

Chapter 5 - Freedom From Racial Discrimination

Emperor Hirohito's thoughts on racial discrimination

In the United States, Japanese people were the object of contempt and subjected to atrocious discrimination.

In 1924, the United States Congress passed the Asian Exclusion Act. Japanese immigrants were not permitted to own either land or a house. The children of Japanese immigrants were barred from public schools.

Although an exclusion movement against Japanese immigration had already been active in California for some time, the people of Japan viewed the Asian Exclusion Act as an unbearable humiliation and were outraged by it.

Nitobe Inazo, the famous author of "Bushido: The Soul of Japan," had taken classes at Sapporo Agricultural College taught by American agricultural scientist William Clark, and later, as a young man, studied in the United States. From 1920, he worked as Undersecretary-General for the League of Nations. However, he was so devastated by the mounting American anti-Japanese movement, that he declared, "I shall never again set foot in the United States."

In 1946, Emperor Hirohito spoke candidly to his close aides about what had provoked the war between Japan and the United States:

"If you ask me what caused the war, I would say it all goes back to the contents of the peace treaty signed after the end of World War I [in 1919 at the Versailles Peace Conference in Paris]. The Racial Equality Proposal upon which Japan had insisted was rejected by the great powers. After this, the feeling persisted that people of yellow skin were being discriminated against by people of white skin. Such things like California's refusal to accept Japanese immigrants were enough to provoke deep resentment in the Japanese mind. Once the militarists had risen up amidst this climate of national anger, it was no easy task to restrain them."

In the year 2000, Takushoku University celebrated its one hundredth anniversary. Takushoku University had been founded in 1900 as the Taiwan Association School in order to train talented students to do development work abroad.

Emperor Akihito attended the commemorative ceremony, and in his address he remarked, "The song of this university extols the ambitions of young people to go adventuring abroad, and at the same time cautions them to 'Never discriminate, on the basis of color or land, against anyone who stands before you.' It seems to me that many students from that time left university for an unknown world holding that vision in their hearts."

In his address, Akihito was undoubtedly channeling the thoughts of his father Hirohito.

"Self-preservation and self-defense" and the liberation of Asia

Japan was involved in World War II because the United States provoked the Japanese, drove them into a corner, and finally forced them to fight purely for their own self-preservation and self-defense.

Japan did not, however, go to war in order to liberate Asia from Western colonial rule. It was only after the start of the war that Japan decided to make Asian liberation one of its war aims.

The Imperial Declaration of War against the United States and Great Britain stated that "Given the situation, the Empire must now stand up resolutely and destroy all obstacles for the sake of our own self-preservation and self-defense." In the declaration, the Emperor lamented that going to war was "not at all what I desired". The Japanese could simply not bear the unjust pressure America was applying to them, and so, for their own self-preservation and self-defense, finally rose up to resist.

Although Japan was fighting in self-defense, the Imperial Declaration of War also stated in its conclusion that Japan "hopes to establish a lasting peace in East Asia which will maintain the glory of the Empire."

Thus, Japan aspired to establish a lasting peace in Asia by liberating it from the Western powers.

Many Japanese youths died on the battlefield with conviction for the cause of Asian liberation. Thanks to Japan's sacrifices, not only Asians but Africans were eventually liberated.

Following the end of the war, the ripples of Asian liberation carried over to the continent of Africa, where African nations, one after the other, would gain independence.

Bert V.A. Roling on the illegality of the Tokyo War Crimes Trial

At the Tokyo War Crimes Trial, which was held under the American occupation, Radhabinod Pal of India was not the only justice among the eleven to submit verdicts which dissented from the majority view. The two others were Bert V.A. Roling of the Netherlands and Henri Bernard of France.

Their dissenting verdicts were restricted from the Japanese public during the American occupation.

Roling, who came to be renowned as a world authority on international law, published a memoir later in his life entitled "The Tokyo Trial and Beyond".

In this book, Roling concludes that the Tokyo War Crimes Trial was illegal:

Racial discrimination may have been one of the roots of the Pacific War... [The Americans] were more or less indoctrinated to look on the Japanese as a sub-human race. The bombing of the Japanese cities, followed by the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, was made possible by precisely that feeling that it was not human beings they were cremating by the hundreds of thousands... In Japan, we were all aware of the bombings and the burnings of Tokyo and Yokohama and other big cities. It was horrible that we went there for the purpose of vindicating the laws of war, and yet saw every day how the Allies had violated them dreadfully. But to claim that there should be a trial in which vanquished and victors should both be held in judgement, that's impossible. Tojo was right that in this respect Tokyo was victors' justice only.

