanomachi in Tokyo's Yotsuya neighborhood, was among those completely incinerated by the air raid of May 25.

Due to his post as Chief of the Foreign Affairs Ministry's North America Section, my father was kept busy conducting negotiations with the US occupation army arriving in Japan. It took him some time before he could return to the house we had rented in Shinanomachi. The next time I saw him, I asked him, with a child's innocence, "Tokyo has been wrecked so badly, but what will happen to Japan?"

My father said to me, "America can destroy Japan, but it can never break the spirit of the Japanese people." My mother also remained strong in the face of adversity. She was thirty-two years old at the time, ten years younger than my father. She wrote the following diary entry on September 14:

"For the last twenty-three days, the newspapers have been releasing lists of war criminals almost every day. General Tojo was ordered to present himself, and it was terrible to hear that he tried to commit suicide and was sent to hospital. I feel pity for him as a fellow Japanese citizen. I think that we will need to steel ourselves mentally to cope with this increasing pressure. A victorious nation can put a defeated nation on trial, but even the United States cannot be the judge of a person's soul. America keeps on stridently insisting that the Japanese people need to be re-educated, but the real problem would be if the people of another nation became infected with America's vain worldview. We have a strong responsibility to exercise leadership here."

### **From conditional surrender to unconditional surrender**

My father returned to the Japanese Foreign Ministry in 1954 at the time of the formation of the Hatoyama Ichiro Cabinet. He became ambassador to the United Nations and secured Japan's admission to the UN in 1956.

Until the day he passed away in 2004, at the age of 101, my father would regularly remind me that, "Japan did not unconditionally surrender," that "The 'pacifist constitution' was not intended to bring peace to Japan," and that "The phrase 'United Nations' is a serious misnomer."

Seventy years have passed since the end of the war, and over that time the Japanese people have gradually deceived themselves over many key facts.

Now, even school textbooks teach that Japan "unconditionally surrendered" at the end of World War II.

However, that is not true. Japan surrendered conditionally by accepting the terms of the Potsdam Declaration.

It was only after MacArthur occupied Japan that the United States began to refer to Japan's "unconditional surrender". By then, the Japanese Army had already been disarmed, and so Japan had no choice but to accept this humiliating falsification of history by the occupation army.

Both the occupation of the Japanese mainland by the Allied Army and the trials of Japanese leaders by the IMTFE were clear violations of the terms of the Potsdam Declaration.

Article Seven of the Potsdam Declaration stated only that, "points in Japanese territory to be designated by the Allies shall be occupied to secure the achievement of the basic objectives we are here setting forth." Article Ten was limited to crimes taking place on the battlefield, demanding only that "stern justice shall be meted out to all war criminals, including those who have visited cruelties upon our prisoners."

Even since Japan regained its independence in 1952, the Japanese government has never spoken a word about how its constitution was imposed by a military occupation in violation of international law.

### **The United Nations are the Allied Powers**

There is one other big lie which the Japanese government has foisted upon its own people.

In the Japanese language, the Allied Powers who opposed Japan during World War II were called *rengo koku*, which literally means "United Nations". And yet, the name of the postwar organization whose headquarters is located in Manhattan, New York, overlooking the East River, was deliberately mistranslated into Japanese as *kokusai rengo*, which actually means, not "United Nations", but "International Union".

This mistranslation of the words "United Nations" as "International Union," ranks alongside Japan's postwar constitution as the biggest factors that have warped the worldviews of Japanese citizens since the end of the war.

There is probably no country in the world with greater affection for the United Nations than Japan. Unfortunately, Japanese people are not aware that their so-called "International Union" was one and the same as the Allied Powers of World War II. Japan is the only country in the world which has mistranslated the name "United Nations" as "International Union".

The English label "United Nations" was first adopted on January 1, 1942, the year following Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor. On that day, representatives from twenty-six countries which were at war with the Axis Powers of Germany, Italy, and Japan met in Washington and promulgated the Declaration by United Nations.

The name came from a speech delivered at the conference by President Roosevelt, who proposed that the Allied Powers fighting Japan and Germany be called the "United Nations".

