

# **The Greater East Asian War: How Japan Changed The World**

**By Kase Hideaki**

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## **Chapter 1 - Up to the Day Japan Surrendered**

### **How the Japanese Army fought**

"Why did Japan fight a war against the United States?"

That is the question I have found myself asking, seventy years from the date Japan surrendered.

Today, most Japanese citizens believe that their country embarked on a reckless war due to the unbridled aggressiveness of its own military.

It has been said that the Japanese people were deceived by the militarists and got dragged into the war, but think about this for a moment. Is it really true that the people of Japan were so foolish?

Japan's victory streak lasted but a mere six months into the war. After Japan's defeat in the Battle of Midway, Japan was forced onto the defensive, fighting desperately to stymie America's counterattack.

The American counterattack began on Attu Island, which a whole Japanese garrison died defending, in May of 1943. In a series of bloody battles, the US Army captured the islands of the Pacific Ocean from the Japanese Army.

On every island, the Japanese defenders fought to the point of total annihilation, even though they had been completely isolated with no hope of reinforcement.

Japanese garrisons sacrificed themselves on one obscure island after another, starting with Attu, and then Tarawa, Makin, Kwajalein, Eniwetok, Saipan, Tinian, Guam, Palau, Peleliu, Angaur, Morotai, and Iwo Jima.

America's official history of the Pacific Theater documents in detail how Japanese soldiers fought. On Attu Island, only 29 men from a Japanese garrison of 2,350 were taken prisoner. The rest were killed in action, a death rate of 98.8%. Of the 2,571 Japanese defenders of Tawara, only 8 were taken prisoner, which means that the death rate had risen to 99.7%. During the Battle of Kwajalein the death rate among the defending garrison of 4,938, excluding 79 POWs, was 98.4%. Ninety-seven percent of the roughly 30,000 Japanese soldiers on Saipan fell fighting.

No other army in the annals of world military history has ever shown the same willingness to fight to the last.

In the training booklet "How the Jap Army Fights," American officers commented that the Japanese fought without fear of death and that "To attempt an estimate of the Japanese

Army is something like attempting to describe the other side of the moon". The "other side of the moon" remained unseen until after the war when the first man-made probes orbited the moon. A British officer also remarked in awe that, "They are the bravest people I have ever met. In our armies, any of them, nearly every Japanese would have had a Congressional Medal of Honor or a Victoria Cross."

It was in October of 1944, when the US Army landed on Leyte Island, the Philippines, that the first kamikaze units were formed and sent flying into enemy warships.

By the time Japan surrendered in August of 1945, kamikaze attacks had been carried out with planes, boats, and submarines.

For a long time I have wanted to know, "Why was Japan the only nation in history to carry out such large-scale suicide attacks?" and "Why did Japanese soldiers fight to the death on every battlefield?"

By August of 1945, Japan had fought the United States for three years and eight months as one nation united, but was ultimately defeated.

On July 24, the US Joint Chiefs of Staff ordered Operation Olympic, the invasion of the southern half of the island of Kyushu, to commence on November 1.

Operation Olympic was slated to involve 477,400 American soldiers, organized into fourteen divisions. Supported by a vast number of aircraft carriers, battleships, cruisers, and other warships, they were to transfer from 1,318 transport ships onto landing craft and storm the beaches at thirty-five predetermined landing sites in southern Kyushu.

Operation Olympic was to be the largest such military operation in history, of even greater scale than the invasion of Normandy, France, undertaken by the Allies in June of the previous year.

The United States was at the height of its power, whereas Japan was losing almost all its capacity to wage war.

The US Joint Chiefs of Staff also decided to launch Operation Coronet, two landings planned to take place at Kujukuri Beach and Sagami Bay near Tokyo, on March 1, 1946.

The scale of Operation Coronet was planned to greatly exceed even that of Operation Olympic.

However, on August 15, the Imperial Rescript on the Termination of the War, which Emperor Hirohito recorded before a microphone the previous day, was broadcast by radio to the whole nation, officially announcing that Japan had lost the war. Five days before that, the decision to surrender to the Allies and end the war had been made at an Imperial

Conference, a meeting held in the presence of the Emperor, convened at dawn near the Emperor's residence in the Fukiage Gardens of the Imperial Palace.

Seventy years later, in January of 2015, the grounds of the Imperial Palace were opened to the public and 82,000 loyal subjects gathered at that same place, waving miniature Japanese flags and shouting *banzai*.

Even today the Emperor and Empress continue to live on the grounds of the Fukiage Gardens.

### **The Emperor's bomb shelters**

Let's return now to December of 1941.

With the utmost secrecy, two bomb shelters were constructed in the Fukiage Gardens just after the start of the war.

One of the two bomb shelters, codenamed the "Imperial Library", was an emergency evacuation site for the Emperor and Empress in case of an air raid.

About 150 meters to the north of it another such facility, about forty-five square meters in size and comprised of a sitting room and a meeting room, was constructed at the same time to serve as the site of Imperial Conferences which might need to be convened during air raids. This one was variously known as the Fukiage Annex, the Imperial Library Annex, or the Imperial General Headquarters Annex.

The Imperial Library was one story above ground, and to ensure that no bomb however strong could destroy it, it was covered with two layers of concrete, each a meter thick, plus a meter of sand in between the two.

The Imperial Library was accessible through a hall in the covered entranceway and was comprised of fifteen rooms, all of them small, which were divided into an east wing and west wing. On the east wing there was the Emperor's state affairs room, his audience room, dining room, bedroom, bathroom, and the office of the chamberlains. On the west side there was the Empress' sitting room, bedroom, wardrobe, bathroom, and the office of the ladies-in-waiting.

As an additional safety precaution in case of air raids, an underground bunker known as the Imperial Evacuation Site was set up for the Emperor and Empress on the Imperial Library's second basement floor. The Imperial Evacuation Site included a sitting room about eighteen square meters in size and a bedroom.

Air raids on Tokyo by B-29 bombers, which commenced following the capture of Saipan by the US Army on July 6, 1944, forced the Emperor and Empress to move permanently into the Imperial Library. Whenever an air raid warning was issued, the Emperor and

Empress would transfer to the underground Imperial Evacuation Site until the warning was lifted.

In May of 1945, while the Japanese garrison on Okinawa was battling an overwhelming onslaught by the US Army, several thousand people were mobilized from the Imperial Guard in order to increase bomb resistance on the Fukiage Annex. They carried out the manual labor, twenty-four hours per day, on a three-shift system.

The work had been undertaken in response to articles circulating in foreign newspapers which were reporting that the US Air Force had dropped a ten ton bomb on Adolf Hitler's mountain retreat in Berchtesgaden. Before that the Fukiage Annex had been built to withstand a blast from a bomb only two and a half tons or less.

Both the Imperial Library and the Fukiage Annex had a small warehouse attached to them, but inside of the warehouse was a bicycle fixed in place with its front wheel removed and its back wheel raised off the ground.

In case external power was cut off and the electric generators of their buildings stopped working, the chamberlains were expected to generate the electricity manually by taking turns pushing the pedals.