Roling also described in detail the circumstances leading up to the war, explaining that Japan's war aim was to create an "Asia for the Asians". He also noted that, "there was no intention to expel the powers from Asia by military force. Japan's military might was to serve a deterrent function only."

The birth of 164 independent nations

As I watched the television broadcast of the Imperial Funeral of the recently deceased Emperor Hirohito, I could not hold back my tears. It was not because I felt sorrow at the death of the Emperor, who had lived a long life.

I had heard from the TV commentary that the representatives and heads of state of 164 countries had come from all over the world to express their condolences, and at that moment I was gripped with admiration for how glorious Emperor Hirohito's reign had been for Japan.

The fact that the world then contained 164 independent nations was made possible only through the sacrifices made by all of Japan during World War II. The peoples of Asia and Africa had been liberated and all become independent.

It reminded me of the old Japanese legend in which one of the gods immolates herself in the process of giving birth to Japan and then travels to the underworld. I imagined in my mind the thought of everyone attending the funeral in the presence of the spirits of the millions of Japanese people who perished in the war.

If Japan had lost the Russo-Japanese War and had not been willing to suffer such terrible losses during World War II, then the people of Asia and Africa would still today be living under oppressive Western colonial rule.

Less than twenty countries sent delegates to attend the funeral of Emperor Meiji in 1912. By the time of the Taisho period (1912-1926) Japan was already a major power, ranking

equally with Western nations, but even Emperor Taisho's funeral was attended by delegates from less than forty countries.

With most of Africa and Asia dominated under white colonialism, the world contained few independent nations.

In an entry dated December 9, 1941, the day after the outbreak of the war, "The Official Record of the Life of Emperor Hirohito" states that, "A ceremony was undertaken on the occasion of the declaration of war. At 9:45 AM the Emperor left through the gate of the inner courtyard to worship at the imperial shrines Kashikodokoro, Koreiden, and Shinden, and will make the following proclamation to the gods."

In the proclamation, the Emperor states that, "In accordance with the teachings of successive emperors, I have wished for universal brotherhood and strived to seek friendship and harmony with other nations. In spite of this, we have come to a point where the very existence of our country is in jeopardy. As terribly regrettable as it is, we have gone to war with the United States and Great Britain."

The Kashikodokoro, Koreiden, and Shinden are located on the grounds of the Imperial Palace and are sites of worship for, respectively, the Shinto deity Amaterasu, the souls of past emperors, and spirits from across Japan.

In keeping with the spirit of the song of Takushoku University, Japan had never practiced any form of racial discrimination throughout its history. *Shikai mina doho* (universal brotherhood) and *hakko ichiu* (world unity) were principles which had been passed on by each emperor to his successor.

Now, even members of the Japanese parliament are afraid to say the words "*hakko ichiu*".

Japanese dictionaries define *hakko ichiu* as, "A phrase which literally means 'eight cords, one roof' and refers to world unity. It was a slogan used to justify Japanese overseas expansionism at the time of World War II. It is based on a passage from the *Nihon Shoki*, an ancient work of Japanese history, which reads, 'Thereafter, the Capital may be extended so as to embrace all of the six cardinal points and the eight cords may be covered so as to form one roof.'"

Japan's non-discriminatory administration

Japan fought alongside the Allies during World War I, and, as a result of their victory, Japan was awarded control in 1920 of Palau, the Marshall Islands, and the Mariana Islands of the Western Pacific including Saipan, Tinian, and Peleliu. These islands had been territories of Spain since the sixteenth century, but were later ceded to Germany.

Following Japan's defeat in World War II, the mandates were transferred to America.

Even though Japan's administration of the islands lasted only a little over twenty years, the inhabitants still look fondly to Japan. In contrast to their previous European rulers, the Japanese did not discriminate against the islanders, but instead strived to improve their level of education and standard of living.

Nowadays racial equality is a concept taken for granted by people around the world, but that itself was the result of what Japan did during World War II.

Even if Japan had won the war, Japan would not have wantonly plundered from the nations of Asia, unlike the Western powers.

Japan's administration of Taiwan and Korea proves this to be true.

Western colonies were characterized by a one-sided exploitation of the ruled by the rulers. By contrast, Japanese governance brought Taiwan and Korea, both pre-modern societies, into the modern world in a very short period of time.