Japan waged war on the Allied Powers, AKA the "United Nations", for the next three years and eight months. Thus, it was the "United Nations" Air Force which carpet bombed Japan's cities in violation of international law and which slaughtered huge numbers of noncombatants through dropping atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The postwar United Nations was established following a conference in San Francisco in June 1945 while the war was still ongoing, and participation in the war on Japan was a requirement for admission.

The UN Charter was signed by the fifty-one nations fighting Japan. Though Article 4 of the UN Charter had stipulated that membership was "open to all other peace-loving states," the invitation to join was extended only to those nations which had declared war on the Axis Powers before March 1, 1945.

At no point since its creation has the United Nations ever been an instrument for international peace. That is why the so-called "enemy clauses" still exist today as part of the UN Charter.

Therefore, the United Nations should rightfully be regarded as synonymous with the "Allied Powers" of World War II. The Japanese language, however, disguises this fact by referring to the United Nations as the "International Union". The correct term, *rengo koku*, appears only once in the preamble of the Japanese text of the UN Charter.

In fact, both the Japanese Foreign Ministry and Japanese newspapers such as the *Asahi Shimbun* did refer to both the Allied Powers and the postwar United Nations by the proper term of *rengo koku* up to October 1945. After the end of the war, the alternative name "International Union" was ultimately adopted in order to prevent the organization from being an object of popular enmity as the Allied Powers, like America, were. The Foreign Ministry based the mistranslation "International Union" (*kokusai rengo*) off the Japanese name for the prewar League of Nations (*kokusai renmei*).

Ample monetary compensation was offered up by the Japanese government to convince the UN to build the headquarters of the "International Union" University along downtown Aoyama Street. Would we have still wanted to host it, if it were called "The University of the Allied Powers"?

Likewise, a great number of well-meaning Japanese men and women have joined the "International Union" Association of Japan, which has branches across the country, but would they be as enthusiastic about it, if it were called the "'Allied Powers' Association of Japan"?

It is the mistranslation "International Union" which has led so many Japanese to worship the United Nations/Allied Powers as a temple of peace. Apart from Japan, the rest of the world sees the UN as a place of conflict and skullduggery.

### **Deception through euphemism**

The mistranslation of United Nations/Allied Powers as "International Union" was only one of many linguistic contortions which came into practice after World War II.

The occupation army (*senryogun* in Japanese) became known as the occupation forces (*shinchugun*), and the "day of defeat" (*haisen* in Japanese) became simply "the war's end" (*shusen*).

Such rephrasing of words has served to distract from the true situation.

Even now, the Japanese language uses the optimistic turn-of-phrase *ohiraki*, which literally means the opening of a meeting, to describe the time when a party ends. Until the Meiji Era, it was unacceptable to eat four-legged animals, and so the boar's meat was called "mountain whale," while rabbits were equated with birds.

When the Tokugawa Shogunate constructed its seat of government in Edo, modern-day Tokyo, it established the famous red-light district of Yoshiwara. However, Yoshiwara had originally been called Ashiwara, where reeds (*ashi*) grew thickly. Because the Japanese word for "reed" (*ashi*) is a homonym of the word "evil," the superstitious shogunate changed its name to Yoshi("good")wara.

Undoubtedly, Japan's postwar veneration of the "International Union" would never have become so widespread if it had been correctly translated as "Allied Powers".

For the last seventy years, Japan has been twisting the meaning of very important words. However, just as the Japanese Army used to insist on referring to "retreats" as "repositionings," such euphemisms serve only to blind us to reality.

Likewise, Japan continues to call its military a "Self-Defense Force".

When the National Diet debated legislation to broaden Japan's right to self-defense, I came across some men and women standing on the sidewalk in front of the Diet Members' Office Building who were holding signs which said, "Protect Article 9!" This was a reference to Article 9 of Japan's constitution under which Japan renounces the right to go to war.

If Article 9 is so great, I would like to see these people preach its lofty virtues to the peoples of the Middle East and Ukraine!

Obviously, the pious pacifists carrying those signs have an unshakable faith in the inviolability of Article 9.