One of the chamberlains who was once given this task told me that during the summer the air in the dark warehouse was hot and humid. He said that his shabby blue air-raid clothes were soon dripping with sweat, and on top of that the food situation was so poor that he couldn't summon the strength to keep pushing the pedals.

### **Emperor Hirohito's "sacred decision"**

On August 9, 1945 at 11:45 PM, just fifteen minutes before August 10, Emperor Hirohito hung his saber onto the army uniform he had donned as commander-in-chief, and then descended into the underground passageway on the east end of the hallway of the Imperial Library.

At the end of the concrete staircase he stepped into a dimly-lit tunnel, just big enough for one person to pass through at a time. On the floor of the tunnel, boards had been laid down and at intervals unshaded, yellow light bulbs hung from the ceiling. Ahead, the tunnel curved leftwards.

The Emperor silently followed his aide-de-camp. Water had collected here, moistening the Emperor's boots as he walked.

At the end of the tunnel they entered a wide corridor encased by white concrete walls. The Emperor's wet boots left tracks along the parquet flooring.

They opened a huge steel door, thirty centimeters thick, and right behind it was a wooden door.

When the Emperor entered the room and sat down in front of a pair of folding screens, each made up of six gilded panels, all the assembled attendees bowed deeply towards him. Then they seated themselves on desks placed in a semi-rectangular shape directly in front of the Emperor's seat.

This Imperial Conference was the second part of a last meeting of the Supreme Council for War Guidance, but the military had not been given any indication that the Emperor had decided to end the war.

The 108 hours that elapsed from the start of this meeting were the final moments of the Japanese Empire during the seventy-eighth year since the Japanese Empire had been founded through the Meiji Restoration. Seated on Emperor Hirohito's right were Prime Minister Suzuki Kantaro, Army Minister Anami Korechika, and Chief of the Army General Staff Umezumi Yoshijiro. Facing these three on the opposite row were President of the Privy Council Hiranuma Kiichiro, Navy Minister Yonai Mitsumasa, Foreign Minister Togo Shigenori, and Chief of the Navy General Staff Toyoda Soemu. Seated in the far row were the secretaries of the liaison conference including Chief of the Military Affairs Bureau Yoshizumi Masao and Chief Cabinet Secretary Sakomizu Hisatsune.

As the Emperor set down his military cap on the table in front of him, his face trembled visibly.

Prime Minister Suzuki ordered Sakomizu to read aloud the full text of the Potsdam Declaration.

Sakomizu stood and began to read the declaration, "Article One - We-the President of the United States, the President of the National Government of the Republic of China, and the Prime Minister of Great Britain, representing the hundreds of millions of our countrymen, have conferred and agree that Japan shall be given an opportunity to end this war." At that point Sakomizu's voice began to whimper and streams of tears poured down the sides of his cheeks.

Forcing the Emperor to listen to the harsh terms of the Allies' declaration was too much for him to bear. Throughout the reading he continued to sporadically sniffle and sob.

"Article Two - The prodigious land, sea and air forces of the United States, the British Empire and of China, many times reinforced by their armies and air fleets from the west, are poised to strike the final blows upon Japan."

Nevertheless, Sakomizu somehow managed to recite every article of the declaration, including the demands that, "points in Japanese territory to be designated by the Allies shall

be occupied" and "Japanese sovereignty shall be limited to the islands of Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku and such minor islands as we determine." The Potsdam Declaration concluded by warning Japan's leaders that their only alternative to acceptance was "prompt and utter destruction."

Once Sakomizu had finished the reading, Suzuki called upon Foreign Minister Togo.

Togo advocated full acceptance of the declaration provided that "the status of His Majesty the Emperor be guaranteed."

The next man asked to speak was War Minister Anami. "I am opposed to the position of the Foreign Minister," he said outright. According to Anami, if the Allies were to land on Japanese shores, the military would do battle with them on the mainland and would be able to strike a "decisive blow" against them. Even so, he also argued that Japan should agree to peace with the Allies on the added conditions that they not occupy Japan, allow Japan to punish its war criminals and disarm its troops on its own authority, and preserve the *kokutai*. The word *kokutai* refers to the emperor system.

Next, Yonai and Hiranuma announced their support for Togo's position. Umezu and Toyoda were of the same opinion as Anami.

Thus, the conference was split three against three. Everyone waited for Prime Minister Suzuki to speak.

The elderly, seventy-eight year old prime minister finally stood, with his back hunched, and slowly said, "Today all those present have set out their points of view passionately, but so far we have not reached a consensus."

"However, because postponing this decision any longer would be impermissible, please permit me to say, with the utmost respect, that at this point I would like to conclude the conference by humbly asking the Emperor what His Majesty's views might be."

Suzuki's appeal to Emperor Hirohito to deliver a "sacred decision" at the end of the conference was an act planned out in advance with the Emperor and the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal Kido Koichi. Togo was also in on the plan, but the representatives of the military were dumbstruck by Suzuki's unprecedented statement.

Not once since Emperor Hirohito had ascended to the throne had he ever given his opinion on a decision to be made at an official conference.

The Emperor responded, "If that is the case, then I shall give you my opinion. I support the position of the Foreign Minister."

Since the start of the war, he said, "It seems that there has been a gap between the promises and the performance of the Army and Navy... They claim to be confident that they can win a decisive battle on the mainland, but that is different from the report of the Chief of the Army General Staff, which says that even the defenses at Kujukuri Beach are not yet ready, and that soldiers are not even being equipped with bayonets... If we fight on the mainland in such circumstances, what would happen? What would be left of Japan to pass on to our descendants?"

Before long everyone was in tears.

The Emperor then said, "Though it will be terribly hard for us to bear, I have resolved to stop the war."

The Emperor lifted his right hand, clad in a white glove, and cleaned off his glasses. Just as he was wiping the tear lines running down his cheek he added, "You needn't worry yourselves about me or the imperial family."

By then the attendees of the conference had gone from crying to outright wailing. Some started to bawl loudly like children.

It was now 2:20 AM on August 10. Suzuki stood, and while shedding tears he said, "The conference is over. The conference has concluded in accordance with the present wishes of His Majesty."

The Japanese government accepted the decision of the Imperial Conference and immediately sent notification through the governments of Sweden and Switzerland to the United States, China, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union that the Potsdam Declaration would be accepted "with the understanding that it does not include any requirement to alter the sovereign authority of the Emperor over the state".

### **The attempted coup d'état**

Forty years ago, when I was still in my thirties, I interviewed at length more than one hundred people who were close to the Emperor during the period starting in January of 1945, including imperial family members, aides, politicians, and military leaders. On the basis of these interviews I put together a non-fiction work concerning how Japan came to grips with the extremely difficult events of the time.

It was just last year, in September 2014, that the Imperial Household Agency released "The Official Record of the Life of Emperor Hirohito," a massive edited collection of documents concerning the daily activities of Emperor Hirohito from his birth to his death. The Imperial Household Agency spent twenty-four years compiling the book.