In Taiwan and Korea, Japan implemented improvements in education and public welfare, built many new schools, hospitals, and railroads, repaired irrigation and flood control infrastructure, and developed agriculture and industry. Japan invested a huge quantity of money in Taiwan and Korea.

Japan also founded prestigious institutes for higher learning, Taipei Imperial University in Taiwan and Keijo Imperial University in Korea. By contrast, Western powers never established a single university in their colonies.

Before Japanese rule, Korean society was entirely stagnant under the rule of the corrupt Joseon Dynasty. Joseon Korea proclaimed its independence as the Korean Empire in 1897, just after Japan's victory in the First Sino-Japanese War, but prior to that it was a Chinese tributary state. Because of this, Chinese influence impaired Korean political culture.

South Korean President Park Chung-hee lamented in one of his writings that, "To put it briefly, in the last 5,000 years of history Korea has alternated between periods of stagnation and periods of retrogression. When I reflect on the history of my people, I cannot deny that it is a sad story."

In 1981, President Chun Doo-hwan likewise mentioned, in a speech on National Liberation Day, commemorating the end of Japanese rule over Korea, that "Koreans should not blame Japan for the humiliation of having lost our national sovereignty. At the time we were a weak nation lacking in internal unity, and for that we have only ourselves to blame."

Taiwan and Korea were able to achieve such spectacular progress as a result of Japan freeing them from the yoke of China.

If Korea had remained a Chinese tributary state, it would probably still today be at the same level of development as mainland China. If Korea had become a Russian colony, it would probably be at a similar level of development as the former Soviet Republics of Central Asia.

Korean support for the Japanese administration

We mustn't forget that Korean people under the Japanese administration were legally Japanese citizens during World War II and were strongly supportive of the war effort.

In Japanese-ruled Korea, six of the thirteen provincial governors were Korean and so were a majority of the 218 subordinate county magistrates. Relative to Korea's population and land area, the number of police officers in Korea at this time was far fewer than the number needed in Japanese-ruled Taiwan, Sakhalin Island, and the Liaodong Peninsula.

In the Japanese Army, many Koreans led Japanese soldiers as general officers or high-ranking commissioned officers. There were also a great number of Koreans who were awarded the Order of the Golden Kite, the most prestigious decoration bestowed to soldiers.

By contrast, it would have been utterly improbable in European or American colonies for indigenous officers to outrank and command whites.

In 1938, when the Japanese Army instituted a volunteer enlistment system in Korea, there was a flood of applicants, amounting within three years to forty-five times the enlistment quota. When the Japanese Navy began accepting volunteers in Korea the next year, the number of applications was more than sixty-two times the enlistment quota. If Japan's rule over Korea had really been so cruel, it is not likely Koreans would have cooperated to this extent.

Starting in 1939, Koreans were permitted to change their names to Japanese names. Over eighty percent of Koreans rushed to select new names for themselves, whereas in Taiwan only two percent did.

Today Koreans are taught that Japan robbed them of their identities by forcing them to adopt Japanese names, but this has no factual basis. There were Korean general officers, high-ranking commissioned officers, and members of the Korean royal family who chose to keep their Korean names.

Even in Japan, there are those who continue to insist that Japan apologize for its "colonization" of Taiwan and Korea, but it's strange how these same people never dare criticize China's brutal "colonization" of Tibet, Inner Mongolia, and of the Uyghurs of Xinjiang.

Koreans were never discriminated against in Japan. In 1932, Bak Chun-geum ran, under his Korean name, as a candidate for the House of Representatives in the Tokyo 4th District

(now the ward of Koto). He was ultimately elected to two terms, despite the fact that most of the electorate was Japanese.

A photo of Bak Chun-geum, which was taken after he had won his first election, shows him surrounded by a large group of kimono-clad women who are shouting cheers of "banzai!" After the war, he served as an advisor to the Korean Residents Union in Japan.

Granted, Japan's lower classes did express some degree of contempt and discrimination against Koreans in Japan. This was because ethnic Koreans who migrated to Japan from the Korean peninsula outcompeted them for jobs.

It was the same situation in America of the late-1980s, when riots by African-Americans consistently targeted Korean shops. This occurred because of the spread of "Korean towns" in which Korean immigrants took low-paying jobs once held by African-Americans. Before the growth of Korean immigrant communities, African-Americans attacked Jews for the same reason.

If Japan had never been dragged into World War II, our judgment of Japan's administration of Taiwan and Korea would probably be very different today.