"The Patriotic March," a song composed before the war in 1937, contains one line which goes, "Our pride in Japan is an unshakable faith". This was a reference to the fact that Japan had never been conquered by a foreign power.

Nonetheless, is Japan's constitution really something that Japanese people should be flaunting to the rest of the world as a source of pride?

Japanese people euphemistically call it a "pacifist constitution", but it is actually an unequal treaty in the guise of a constitution, which was imposed by the US occupation in order to completely disarm Japan and reduce it to the status of a permanent vassal state.

### **Japan's "wrapper culture"**

A major distinguishing characteristic of Japanese culture is its unusual obsession with the exterior or superficial side of things.

If a person graduated from the University of Tokyo, he will be labeled as a "Tokyo University man" until he is eighty or ninety years old.

The packaging used by Takashimaya Department Stores is prized more highly than the packaging used by Seibu Department Stores.

In Japan, the wrapping of a gift is often better than the gift itself.

Moreover, the clothing worn by Japanese women is more lavish and expensive than that of any other culture in the world. Japanese wedding dresses and the costumes used in *kabuki* and *noh* plays are considerably more extravagant than the dresses worn in China by successive empresses or in the Palace of Versailles by Marie Antoinette and the French court.

Until very recently, when a Japanese person received imported brandy or foreign-made Johnnie Walker Black Label, it was always packaged in a box made of fine paulownia wood.

When Mount Fuji was registered as a World Heritage Site, the number of climbers rose precipitously. Similarly, when Tomioka Silk Mill in Gunma Prefecture was awarded the same label, it was deluged with tourists, even though virtually no one had bothered to visit it until then.

This is all indicative of Japan's "wrapper culture". What is known as the Constitution of Japan is only wrapping paper, but even so most Japanese citizens refuse to acknowledge that the actual substance of the document underneath the wrapping is that of an unequal treaty forced upon Japan by the United States at the point of a bayonet.

In fact, peace is not something which can be achieved through hope and prayer. Peace comes only through the collective efforts of the people.

### **Why would a Japanese law book include the US Declaration of Independence?**

Supporters of Article 9 often remind me about how in 1945 the people were preparing to defend mainland Japan armed with only bamboo spears and the hope that "one hundred million kamikaze" would make the land of the Gods invulnerable to attack. They were told that Japan would achieve the final victory thanks to the divine wind of the Gods.

However, I would like supporters of Article 9 to look beyond the superficial exterior of the constitution and think about Japan's future without blinders.

They cherish Japan's constitution as a "pacifist constitution," even though it is an unequal treaty, disguised as a constitution, which was devised with the aim of perpetually disarming Japan so that Japan would be reduced to the status of a vassal state and unable to again pose a threat to the USA. It was not imposed on Japan with Japan's best interests in mind.

I own a copy of the Japanese Compendium of Laws, released in 1972 by Yuhikaku Publishing. The chief editor was Wagatsuma Sakae, a University of Tokyo professor.

Although it was published twenty years after Japan regained its independence, for some reason the title page of its volume on constitutional law includes the full text of the US Declaration of Independence in both Japanese and English.

"We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights..."

The US Declaration of Independence was drafted by Thomas Jefferson, who would become America's third president. And yet, Jefferson was a southern planter who owned many slaves. "All men" actually referred only to white men.

Jefferson wrote the declaration even as his black slaves were shrieking in pain from whippings. This is all sadly absurd.

### **A people who value mind over matter**

Because my father worked in the Foreign Ministry under the new constitution and served as Japan's first ambassador to the United Nations, he was not in a position to speak about the mistranslation of "International Union" or to strongly criticize the "pacifist constitution".

It is a racial characteristic of the Japanese people that we cherish the spirit so much that we often neglect the reality.

Because of this, the true spirit of a Japanese word like *budo* cannot be translated into foreign languages, including English. The standard English translation of *budo* is "martial arts," referring to a set of fighting techniques.

However, in the martial art I practice, karate, what is required is clarity of mind, and the same is true of kendo, judo, and jodo. They do not involve any strategy or any obsession with winning or losing a match. The Japanese word "karate" initially meant "Chinese hand" in reference to its Chinese origins, but its meaning later changed to "empty hand" in reference to the Zen Buddhist motto "emptiness is form".