As I perused "The Official Record of the Life of Emperor Hirohito," I was astonished to read the entry dated August 14, 1945.



"At 8:58 AM, the Emperor granted an audience in the Imperial Library to Chief of the Army General Staff Umezu Yoshijiro who reported on his orders to the commander of the China Expeditionary Army at the time of the Soviet Union's entry into the war. In addition, Army Minister Anami Korechika had heard the night before of a coup d'état planned by the Chief of the Military Section of the Army Ministry's Military Affairs Bureau Arao Okikatsu and five other army officers, and received a detailed operation plan. At 7:00 AM, the Army Minister and the Chief of the Military Section asked the Chief of the Army General Staff whether or not he would support a planned coup d'état (Troop Strength Utilization Plan #1) which would involve forcing their way up to the room beside the Imperial Conference scheduled to take place that day at 10:00 AM, and then having the Emperor's aide-de-camp lead the Emperor into the reception room before detaining everyone else. The Chief of the Army General Staff condemned them for moving troops in the Imperial Palace and expressed his strongest possible opposition to their plan."

If, at that moment, General Umezu had supported the planned coup d'état, the course of Japanese history after that would probably have been very different.

If the US Army had gone ahead with its landing and fought through the Japanese mainland, over ten million Japanese people would have been killed or wounded, and the Soviet Army would surely have occupied Hokkaido as well. As a result, even the Emperor system would not likely have survived.

### **A decisive battle on the mainland?**

Now, let's return to the day after Emperor Hirohito handed down his first "sacred decision" to end the war. In spite of his order to stop the war, that morning's newspapers across the country gave substantial coverage to the message from the Army Minister, that "We shall not hesitate to fight a holy war to defend the land of the Gods." By then Japan's newspapers were running only a morning edition due to paper shortages.

In the afternoon, Army Minister Anami was received by the Emperor in the Imperial Library and told him, "I have grave doubts over whether the *kokutai* will survive the termination of the present war. I have sufficient confidence of victory for a war on the mainland."

It was earlier that year, on April 1, that the US Army landed on Okinawa.

The Imperial General Headquarters had foreseen that if Okinawa were lost, the mainland would be the US Army's next target, and so the 1st General Army and the 2nd General Army were constituted in case mainland Japan was split by the enemy attacks. The 1st General Army was in charge of defending the Tokai and Tohoku regions, of eastern and northern Japan, whereas the 2nd General Army was in charge of everything from central Japan down to the southern islands of Kyushu and Shikoku. Hokkaido was placed under the authority of the Northern District Army.

Meanwhile, the military was brazenly calling for "one hundred million *kamikaze*". That phrase, "one hundred million *kamikaze*," stood out everywhere from the front page of the morning newspapers to the cover of *The Housewife's Companion*.

The Orders for the Decisive Battle, which were declared by Army Minister Anami in April in preparation for the decisive battle on the mainland, included the following text:

"The officers and men of the Imperial Army shall defend the Empire to the death. The Empire of Japan is the land where the Emperor and the spirits of our ancestors reside. The soldiers of the Empire should be the vanguard of a nation one hundred million strong. All one hundred million of us are comrades-in-arms fighting to defend the Empire."

Furthermore, the Instructions for the Battle on the Mainland, which were released the same month by the Army Section of the Imperial General Headquarters, included an order to not hesitate to kill Japanese civilians whenever necessary.

"There may be times when the enemy will advance using local residents, women, the elderly, and children as human shields in a bid to crush our morale. If this happens you should believe that our countrymen value the victory of the Empire more than they do their own lives and should show no hesitation to destroy the enemy forces."

The government conscripted the entire male population and constituted new divisions which existed only on paper.

At the time the war ended, military reports indicated that in the 1st General Army's 308th Division "roughly one out of every five soldiers are equipped with rifles and roughly one out of every seven are equipped with bayonets." In this division, it was expected that "For clothing the standard rules apply, but shoes are to be saved for combat operations only and outside of combat, homemade sandals or similar footwear are to be used."

The military had boasted that it could finish off the enemy in one blow as they were landing on the coastline. In preparation for their landing the military was having all its units across Japan work day and night digging cave fortifications.

In May, the newspaper *Asahi Shimbun* ran an article under the headline, "Even thousands of tanks cannot stop us! Defenses for our final victory will be unshaken by air or sea bombardment". According to the article, "Our homeland fortifications have all been dug deep within the earth. Consequently, even if the enemy ships bombard us day and night with their heavy guns, it will do no more than uselessly turn over the soil on the surface. They will not make even the slightest impact on our underground encampments. The same is true for enemy bombing."

The *Asahi Shimbun* claimed these underground shelters to be "a revolution in strategic thinking," and concluded its article with the challenge, "Bring it on, American beasts!"

In June, the 36th Army, which was in charge of defending the front line on Kujukuri Beach, reported to the 1st General Army that its inventory of "unit-produced weapons" included 1,500 spears.

It was over the course of that June that the US Army overpowered the last organized resistance by Japanese units on Okinawa and captured the island. Over 90,000 Japanese soldiers died in battle and over 100,000 civilians had been killed or wounded during the fighting.

On July 25, the 1st General Army convened a staff officer meeting in Tokyo, attended by all the chiefs of staff and deputy chiefs of staff of their subordinate area armies, armies, and divisions.

The Chief of the 1st General Army's General Staff, Lieutenant General Sudo Einosuke, started off the meeting by emphasizing the need to destroy the enemy on the beaches. Then the general staff read aloud the army notice which had been distributed to the attendees in advance.

"Our concept of the decisive battle is to focus on attacking the enemy's weak points around their positions on the beaches. Do not hesitate to resolutely press forward your attack. (1.) The high-ranking officers and general staff do not understand what is at stake in the Greater East Asian War and have not fought with a will to lay down their own lives. You will remain on the offensive until the final hour. You will attack until the enemy has been destroyed or until only one man remains standing."

At dawn, on August 12, Japan intercepted a transmission of the Allies' response to Japan's acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration. It read, "The authority of the Emperor and the Japanese Government to rule the state shall be subject to the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers." The official text of the Allies' response was wired to Japan shortly after 6:00 PM the same day by Japan's envoy in Switzerland.

Confusion ensued when Japan's Foreign Ministry translated the words "subject to" from the original text to literally mean "restricted by," even though the military had interpreted them to mean "subordinate to". The military insisted that the Potsdam Declaration could not be accepted until after they had "re-inquired" with the Allies about their answer.

### **The final Imperial Conference**

After receiving the Allies' response, another Imperial Conference, the final one in Japanese history, was convened in the Fukiage Annex at 11:00 AM on August 14. It was attended by all the members of the Supreme Council for War Guidance plus the cabinet ministers.

Forty minutes before the meeting began Hirohito had consulted in the Imperial Library with Marshal-Admiral Nagano Osami, 1st General Army commander Field Marshal Sugiyama Hajime, and 2nd General Army commander Field Marshal Hata Shunroku, and asked them about the prospects of winning a decisive battle on the mainland.