The treatment of Native Americans and Africans by the white man

During the 1904-05 Russo-Japanese War, Japan fought with and defeated Russia, a preeminent European empire. Japan's victory awakened the colored peoples of the world by proving that even people of color could defeat a white empire in battle.

It was back in 1620, at the start of the seventeenth century, that the United States was founded by Puritans, who crossed the Atlantic Ocean to escape persecution and landed on the eastern shores of North America.

The founders of America believed the vast North American wilderness was land given to them by God, and they exploited everything they could lay their hands on. The Native Americans were seen as little better than animals and were slaughtered.

Because this new land was theirs by Divine Right, European settlers in America felt free to take anything they pleased, including both the land and the lives of the people who inhabited it. To them, the Native Americans were merely a sort of animal with a human appearance.

The celebrated British author Cecil Chesterton (1879-1918) wrote in his book, "A History of the United States," that "None of the other founders of English colonies [in the New World] had ever treated the Indians except as vermin to be exterminated as quickly as possible."

The Britannica International Encyclopedia states that "The formation and development of the Thirteen Colonies of North America was undertaken with the understanding that Native Americans would be 'cleansed' and African slaves would be 'imported'."

According to research carried out in the United States, at the time that the Puritans landed on the east coast, there were three million Native Americans living in North America, but by the nineteenth century this figure had dropped to just 300,000.

Furthermore, even the very first European colonies in the United States used African slaves. It is estimated that by the time of the release of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, over seven million black slaves had been abducted from Africa and forced to work in the United States under horrible conditions.

Native Americans were not as docile, and therefore unsuitable as slaves. Africans could be transported more cheaply than horses or oxen, and they lived longer than either.

The internment of the Japanese-Americans

Immediately after the outbreak of war with the attack on Pearl Harbor, a single Executive Order by the President designated over 120,000 Japanese-Americans with US citizenship as enemy aliens. All of their hard-earned property was confiscated, and they were permitted to carry with them only their personal belongings as they were herded into the internment camps set up in ten remote locations across the United States.

This was a serious violation of the United States Constitution. German-Americans and Italian-Americans, who were also descended from people of enemy nations, were never interned in the United States.

In the internment camps were row after row of horse stables and hastily constructed hovels surrounded with barbed wire. The living conditions and sanitation were atrocious. From atop the watchtowers, which were equipped with searchlights, American soldiers constantly stood guard with rifles in hand.

In his book, "War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War," John Dower, a famous historian and professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, described the facilities where the Japanese-Americans were interned:

[Japanese-Americans] were not merely driven from their homes and communities on the West Coast and rounded up like cattle, but actually forced to live in facilities meant for animals for weeks and even months before being moved to their final quarters in the relocation camps. In the state of Washington, two thousand Japanese-Americans were crowded into a single filthy building in the Portland stockyard, where they slept on gunnysacks filled with straw. In California, evacuees were squeezed into stalls in the stables at racetracks such as Santa Anita and Tanforan. At the Santa Anita assembly center, which eventually housed eighty-five hundred Japanese-Americans, only four days elapsed

between the removal of the horses and the arrival of the first Japanese-Americans; the only facilities for bathing were the horse showers, and here as elsewhere the stench of manure lingered indefinitely. Other evacuees were initially housed in horse or cattle stalls at various fairgrounds. At the Puyallup assembly center in Washington (which was called Camp Harmony), some were even lodged in converted pigpens."

Inhumane treatment of Japanese soldiers

Given that most white Americans despised the Japanese people, they did not see them as fellow human beings. Therefore, they did not treat Japanese soldiers on the battlefield as human beings either.

Charles Lindbergh became an American national hero in 1927 for being the first person to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean.

At the outbreak of World War II, Lindbergh volunteered for service with the rank of colonel. While fighting in the Pacific Theater, Lindbergh kept a detailed diary:

The sergeant saw no Jap to shoot, but members of the patrol took a prisoner. The Jap prisoner was brought to the sergeant with the statement that here was his opportunity to kill a Jap.

'But I can't kill that man! He's a prisoner. He's defenseless.'

'Hell, this is war. We'll show you how to kill the son of a bitch.'

One of the patrol members offered the Jap a cigarette and a light, and as he started to smoke an arm was thrown around his head and his throat 'slit from ear to ear.'

The entire procedure was thoroughly approved by the general giving the account. I was regarded with an attitude of tolerant scorn and pity when I objected to the method... 'It's the only way to handle them.'

The talk drifted to prisoners of war and the small percentage of Japanese soldiers taken prisoner. 'Oh, we could take more if we wanted to,' one of the officers replied. 'But our boys don't like to take prisoners.'