In kendo, there exists the aphorism, from Miyamoto Musashi's "The Book of Five Rings," that "When swords are crossed it is hell, but to step forward is paradise." Within the Yagyu school of swordsmanship, there is even one branch called the "no sword school". In Japanese archery, pupils are taught to "aim not at your target".

Since the shape of Japanese swords was fixed in the twelfth century, no other types of swords have existed. By contrast, European, Chinese, Indian, and Islamic civilizations all produced a wide variety of swords, each of which was suited for a different form of combat, in the same way that in golf one might use a driver or a type of numbered iron depending on the shot one is making.

Recently, I have been frequently asked to explain martial arts to the many Westerners who are fascinated by the subject. Even so, people from the West and from China find it impossible to understand why it is so important to clear one's mind and fight without concern for life and death or for winning or losing.



Japanese women's clothing is more ornate and expensive than that of any other country in the world, but here also the Japanese word *kitsuke* has no equivalent in any foreign language. Japanese-English dictionaries commonly translate it simply as "garments", but it actually implies a person's manner of bearing as much as it does the beauty of the clothing. The emotional state of the person wearing the clothing is crucial.

Likewise, in Japanese tea ceremonies, flower arrangement, calligraphy, and incense ceremonies, a person's state of mind is central to the art.

The Japanese spirit remains unique among all cultures on planet Earth.

### **John Lennon's praise for Shinto**

On New Years' Day, I pay my respects at Yasukuni Shrine. I have been encouraged these last six or seven years to see many young men and women visit the shrine.

While I'm on the subject of Yasukuni, I would like to describe John Lennon's connection to the shrine.

John used to visit Yasukuni Shrine together with Yoko Ono, my cousin. I got to know John after he married Yoko. The surname Ono is my mother's maiden name.

Because I was the first member of Yoko's family who he met, we hit it off right away.

I met John in New York and in Tokyo. We used to chat about rather silly things. He mentioned to me that he saw a UFO flying over the skies of Manhattan. Once he propped up three silver batons together and likened them to a pyramid. We put our vegetables, meat, and cigarettes underneath and joked that the flavor would be enhanced by "pyramid power".

We also discussed religion and art. I explained to him that in World War II, Japan had been forced by America to go to war for the sake of its own survival.

Because John and Yoko were on the frontlines of the movement against the Vietnam War, which was another instance of America illegally forcing war upon another country, John probably saw World War II through the same prism.

John was an extremely kind man. I have never known another person with such a gentle heart.

John had a true affinity for Japan, and he was especially fascinated by the Shinto faith.

One of the big hits John wrote and composed was the song "Imagine," which captured the hearts of young people around the world. John wrote the song together with Yoko. However, it set off a strong backlash in the Christian world due to its denial of monotheism. The song contains lyrics like "Imagine there's no heaven, It's easy if you try, No hell below

us, Above us only sky" and "Nothing to kill or die for, And no religion too, Imagine all the people, Living life in peace."

I had told John that Shinto has no such absurd concepts as a heaven somewhere high in the sky or a hell deep within the Earth. I had explained to him that our heaven is the whole world, including the seas, rivers, forests, and mountains. Because humans too are just one part of the Earth, we worship nature and vow to not damage or pollute it.

I illustrated my explanation of Shinto to him by referring to Winnie the Pooh, a small bear known to all the children of Britain.

Winnie the Pooh is the protagonist of a series of children's stories set in the forests of England where many types of animals live. Pooh enjoys a playful existence with his friends in the forest and goes on adventures with the other animals.

There are no churches in the forest. For Pooh and his friends, the forest is their heaven, and in the forest, all the animals are equal. It is just like a Shinto sacred grove. For Japanese people, the animals, sea life, insects, and plants are all our friends.

John also visited Ise Grand Shrine together with Yoko.

I told John that, whereas love in Christianity is not without conditions, harmony in Japanese Shinto surrounds us all completely. He nodded in approval.