According to "The Official Record of the Life of Emperor Hirohito," Osami and Sugiyama basically advised him that, "All of our nation's armed forces still have men to spare and morale is high. Therefore, we must be determined to repulse the US Army as it goes ashore." By contrast, Hata told him that, "Unfortunately, I have no confidence that I will be able to repulse the enemy along the defense lines which were put under my charge." Hata said that Japan had little choice but to accept the Potsdam Declaration.

At 10:30 AM that day, the weather was already hot. The members of the Japanese cabinet, dressed in a wide array of morning coats, military uniforms, national uniforms, and business suits, each got out of their respective vehicles in front of the eastern entranceway to the Imperial Library. They lined up and then descended below ground.

The meeting room of the Fukiage Annex was about six meters wide at its entranceway and about ten meters long from front to back. Three rows of twenty-three chairs had been placed on the red carpet in front of the Emperor's seat.

Soon, Emperor Hirohito also entered, just behind his aide-de-camp.

The Emperor placed his military cap down on the table in front of him and then sat down. The Emperor's face shook slightly with nervousness, though this seemed to only magnify his divine aura.

Prime Minister Suzuki opened the conference by briefly summarizing to the Emperor the course of events since the Imperial Conference of August 9.

"I support the roughly eighty per cent of those at the cabinet meeting who accepted the Allies' response without conditions, but we have not yet achieved unanimity. As a subject of the Emperor, I know that in this situation it would be a grave sin to again trouble him to deliver his wise counsel, and I apologize deeply. Nevertheless, because this matter is a very serious one requiring immediate attention, at this meeting we will hear directly from some opposing voices one more time, and then would be honored if the Emperor would again take a few minutes of his time to deliver his sacred decision."

After speaking, Suzuki called upon Army Minister Anami.

Anami rose from his seat, but as he started to speak his voice became tearful mid-sentence.

If they ended the war like this, Anami said, there would be no certainty that the *kokutai* would be preserved, and therefore they had to ask the Allies to clarify their position. Anami

believed that, "if even the slightest doubt about this exists, then we should accept continuation of the war as the least worst option." "The Army has not yet been crushed in battle," Anami insisted, and thus the odds would be in Japan's favor if the war continued. It was a fiery speech which he delivered with his flushed cheeks trembling and tears running down the side of his face.

Anami failed to mention the fact that just that morning at 7:00 he had been at the Army General Staff Office urging Umezu to detain the Emperor and launch a coup d'état involving the whole army to ensure that the battle for the mainland would happen.

Emperor Hirohito nodded deeply each time Anami tearfully appealed to him. In due course, as he watched Anami weeping, the Emperor's eyes also began to well with tears and he pushed back his glasses many times.

After Anami sat down, Suzuki stood again, bowed, and next called on Umezu. Umezu also made a tearful address reiterating that the Japanese Army was not beaten.

The meeting room was already filled with the noise of sobbing and muttered voices. No Japanese person can see the Emperor cry without crying himself.

Then, for a moment, their lamentations stopped, though a few continued to blow their noses.

Once Umezu had finished, the Chief of the Navy General Staff Toyoda Soemu, who had been waiting for Suzuki to call his name, rose up from his seat.

Toyoda agreed that the *kokutai* would not be maintained the way things were. He argued that they should make an inquiry to the Allies and should fight on if no satisfactory answer was received.

The three military officers offered no apology for courting disaster. They kept on vainly repeating their slogans of "least worst option," "land of the Gods," and "sufficient confidence of victory".

Suzuki finally said, in a slow voice, "We have now heard from the opposing voices."

Emperor Hirohito had been waiting for this moment to speak.

"Since it seems that everyone has had their say, I will now give my opinion. I ask all of you to respect my decision."

The spacing and intonation in the Emperor's way of speaking were unusual. He spoke in a choppy, discontinuous manner.

Furthermore, he was crying. From time to time he wiped his cheeks with his glove-clad right hand.

"I fully understand the feelings of the three individuals who have raised objections here today. I also understand the arguments that they have made. However, my views have not changed from what I stated earlier. I do not believe that it is feasible to continue the war any longer... You all seem fearful about whether or not the *kokutai* will be preserved, but I think that that is essentially a matter which will depend on the convictions and resolution of the Japanese people as a whole. Therefore, I think we should accept the Allies' response."

The mournful weeping of those present grew louder.

"For military officers, disarmament and occupation are terribly harsh and unbearable things. I fully understand your feelings that the people shall sacrifice themselves and die honorable deaths for the sake of the nation. However, it does not matter what happens to me personally. I want to save the lives of the people... As long as Japan and the Japanese people survive, we can have hope that the country will return to its former glory. Though this path will probably be a long and difficult one, whenever I think about the people who have died on the battlefield or those who have tragically perished at home, as well as their bereaved family, a terrible sorrow comes over me. Alongside my people, I also intend to strive for that goal."

Suddenly, the Emperor's exclaimed, in a booming voice, "Anami, Anami, I know how you feel. However, I firmly believe that I can protect the *kokutai*."

The Emperor appealed to him in a sorrowful tone.

Then, he returned to his previous composure and calmly continued, "Whenever I think about the future lives of those who were wounded in battle, or whose lives were ravished by the war, or who lost their family businesses, I cannot contain my sadness. If there is anything I can do for them, I intend to do it."

Even Anami sobbed uncontrollably as the Emperor continued to speak.

"If I should address the people directly, then I will personally stand before the microphone. Today the people don't know about anything that has gone on, so they will surely be shaken to hear that we have concluded a peace. Our officers and men in the military will be upset all the more. It will probably be very challenging to pacify them, but I need them to understand me. I am ready to do whatever it takes. I will do anything."

By this point some people had fallen from their chairs and were crouching on the floor crying. It seemed like each man was trying to drown out the next with his sobbing.

The next day at noon, August 15, all the people of Japan gathered in front of their radios.

The announcer said, "And now there will be an important broadcast. I ask all of our listeners from across the country to please rise... His Majesty the Emperor has graciously offered to personally read an Imperial Rescript to the whole nation. We will now respectfully transmit to you the voice of the Emperor."

Once the announcer had finished speaking, the song *Kimigayo* began to play solemnly.

The voice of the Emperor, known in Japanese as the "jewel voice," flowed forth from the radios.

"After pondering deeply the general trends of the world and the actual conditions obtaining in Our Empire today, We have decided to effect a settlement of the present situation..."

This was the first time that the people of Japan had heard the voice of the Emperor.

The Emperor's message concluded with, "Cultivate the ways of rectitude, nobility of spirit, and work with resolution so that you may enhance the innate glory of the Imperial State and keep pace with the progress of the world. All you, our subjects, we command you to act in accordance with our wishes." Then there was another mournful playing of *Kimigayo*.

After this, the announcer spoke again.

"This respectfully concludes the jewel voice broadcast of His Majesty the Emperor... His Majesty the Emperor has magnanimously sought to establish a great peace for all generations to come and so had the government announce yesterday to the United States, Great Britain, China, and the Soviet Union that Japan will accept the Potsdam Declaration... This unprecedented imperial deed was certainly the wisest possible decision and has caused all people across Japan to shed tears of gratitude. We loyal subjects must abide by the spirit of the Imperial Rescript and humbly swear to work selflessly to preserve the honor of the nation and maintain the *kokutai*."