'We had a couple of thousand down at -----, but only a hundred or two were turned in. They had an accident with the rest. It doesn't encourage the rest to surrender when they hear of their buddies being marched out on the flying field and machine guns turned loose on them.'

'Or after a couple of them get shot with their hands up in the air,' another officer chimed in. (Diary entry of June 26, 1944.)

I am shocked at the attitude of our American troops. They have no respect for death, the courage of an enemy soldier, or many of the ordinary decencies of life. They think nothing whatever of robbing the body of a dead Jap and call him a 'son of a bitch' while they do so. I said during a discussion that regardless of what the Japs did, I did not see how we could gain anything or claim that we represented a civilized state if we killed them by torture. 'Well, some of our boys do kick their teeth in, but they usually kill them first,' one of the officers said in half apology.' (Diary entry of June 28)

Our men think nothing of shooting a Japanese prisoner or a soldier attempting to surrender. They treat the Jap with less respect than they would give to an animal, and these acts are condoned by almost everyone. We claim to be fighting for civilization, but the more I see of this war in the Pacific the less right I think we have to claim to be civilized. (Diary entry of July 15)

[The Japanese soldiers did not dare] to surrender even if they wished to, because they know only too well that our soldiers would shoot them on sight even if they came out with their hands above their heads. (Diary entry of July 21)

In 1946, the American war correspondent Edgar Jones wrote in an article for "The Atlantic Monthly" that American soldiers in the Pacific Theater had "shot prisoners in cold blood, wiped out hospitals, strafed lifeboats, killed or mistreated enemy civilians... [and] boiled the flesh off enemy skulls to make table ornaments for sweethearts, or carved their bones into letter openers."

In his book "Goodbye, Darkness: A Memoir of the Pacific War", the popular American writer William Manchester also recounted an incident in which, "[The] orderly snatched up a submachine gun and unforgivably massacred a line of unarmed Japanese soldiers who had just surrendered."

John Dower, mentioned earlier, refers to other such incidents in his book. "A veteran reminisced before a class of students about how his unit had unexpectedly 'flushed' an isolated Japanese soldier on an island that had already been secured, and amused themselves by shooting at him as he dashed frantically about the clearing in search of safety... [The American soldier was] shooting a terrified old Okinawan woman and casually dismissing her as 'just an old gook woman who wanted me to put her out of her misery.'"

The British historian Max Hastings included the following account of American atrocities in Okinawa in his book "Nemesis: The Battle for Japan, 1944–45". "Nemesis" is a goddess from Greek mythology who administers divine punishment and retribution.

"Fighting in the midst of civilians is always repugnant, never more so than on Okinawa. 'On the ground,' [US infantryman] Chris Donner recorded one day, 'lay the body of a young Okinawan, a girl who had been fifteen or sixteen, and probably very pretty. She was nude, lying on her back with arms outstretched and knees drawn up, but spread apart. The poor

girl had been shot through the left breast and evidently violently raped.' It seemed unlikely that this was the work of Japanese soldiers. Not long after, several men of the infantry unit which Donner was accompanying fell to fire from unseen enemies on a cliff top. Suddenly, the Americans saw a Japanese woman clutching a baby... some shouted: 'Shoot the bitch, shoot the Jap woman!' There was a burst of fire. The woman fell, then struggled to her feet and staggered towards her baby. After more shots, she went down again and lay still."

Japanese soldiers have never committed these sort of atrocities. Throughout history, Japan has never practiced racial discrimination, engaged in massacres of whole cities, or used slaves.

By contrast, eyewitness accounts of atrocities by American soldiers like the ones above are easy to find. It was with good reason that, during the war, they were called "American devils".

Truman's and MacArthur's racism

Harry Truman, who became President upon the death of Roosevelt, was a fervent racist.

Truman was frank and abrasive in the way he spoke. At the time he decided to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, he said to an aide, "When you have to deal with a beast you have to treat him like a beast." Shortly after Japan surrendered, he described the Japanese people as "vicious and cruel savages".

Truman also despised both blacks and Jews. He boasted that no Jew or black man had ever set foot on the front door of his home in Missouri.

At a cabinet meeting in 1946, Truman made derisive statements about the Jews, declaring that "Jesus Christ couldn't please them when he was here on earth, so how could anyone expect that I would have any luck?"

General MacArthur was also a racist.

Major Faubion Powers, who was MacArthur's senior aide-de-camp during his time in Tokyo, was riding with MacArthur in his private car as rain fell outside.