John used to go to Japanese language school to study Japanese several times a week. His favorite expression was *okagesama* ("thank you"), which he told me "is the most beautiful phrase in the world. There is no other phrase quite so marvelous."

He wrote the Japanese that he was learning in Romanized Japanese in his notebook, and each word was accompanied by an amusing doodle. I praised him for his work, and the next time I saw him he presented me with the notebook, bound in a black leather cover and autographed with the message "For dear cousin Hide."

I believe that "Imagine" is a song about the Shinto world.

The world today is full of unceasing bloodshed due to religious conflict. I think that if the spirit of Shinto were more widespread, people would be able to coexist peacefully with one another.

Once, when I was giving a lecture on Japanese culture, I mentioned that John and Yoko had visited Yasukuni Shrine, and a young lady in the audience immediately blurted out, "That can't be true!"

I responded by telling her, "I have a photo of the two of them taken at the entrance of the shrine." She gave me a displeased look and said, "This must be some sort of mistake..."

The photograph was taken by the Associated Press when the two of them were entering the shrine to pay their respects. John still had long hair at that time.

### **The spirit of gratitude of the kamikaze**

Why was it that over 10,000 kamikaze willingly sacrificed their lives for their homeland during World War II? For a long time, I have been searching for the answer. More than 10,000 perished if we add together all suicide attacks carried out by aircraft pilots, boat and submarine crew, and paratroopers.

The Japanese expressions used to express gratitude before and after a meal are, respectively, *itadakimasu* and *gochisosama*, which literally mean "I humbly accept" and "That was a great meal". These words have no equivalents in any foreign language.

In neighboring Korea, before a meal they say *chal mǒk ket sŭm nida*, which literally means "I shall eat sufficiently", whereas in China they say *kaishi chifan*, which literally means "Now I will eat". After a meal Koreans say *chal mǒ gŏt sŭm nida*, and once sated the Chinese say *haochi fanle*, both of which mean "I ate sufficiently."

Europeans and Americans start a meal with the French expression, *bon appétit*, and end by saying "I enjoyed it."

Pious Christians would instead start their meals with a short prayer of gratitude to the Almighty God. However, they wouldn't bother to give any thanks either to the plants, animals, and sea life they were about to consume, or to nature, their ancestors, and the people around them.

By contrast, Japan is a culture where we continually express gratitude to one another. We greet one another with *osewa ni narimasu* ("Thank you for your support"), even when we aren't actually asking for anything specific.

Christianity is called the "religion of love", but Christian love is not love as Japanese people normally understand the concept.

Christianity was born from Judaism where if a person loves God, then God reciprocates that love. Thus, it is a love that comes with conditions. This agreement is referred to as the "Covenant with God".

The Christian Bible is comprised of two holy books, the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament, considered by Christians to be the "Old Covenant" with God, is the only one used in Judaism, whereas the New Testament, considered by

Christians to be the "New Covenant" with God, is the holy book composed after the birth of Jesus Christ.

This Covenant with God is the most fundamental tenet of Christianity. In the Old Testament, the Jews are referred to as "the people of the Covenant". Christianity is inclusive to all people, and those who subscribe to the faith have each made a personal commitment to God. Islam too is a covenant-based religion, and Muslims recognize the holy books of Christianity and Judaism alongside their own holy book, the Quran.

My heart feels warmest, not when my wife tells me that she loves me, but when she says those two beautiful words, "Thank you".

My spirit is nourished each time that I express my gratitude to nature, to the Gods, to my ancestors, to my parents, and to my neighbors. Our souls exist only to appreciate others.

The faith of the Japanese people is based upon the spirit of gratitude.

In Japan, we understand that each individual is kept alive only thanks to all other things around him, and so our culture emphasizes the gratitude we feel towards others. We are grateful, not to any one specific object, but rather to everything in our lives, including nature, the Gods, our parents, our ancestors, our land, and our country. Until the end of World War II, this list was condensed into words like "Emperor" and "nation".

I believe that the kamikaze, a phenomena which have never been seen in any other country or anywhere else in world history, represent the pure manifestation of this spirit of gratitude.