## **Chapter 2 - The Trap Laid by the United States**

### **The big lie about the outbreak of the war**

Why is it that Japan had to fight the United States?

Today many Japanese people mistakenly believe that the war with the United States was started by Japan or that it was the fault of Japan's out-of-control military.

It is indeed true that if Japan had been unable to restrain its military in August of 1945, the last summer of the war, then the decisive battle would have been fought on the mainland and Japan would have been destroyed.

However, in 1941 neither the Japanese government nor the military had any desire to go to war with the United States. Right up to the final days before the fighting began, they made every effort to try to avoid war.

By contrast, the United States had already decided, well before Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, on a policy of going to war with and neutralizing Japan.

In spite of this, most people remain convinced that it is Japan, not the United States, that should be held responsible for starting the war.

This assertion is utterly contrary to the facts. It is the product of a wildly distorted view of history which was promoted by the United States in the wake of Japan's defeat.

Those who control the history of the past are also able to control the future. After losing the war Japan became a nation robbed of its own history.

History is memory. People who suffer memory loss are unable to lead normal lives, and the same holds true for nations.

### **President Roosevelt's pro-China attitude**

The war between Japan and the United States was not inevitable. It was provoked through American actions.

President Franklin Roosevelt, who prosecuted the war with Japan, entered the White House in 1933. The year before that, he had run as the Democratic Party's candidate for the US presidential election in which he trounced incumbent President Herbert Hoover of the Republican Party. If Roosevelt had not won that fateful election, then there would have been no war between Japan and the United States.



At that point in time, public opinion in the United States was dominated by noninterventionist sentiment. Americans had learned a bitter lesson from the disaster of World War I and did not want to get involved in another war in Europe.

America's war-weary determination to not repeat its mistake of intervening in World War I, which had ended in 1918, continued to exert a powerful influence. The situation was very reminiscent of the pacifist sentiment now pervading in modern-day Japan.

A major factor behind the war between the United States and Japan was President Roosevelt's favoritism towards China and ostracism of Japan.

The father of Roosevelt's mother, Sara, had built a huge fortune selling opium in late-Qing China during the clipper ship era and owned a mansion in Hong Kong. Because of this, Sara spent much of her childhood in Hong Kong and acquired a deep sympathy for the Chinese.

Roosevelt himself grew up surrounded by the priceless artwork, including temple bells, folding screens, ivory, and porcelain, which his grandfather had looted from China, and thus came to hold affection for China from a young age. Even after becoming president, he spoke excitedly about his grandfather's wide-ranging travels across China.

Many Americans also regarded China as being within their sphere of influence.

China had gained America's goodwill both by welcoming in a great number of Christian missionaries from the United States and due to its highly coveted status as one of the world's largest marketplaces. Japan, on the other hand, was quite a different situation. Japan was much smaller as a marketplace, it declined to adapt to Christian culture and instead maintained its traditional culture, and it refused to act obsequiously to the United States.

### **The misunderstood China Incident**

In 1931, the Manchurian Incident occurred. Manchuria lies beyond the Great Wall and historically was the home of the Manchu people, not a part of China. The Manchu people carried out an invasion and conquest of China by crossing the Great Wall and thus founded the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912), but during this period they forbade ethnic Han Chinese from entering Manchuria.

Nevertheless, Roosevelt viewed the Manchurian Incident as a Japanese invasion of China.

In 1935, as tensions in Europe mounted, the US Congress enacted the Neutrality Act, which had been passed with the support of the ruling Democratic Party under pressure from public opinion. The Neutrality Act banned the export of weapons and war materials to any countries at war, including civil war.

In January of 1932, the year following the Manchurian Incident, the Shanghai Incident broke out. Japan dispatched troops to Shanghai, but in May, a ceasefire agreement was reached and Japan's expeditionary army withdrew.

In July of 1937, Japanese and Chinese soldiers clashed near Marco Polo Bridge in the outskirts of Beijing. The so-called "Marco Polo Bridge Incident" is now known to have been a provocation set in motion by the Chinese Communist Party. Since the Boxer Rebellion of 1900, a variety of nations, including Japan, Great Britain, and France, had the right to station soldiers on Chinese soil in order to protect their citizens there.

The Battle of Shanghai began the following month. At that point, Japan had a naval landing party of only 3,000 soldiers stationed in the city's Japanese concession.

This small force was suddenly attacked by a 400,000-man Chinese army unit. Zhang Zhizhong, the army group commander, later admitted in his memoirs that he was a secret agent of the Chinese Communist Party. Because the Soviet Union was afraid of having to fight Japan, the Soviets instigated the Chinese Communist Party to provoke a conflict between China and Japan.

The Japanese Army in China received reinforcements as the fighting extended across the Chinese mainland.

Roosevelt falsely portrayed both the Marco Polo Bridge Incident and the Battle of Shanghai as being planned acts of aggression by Japan against China.

However, Japan did not start the China Incident.

After the war, the China Incident became known as the Second Sino-Japanese War, despite the fact that neither side declared war on the other until after the outbreak of the war between the United States and Japan in 1941. The conflict should more appropriately be referred to as an "incident."

### **Volunteer servicemen deployed in China**

Even though Japan had done no harm whatsoever to the United States, the Roosevelt administration viewed Japan as an enemy.

Still, because the United States was a neutral power, President Roosevelt was not able to assist any belligerent power directly. Instead, he encouraged private civilians to form the China Aid Council, which provided a considerable amount of funds to Chiang Kai-shek's government with which to fight Japan. The Roosevelt administration had financial aid, weaponry, and war materials pumped into China in great quantities.

Because Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and his wife Soong May-ling were Christians, many Americans viewed the war as an invasion of Christian China by heathen Japan.

In order to manipulate American public opinion, Chiang's regime regularly bought influence among American journalists, university scholars, and researchers.

In 1937, Chiang's regime also hired Captain Claire Chennault of the United States Army Air Corps as a highly paid military advisor. The following year, Chennault was made a colonel and was appointed Chief of Staff of the Republic of China Air Force.

Chennault submitted a plan to the Roosevelt administration to send fighters and active duty US Air Corps pilots to China under the guise of being a "volunteer group." President Roosevelt approved this idea on the spot.

This, however, was a serious violation of international laws. Chennault's air corps was dubbed the "Flying Tigers". The United States supplied their fighter planes, which each had the image of a shark's face painted on its nose cone and the "white sun, blue sky" emblem of Nationalist China marked on its wings. The Flying Tigers, piloted by American "volunteers", made big headlines in the United States.

In July of 1939, the Roosevelt administration notified Japan that it had decided to not renew the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation which was set to expire in January of next year. Japan and the United States had signed the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation in 1911.

It was also in July that the United States imposed a restrictive licensing system on the export of oil and scrap iron to Japan and prohibited the export of aircraft fuel.