MacArthur reminisced to Powers about his last trip through Tokyo and told him, "It was raining just like now... Something menacing and nefarious about the Japs."

In 1905, the last year of the Russo-Japanese War, MacArthur was brought by his father to Japan, who had travelled to Manchuria as a military observer, and stayed there for a short time.

MacArthur also loathed President Roosevelt. When speaking to an aide, he referred to him as a Jew and deliberately misnamed him, calling him "Rosenberg". He called Truman "that

Jew" and explained himself by saying, "You can tell by his name. Look at his face..." In actual fact, neither Roosevelt nor Truman were Jewish.

In return, Roosevelt hated MacArthur. According to the memoirs of Herbert Hoover, Roosevelt openly called him "McClelland" instead of MacArthur, and described him as his "problem child".

"Should the Japanese race be exterminated?"

In 1944, the United States was gripped by violent hatred of Japan.

That year, thirteen percent of respondents to a Gallup opinion poll supported the extermination of the Japanese race. From the outset Gallup had decided to include the question, "Should the Japanese race be exterminated?"

Documents show that, around the same time, President Roosevelt invited to the White House cultural anthropologist Ales Hrdlicka, who worked at the Smithsonian Institution. It is recorded that Roosevelt told Hrdlicka that the people of Japan should be forcibly crossbred with the mild-tempered indigenous peoples of the South Pacific with the aim of transforming the Japanese into a placid, harmless race.

Anti-black discrimination which outdid the Nuremberg Laws

I studied abroad in the United States during the late-1950s, during the height of African-American discrimination.

Although they were supposedly American citizens, their right to vote had been taken from them, and everything, including churches, schools, hotels, restaurants, buses, trains, lobbies, public restrooms, and drinking fountains were strictly segregated into facilities for use by whites and those for use by blacks. In the South, blacks were often lynched and cruelly murdered by whites.

Those with one-eighth African-American ancestry or more were legally defined as being "black". This was an even harsher standard than the Nuremberg Laws, which were passed in Germany during the era of Nazi persecution of the Jews, which defined "Jews" as people of one-fifth Jewish ancestry or greater.

During World War II, Japan freed Asia from Western domination, and while the after-effects spread to Africa, resulting in African nations, one after another, achieving their independence, discrimination against African-Americans in the United States continued unabated.

Even so, when diplomats from newly-independent African nations took up their posts in America, the United States did nothing to stop restaurants and hotels from discriminating against them.

At that point, a great awakening occurred among the African-Americans of the United States. In the 1960s, a civil rights movement was launched under the leadership of Reverend Martin Luther King, which finally freed blacks from the burden of unjust discrimination.

Until then, many states had laws criminalizing marriage or sexual relations between blacks and whites. In 1967, these laws were finally abolished in the last three states upholding them.

After World War II, African-Americans were allowed to play in the major leagues for the first time. Once limited to the role of caddies, in the 1970s they began to play golf alongside white players. They also were able to partake in tennis.

Without Japan, Tiger Woods would never have become an American hero, and the Williams sisters would never have rocked the world of tennis. If Japan had not fought in World War II, President Obama may not have ever been born, and of course, African-Americans, even today, would still be suffering under terrible discrimination.

Was racially segregated America really a democracy?

American propaganda depicted World War II as a battle between democratic America and militarist Japan. However, can we really describe the United States, a nation which trampled on the rights of its own African-American citizens, as a democracy?

The achievement of many African-Americans in breaking through the race barrier was made possible by Japanese soldiers who gave their lives on the field of battle and by Japanese citizens who perished in the flames of war.

Japanese-Americans also endured numerous hardships in the United States.

During the period when I was travelling back and forth between Japan and the United States for work, I used to visit homes for senior Japanese-American citizens whenever I had time. They were very grateful to receive the mementos and souvenirs I brought for them.

When I visited Washington in 1976, I received a White House invitation to attend a ceremony at which President Gerald Ford would sign a new Executive Order, repealing the Executive Order of 1941 that interned Japanese-Americans.

At the White House ceremony, President Ford surrounded himself with over twenty Japanese-American leaders, including congressmen, while he signed the order. I was the only Japanese citizen present among them and, not wanting to impose, I stood at the spot nearest to the entranceway.

When we were served tea after the ceremony, I thanked the Japanese-Americans personally. I told them that, "The reason why American citizens came to respect Japan after World War

It was certainly not due to anything Japan had done, but rather it was because of the unflinching efforts of Japanese-Americans like yourselves."