### **The emotional sensitivity of the Japanese people**

There are some people who abhor Yasukuni Shrine. I have never managed to understand why they are so unable to love their own country or the spirits of those soldiers who gave up their lives for it.

Out of all the many countries in the world, only Japan boasts an imperial dynasty which has survived for 125 generations. The Imperial House is what makes Japan Japan.

Why is it that the Emperor has been Japan's most venerated and esteemed figure ever since the foundation of the Japanese state?

Shinto is an animistic faith which believes that spirits reside within all things. Among all the world's developed countries, only Japan adheres to an animistic faith. Moreover, the Shinto faith and the Imperial House share the same roots.

Japanese people have believed in the ubiquitous nature of the spirits since ancient times, a belief which sprang from pure intuition. The Japanese knew intuitively that everything in the universe was sacred.

Nevertheless, for a long time these beliefs had no name. The word "Shinto" entered the Japanese language relatively recently. It first appeared in the *Nihon Shoki*, the second oldest work of Japanese history, which was completed in AD 720.

Shinto has existed for as long as Japan has existed, but the word "Shinto" came into use only after the introduction of Buddhism in order to distinguish the two.

Rational modes of thinking were imported to Japan from continental China alongside Buddhism.

Shinto is based on spiritual intuition, and therefore has no connection to the religions which ask their followers to exercise their minds. This is the reason why Shinto, unlike Buddhism and the other continental import of Confucianism, still uses no sacred scripture.

Buddhism and Confucianism proved very useful as the Japanese nation developed. Buddhism and Shintoism were not in conflict with one another, but rather drew lessons from one another and intermixed.

Whereas reason ultimately supplanted intuition in China, Europe, and the Middle East, in Japan, Shinto lost none of its strength.

The Emperors have reigned as spiritual sovereigns for 125 generations, and under their guidance, Shinto too has endured to the present day.

And yet, in the West, religious scholars deem rational monotheism to be a trait of "mature religions", and they look down on animism as being "primitive religion".

In China, Europe, and the Middle East, people fought endlessly over their own sound or unsound rationalizations. Each side held fast to their own ideals of good and evil, which were constructed on the basis of their own ways of reasoning, and they competed for power. Dynasties rose and fell with great frequency.

Because Japanese people have valued intuition above all, our society has never been ruled by rationalism.

In Japan, no person would decide on his or her own what is good and what is evil. Japanese people make judgments based on our emotional sensitivity to what is pure and beautiful, and to what is impure and unsightly.

#### **A society where gods and men are equal**

Amaterasu is the chief deity in Shinto, but she is not an omnipotent and all-powerful Supreme Being like the God of the Abrahamic religions or the Chinese Lord of Heaven. Amaterasu did not create the universe. According to the *Kojiki*, the oldest work of Japanese

history which was completed in AD 712, the universe created itself through its own power without requiring the intervention of the gods.

In Chinese mythology, mankind was created by a half-snake goddess. The humans who she crafted with great care became the governing elite of the Earth, while the humans who she threw together in a rough manner became the common people.

To this day, China is a hierarchical, class-based society. In Europe too, strong class distinctions continue to exist. In the United States, discrimination against African-Americans remains a major social problem.

On the other hand, Japan has developed as an egalitarian society. Both we on Earth and the gods above are all equally kings in our own right.

### **What if Roosevelt had been assassinated?**

The course of history can seem incredible when examined retrospectively.

Franklin Roosevelt was elected to office in the presidential election of 1932. Currently, the inauguration ceremony for a new president takes place in the January following the election, but at the time it was held two months later in March.

On February 15, 1933, Roosevelt went to Miami, Florida, for a vacation as president-elect. That evening, a welcoming party was held in Bayfront Park in honor of the incoming president.

Over seven thousand citizens had crowded into the park's outdoor amphitheater.

The mayor of Chicago, Anton Cermak, came to the reception from Chicago to meet Roosevelt, who was standing beside him at that moment.

Roosevelt gave a short speech, and as he was handing the microphone over to the mayor of Miami, five shots rang out.