The Second World War began in September with the invasion of Poland by Hitler's Germany. The United States immediately declared its neutrality.

President Roosevelt made a radio address in which he stated, "I hope the United States will keep out of this war... As long as it remains within my power to prevent, there will be no blackout of peace in the United States."

In October, an American military code-breaking team succeeded in decrypting Japan's diplomatic code. It referred to the diplomatic code as the "Purple Code" and called its cipher machine the "Purple Machine."

The United States was thus able to gradually learn all the Japanese government's secrets.

In December, the Roosevelt administration added aluminum, which is indispensable for the manufacture of aircraft, to the list of items prohibited from export to Japan, as well as magnesium, molybdenum, and any technical information or designs to be used in aircraft fuel plants or for the production of aircraft fuel.

President Roosevelt's most trusted advisor was his Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau.

Exactly one year prior to the outbreak of war between the United States and Japan, December 7, 1940, Morgenthau wrote in his diary that he had told President Roosevelt they should hand China "some long-range bombers with the understanding that they were to be used to bomb Tokyo and other Japanese cities," and Roosevelt responded that, "it would be a nice thing if the Chinese would bomb Japan." A plan to launch a surprise bombing strike on the Japanese mainland, entitled "JB-355," was drawn up by the Joint Army-Navy Board.

The Treaty of Commerce and Navigation had lapsed in January 1940, and Japan ultimately lost most of its foreign trade. On May 15, President Roosevelt officially ordered that plan "JB-355" be submitted to the armed forces. According to the plan, the United States would transfer bombers to China and would disguise them as Chinese planes by painting the emblem of Nationalist China on their fuselages. After finding American "volunteers" to pilot them, they would take off from Chinese airbases and launch bombing raids against Tokyo, Yokohama, Osaka, Kyoto, and Kobe.

The Joint Army-Navy Board was making detailed preparations to put the plan to bomb the Japanese mainland into action.

The now declassified planning document states that their objective would be the "destruction of Japanese factories in order to cripple munitions and essential articles for maintenance of economic structure in Japan." In other words, their objective was to destroy the Japanese economy.

It was decided that the bombers to be used to strike Japan would be the new Boeing B-17. These massive bombers, which were known as "flying fortresses," had four engines and a flight range of 3,300 kilometers.

### **The top-secret Special Research Division**

In June 1940, France surrendered and the German Army swept across the European continent. From that moment, Great Britain was forced to fight the war alone.

Roosevelt strongly hoped to have the United States participate in the war in Europe to save Great Britain, but America's prevailing noninterventionist sentiment proved to be an insurmountable barrier.

That is the reason why Roosevelt schemed to quickly force Japan into a war with the United States, thereby entering the war in Europe "through the back door."

In February 1941, the Roosevelt administration secretly established the Division of Special Research within the State Department in order to investigate the question of how the United States would deal with Japan after defeating it in war. This occurred nine months prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Within the US government, this division was simply known by the acronym "SR".

During the 1960's and 1970's, I went to the United States to interview members of the US occupation regime in Japan and many wartime government leaders. That was how I first learned about the existence of SR.

After the outbreak of the war between Japan and the United States, the US Army began participation in the State Department's Division of Special Research and it became the Advisory Committee on Postwar Foreign Policy.

In March 1944, a report was completed which included the recommendation that the United States authorities leave the Emperor on the throne during their occupation in order to use him for their own ends and retain the Japanese government so that they could rule indirectly.

They also planned to have the United States recognized as the sole power occupying Japan and to carry out a thorough demilitarization and "democratization" of Japanese society. After this, they would sign a peace treaty which would grant Japan nominal independence while ensuring that Japan would be effectively under America's thumb.

SR was also given the task of producing a draft peace treaty.

After Japan's defeat, the subsequent occupation went exactly according to the plans that had been drawn up by the Postwar Foreign Policy Committee.

In its first draft of the peace treaty with Japan, Japan was permanently forbidden from maintaining any military capacity. Elaborate safeguards were to be put in place after that to ensure that Japan would never be able to rebuild its military strength.

Japan would not be permitted to have a single aircraft, which included not just military aircraft but even civilian ones. Among many other things, Japan was also completely prohibited from stockpiling strategic materials, undertaking military research, and researching the peaceful use of nuclear power.

Even after the peace treaty was signed, some of the highest-ranking Japanese who were purged during the occupation were to be permanently banned from public service in Japan.

However, merely binding Japan by a treaty did not set their minds at ease, so they also mandated international inspectors to monitor all Japanese territory for twenty-five years from the signing of the treaty in order to ensure that Japan had not acquired any capacity to produce armaments or war material.

This first draft of the peace treaty was far harsher than even the Treaty of Versailles forced upon Germany after World War I. General MacArthur, the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, was ordered to impose a new constitution on Japan using this draft as its model.

**A sneak attack that hoodwinked even the American people**

Thus, Japan's current constitution can barely be called a "constitution" at all. Rather, it is an unequal treaty in the guise of a constitution.

Let's return to 1941. Negotiations between Japan and the United States commenced with a meeting in April between Nomura Kichisaburo, the Japanese ambassador to the US, and Cordell Hull, the US Secretary of State, at Hull's private residence in Washington, DC.

Nomura spoke with Hull again on April 16. In May alone Nomura met with him on May 2, 7, 11, 13, 14, 16, 20, 21, and 28, but of course no notable progress was made.

President Roosevelt is recorded as telling his advisor, "I think I can baby them [the Japanese] along for three months." In other words, Roosevelt was not negotiating in good faith.

On July 18, after the US Army and US Navy had jointly signed the plan to bomb the Japanese mainland, "JB-355," it was handed back to President Roosevelt, who approved the plan that same day.

This was five months before a Japanese task force struck Pearl Harbor.

Today, the documents which President Roosevelt signed, approving a surprise air strike on the Japanese mainland, have been declassified.

The plan was for the United States to supply 150 B-17 bombers and 350 fighter planes to Chiang Kai-shek by October 1, which were to be launched from Chinese airbases and attack Osaka, Kyoto, Kobe, and industrial areas of Tokyo and Yokohama.

By organizing a sneak attack on Japan, the Roosevelt administration was deceiving the American people.

In July, after obtaining the permission of French authorities, Japan stationed troops in the southern half of French Indochina, modern-day Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

The United States and Great Britain had been using French Indochina as a conduit to transport large quantities of weaponry to Chiang's government. Japan had troops stationed in northern French Indochina since August of the previous year with the permission of the French government in order to cut off Chiang's supply lines.

Today, many experts believe that Japan's forcible occupation of southern French Indochina on July 28 was the trigger that set off the war between the USA and Japan.

And yet, President Roosevelt had already approved a plan to bomb the Japanese mainland ten days before that.

Even so, Roosevelt's surprise air strike was never put into action. The war in Europe was reaching a critical stage and, because large-sized bombers had to be quickly dispatched to Great Britain, it was too late for the US to deliver them to China.

Even now, most Americans believe that the attack on Pearl Harbor was a despicable sneak attack, but this propaganda was itself a "sneak attack" on the American people.

### **Economic sanctions that throttled Japan**

In August, the US government froze Japanese assets within the United States and imposed a total trade embargo on Japan for all strategic materials, including petroleum. At that time, Japan had only two years' worth of petroleum reserves, including petroleum for civilian use.

Japan was dependent on the United States for petroleum imports. At that time, the United States was the world's largest producer of petroleum. For Japan's armed forces, their fuel supplies drained lower and lower with each passing day. Without a supply of petroleum, Japan's whole economy began to seize up. America was tightening its noose around Japan in the hopes of forcing Japan to fire the first shot.

After General MacArthur had been removed by President Truman as commander of the United States Army Forces in the Far East and returned to the United States, he testified on May 3, 1951 to the US Senate Joint Committee on Armed Services and Foreign Relations that, due to the US economic embargo, Japan had been left with no choice but to go to war in its own self-defense.

Because Japan was then under US occupation, MacArthur's testimony was never reported in Japan.

MacArthur mentioned that the United States had embargoed the export of raw material to Japan, including the petroleum and scrap iron that are essential in industrial nations, and stated that, "They [The Japanese] feared that if those supplies were cut off, there would be 10 to 12 million people unoccupied in Japan. Their purpose, therefore, in going to war was largely dictated by security."

At the time that Japan entered into negotiations with the United States, US-Japan relations were deteriorating, but no one in the Japanese military was yet thinking seriously about going to war. Naturally, the military also had strong expectations that the negotiations would succeed.

### **An unexpected war**

Japan was not at all prepared for a war with the United States.

If the war was to involve the United States, Great Britain, and the Netherlands, then their colonies in Southeast Asia would of course become battlefields.

Up to that point, the Japanese armed forces had not expected to fight in either the Asian colonies of the Western powers or the islands of the South Pacific. Judging from Japan's national strength, they would not have been able to plan for this sort of war.

If the Japanese had been planning to go to war with the United States from an early date, surely they would have fortified the islands which they had received as mandates after World War I, such as Saipan, Tinian, and Truk.

However, Japan erected no fortifications on its South Pacific island territories until 1944, long after the start of the war.

It was expected that if Japan had spent enough time building defense works on these islands, they would not have fallen to the United States in such a short period of time. Japan's soldiers would have been able to put up much more dogged resistance in the face of the American attack.

The Japanese Army was also thoroughly unprepared for military operations in southern Asia.

The Japanese Army did not start planning its invasions of the Malay Peninsula, the Philippines, Burma (modern-day Myanmar), and the Dutch East Indies until March 1941, nine months before the war began. For the Japanese Navy, planning did not begin until a mere four months before the war began.

Until then, the Japanese Army had never undertaken any training for jungle warfare.

At the time Japan decided to go to war, its military did not have any of the detailed maps which were always prepared in advance for the territories it would invade, nor did it have any of the military geography booklets which looked into things like the climate and local customs of the territories in question.

Japan lacked the necessary preparations for this kind of war. The Army was only ready to fight its acknowledged archrival, the Soviet Union, and the Navy was only expecting a decisive sea battle with the US Navy, similar to the Battle of Tsushima in 1905.

Because of this, by December 1941, Japan had only a very vague idea of how to end the war. The Japanese military hoped that after it had won the first stage of the war it could



fortify its newly occupied territories and construct an invincible defensive position, thus forcing the United States to eventually lose its will to fight and sue for peace.

### **Roosevelt's ploy**

President Roosevelt had already decided on going to war with Japan, and for this reason he did not desire to reach a settlement through diplomacy.

By contrast, the Japanese government believed that the United States wanted peace as much as Japan and wanted to ease the mounting tensions between the two countries.

The Japanese had no doubt in their minds that America was as sincere as Japan.

Thus, Japan played right into America's hands. It fell for the Roosevelt administration's ploy, was driven to a precipice, and was forced to choose war.

Japan's government and military were being made to dance to America's tune, with no knowledge that the Roosevelt administration's real intention was to force Japan to go to war with America.

On November 3, Joseph Grew, the US ambassador to Japan, reported to the State Department from Tokyo that, if US-Japan relations were not improved, "This would lead to what I have described as an all-out, do-or-die attempt, actually risking national *hara-kiri*, to make Japan impervious to economic embargoes abroad rather than to yield to foreign pressure. It is realized by observers who feel Japanese national temper and psychology from day-to-day that, beyond peradventure, this contingency not only is possible but is probable."

On November 25, twelve days before the attack on Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt met in the White House with a group consisting of Secretary of State Cordell Hull, Secretary of War Henry Stimson, Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, Army Chief of Staff George Marshall, and Chief of Naval Operations Harold Stark. They agreed that, "The question was how we should maneuver them [the Japanese] into the position of firing the first shot without allowing too much danger to ourselves."

Then, on November 26, the United States confronted Japan with the Hull Note, which completely overturned everything that had been agreed upon through negotiation up to that point.

Today, historians agree that the United States delivered the Hull Note to Japan in full knowledge that Japan would never accept its terms.

Ambassadors Nomura Kichisaburo and Kurusu Saburo strongly objected to the note immediately after they had received and read it in Washington, DC. They said, "We are unsure whether or not we should pass this proposal to our nation's government without

alteration. It includes terms which could never be accepted." Ambassador Grew read the Hull Note at the US Embassy in Tokyo and later commented in his diary that, "It was the document that touched the button that started the war."

The strongest advocate for peace in Tojo Hideki's cabinet was Foreign Minister Togo Shigenori. He later recalled that the moment he received the Hull Note, "I was struck by an overwhelming despair."

In spite of Togo's adherence to the pro-peace faction within the Japanese government, after the war he would be incarcerated as a Class A war criminal and would die of illness in prison. Togo was an ethnic Korean who was born in Kagoshima. In Japan's family registry his name is listed as "Pak Mudok." It was only after he passed the entrance exam of the Law Department of Tokyo Imperial University (now the University of Tokyo) that he changed his last name to the Japanese name *Togo*.

In his memoirs, which he wrote in prison, Togo states, "Because Japan's very existence was being threatened by both the US-instigated economic embargo and a military encirclement that grew stronger by the day, there was already nothing Japan could do but rise up... I have no doubt that Japan's position after accepting the Hull Note would have not been much different from our current position after being defeated in war."

Radhabinod Pal, the justice representing India in the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, is famous for submitting a dissenting judgment declaring all twenty-eight of the so-called "Class A war criminals" on trial to be innocent.

Pal strongly denounced the tone of the Hull Note, writing in his judgment that, "as for the present war, the Principality of Monaco, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, would have taken up arms against the United States on receipt of such a note as the State Department sent the Japanese Government on the eve of Pearl Harbor."

### **Pearl Harbor: The Final Act**

In the early morning of December 7 (Hawaii local time), six Japanese aircraft carriers approached within two hundred miles north of Pearl Harbor. Their crews, lined up on both sides of the flight deck, cheered as the 183 planes of the first attack wave took off from the carriers, one by one, bound for Pearl Harbor.