Giuseppe Zangara, a bricklayer and anarchist, shot at Roosevelt with a .32-caliber revolver at a distance of ten meters. By some miracle, the bullets missed Roosevelt and hit Cermak in the chest.

With his last breaths, Cermak uttered to Roosevelt, "Mr. President, I'm glad it was me instead of you." Cermak was rushed to hospital, but did not survive.

If Zangara had fatally shot Roosevelt instead, the next month Vice President-Elect John Nance Garner would have taken office as the thirty-second president of the United States.

Garner was a neutralist who fervently believed that the United States should not become entangled in overseas wars.

If Roosevelt was assassinated and Garner became president, I am fairly certain that the war between the United States and Japan would never have happened.

### **To Conclude**

For humankind, the greatest event of the twentieth century was the disappearance of the "color line," which measured the worth of humans and divided them based on the color of their skin.

Even now, seventy years after the end of the war, Washington demands that Japan adhere to its war apology statements, the Murayama Statement and the Kono Statement, and that it continually express remorse over its actions during World War II.

Russia is at least able to claim justice for having overthrown Nazi Germany in World War II. Like Russia, China has also become a pariah due to its threats against neighboring countries. Though the People's Republic of China was not actually one of the victor powers, even China can at least dishonestly claim justice for having brought militaristic Japan to heel.

And what about the United States? The United States is trying to Americanize the world, all the while flaunting its infallibility and portraying itself as the most righteous nation on the face of the Earth.

America too wants to prove that its cause during World War II was just. Nonetheless, America is very wrong to insist that only Japan need make amends for its actions during the war.

Shouldn't America admit that it was wrong to have forced the war upon Japan? Japan was fighting a just war purely for the sake of its own survival.

When Prime Minister Abe Shinzo referred to the Japan Self-Defense Forces as an "army", he was lambasted in the Diet.

On July 31, 1952, three months after Japan regained its independence, Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru told the Diet that, "It is within our mandate that this force form the foundation of a new national army." Even so, no one in the Diet raised a word of objection.

On November 3 of the next year, Yoshida told the House of Representatives Budget Committee that, "The Self-Defense Forces are an army without the capacity to make war." Again, the opposition parties never found any fault with his comment.

However, when a female Diet member recently uttered the prewar phrase *hakko ichiu* (world brotherhood), she too was harangued by her colleagues in the Diet.

Whenever did the Diet of Japan become the National Assembly of South Korea, where anti-Japanese attacks are a daily routine?

The phrase *hakko ichiu* comes from the *Nihon Shoki*. Are people saying that the *Nihon Shoki*, one of the oldest works of Japanese history, is a book that the Japanese should be ashamed of?

On March 8, 1956, Foreign Minister Shigemitsu Mamoru, who was serving in the cabinet of Prime Minister Hatoyama Ichiro, stated to the House of Councilors' Budget Committee that, "Japan's actions during World War II contributed to the independence of the nations of Southeast Asia."

On January 24, 1974, Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei remarked that, "Japan's rule over the Korean Peninsula was beneficial to the Korean people." No one in the Diet or anywhere else in Japan objected to what he had said.

The more the memory of the war faded away, the more the nation's sanity faded as well.

The Emperor and Empress visited Palau in April, 2015, and though they were able to stay aboard a Japan Coast Guard patrol boat, why did not Japan send escort from the Maritime Self-Defense Force, designated as the Imperial Flagship?

The Air Self-Defense Force flies the "Prime Minister's Flag" when the prime minister is aboard, but there is no "Emperor's Flag". If there is a flag for the prime minister, then why can't there be one for the emperor?

That is a question I can answer. It is because Japan is not a country. Many irresponsible Japanese people treasure the "pacifist constitution," but it should properly be called the constitution of a vassal state. The use of the term "self-defense force" to mean "army" and the use of the term "pacifism" to effectively mean "submission" clearly reflect the mentality of a fallen nation.

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-Kase Hideaki

### **About Kase Hideaki**

Kase Hideaki is an active commentator on diplomatic affairs. He was born in Tokyo in 1936 and has studied at Keio University, Yale University, and Columbia University. He was the first Editor-in-Chief of Britannica International Encyclopedia, the Japanese-



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