The attack on Pearl Harbor ended a long exercise in futility on Japan's part. Between February 11, when Ambassador Nomura took up his post in Washington, and December 7, Nomura had met with President Roosevelt ten times and Secretary of State Hull sixty times. Roosevelt and Hull were only pretending to negotiate with Japan in good faith.

Concerning December 7, Secretary of War Stimson wrote that, "When the news first came that Japan had attacked us my first feeling was of relief... This continued to be my dominant feeling in spite of the news of catastrophes which quickly developed."

Roosevelt had deliberately provoked Japan to attack the United States, and succeeded in forcing Japan into committing suicide. The attack on Pearl Harbor was the final act in a puppet play, and Roosevelt was the puppet master.

In Japan, on December 8 at 6:00 AM (Japan time), a special news bulletin was broadcast by radio declaring that a state of war existed with the United States and Great Britain.

The announcer said, "We now give you a special news bulletin," and this was followed by the brief message, "Joint Army-Navy Announcement from the Imperial General Headquarters: The armed forces of the Empire of Japan entered a state of hostilities with the US and British Armies in the western Pacific before dawn on December 8."

That night, at 7:00 PM, Prime Minister Tojo Hideki invited eighteen military and political leaders to the dining room of his official residence for supper, including Chief of the Army General Staff Sugiyama, Chief of the Navy General Staff Nagano, Navy Minister Shimada Shigetaro, and Chief Cabinet Secretary Hoshino Naoki. The kitchen staff prepared Chinese food for them.

At the meeting, as soon as the Navy reported on the Pearl Harbor raid, Prime Minister Tojo beamed with joy and declared excitedly that, "This has greatly exceeded our expectations. Now even Roosevelt will finally fall from power."

Then Sugiyama added, "A little while ago, I paid a visit to Iwashimizu Hachiman Shrine and prayed that we would see this war through to its end without needing the help of the divine wind of the Gods."

### **Lindbergh's diary**

Even at the time, there were people in the United States who believed that President Roosevelt had forced the war upon Japan. One of them was Charles Lindbergh, who had become an American national hero in 1927 for piloting his airplane, the *Spirit of St. Louis*, on the world's first transatlantic flight.

The day after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Lindbergh wrote in his diary, "I am not surprised that the Japs attacked. We have been prodding them into war for weeks. They have simply beaten us to the gun."

Herbert Hoover, Roosevelt's predecessor as president of the United States, wrote the following in his memoirs, "Freedom Betrayed," about a discussion he had with MacArthur in 1946 during a trip to occupied Japan:

"I talked with General Douglas MacArthur alone for three hours on the evening of May 4th, for one hour on the evening of May 5th, and for one hour on the morning of the 6th... I said that the whole Japanese war was a madman's desire to get into war. He agreed and also

agreed that the financial sanctions in July 1941 were not only provocative but that Japan was bound to fight even if it were suicide unless they could be removed... The gigantic error in Roosevelt's statesmanship was the total economic sanctions on Japan... The sanctions were war in every essence except shooting. Roosevelt had been warned time and again by his own officials that such provocation would sooner or later bring reprisals of war."

### **Chapter 3 - The Greater East Asia Conference and the Dream of Racial Equality**

#### **The abolition of the humiliating unequal treaties**

At the beginning of 1942, the year following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the majority of the world was still under white colonial rule.

Race was the primary factor dividing humanity into those who ruled and those who were ruled. A person's value was determined by the color of his skin.

Since the middle of the nineteenth century, as Japan was opening up to the world following a prolonged period of isolation, the Japanese people had two great aspirations.

The first of these was the abolition of the unequal treaties. In 1853, US Commodore Matthew C. Perry's fleet forced its way into Tokyo Bay, and Perry ordered that Japan's ruling Tokugawa shogunate comply with his demands. Japan was compelled to sign humiliating unequal treaties with the United States and a variety of European nations.

In accordance with the unequal treaties, foreign troops were stationed at "open ports" throughout Japan including Yokohama and Kobe. The Western powers controlled exports and imports, set tariff rates, and established their own courts. Japan had no right to put any white man on trial. Thus, Japan was virtually a vassal state.

Today, when court banquets are held at the Imperial Palace for guests visiting from foreign nations, French food is served.

And yet, in China, foreign dignitaries are served Chinese food, just as in Korea they are served Korean food, in Thailand they are served Thai food, and in India they are served Indian food.

So why is it that Japan adopted French cooking?

At the start of the Meiji period (1868-1912), when Japan was still groaning under the weight of the unequal treaties imposed by Western nations, it was thought that Western civilization was the only true civilization, and that all other cultures were uncivilized. In order to revise the unequal treaties, Japan had to prove that it was a civilized nation by learning the customs, lifestyles, and the advanced civilization of the West.

For this reason, Japan constructed Rokumei Hall, which today stands beside the Imperial Hotel in front of Tokyo's Hibiya Park. During the Meiji period high-ranking Japanese officials, along with their wives and daughters, dressed in Western clothing and invited

foreign dignitaries residing in Tokyo to Rokumei Hall for Western-style banquets and costume balls.

Today, black clothing is always worn at Japanese funerals, but until the start of the Meiji period, white clothing was the accepted norm. The Meiji government issued a nationwide notice asking citizens to wear black clothing at funerals because Western nations would view white clothing at funerals as being a mark of an uncivilized society.

Official orders remain in effect across Japan, issued by the Ministry of Education at the beginning of the Meiji period, which ban girls' school students from urinating outdoors the way that men do.

It is not customary in either Korea or China for women to urinate outdoors. I spent my youth in Nagano Prefecture and used to see women urinate in the rice and vegetable fields. When I visited the island of Java in Indonesia, I saw a woman urinating while standing on a footpath between two rice paddies. That, together with the smell of rice wafting through the air, filled me with a surprising feeling of nostalgia.

### **A proposal for racial equality spurned by the white powers**

The Japanese people's other great aspiration was to build a world based on the principle of racial equality.

Since the middle of the nineteenth century, many Japanese samurai visited Europe and the United States, and during their travels they were angered to see the way that white-skinned people exploited their fellow colored citizens, as if they were work animals or slaves.

The last unequal treaty was finally abolished following Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War. The Japanese succeeded at becoming the only nonwhite race to join the Great Powers club, which up to then had been restricted only to whites. Now that Japan was a great power, discrimination based on race could no longer continue.

From then on, the Japanese people never gave up their dream of global racial equality. Japan repeatedly pleaded for the abolition of racial discrimination, only to be turned down by the United States and the European powers.

In 1919, when the Charter of the League of Nations was being drafted at the Versailles Peace Conference convened in Paris after World War I, the Japanese plenipotentiaries proposed the inclusion of the principle of racial equality. The people of Japan were devastated when this proposal was killed due to opposition from the white colonial powers, including the United States, Great Britain, France, and the Netherlands.

Smaller European nations like Serbia had cast their votes in support of Japan's proposal, but just when it had been adopted by majority vote, the chairman of the conference, US President Woodrow Wilson, vetoed it, for the bizarre reason that "Such a significant

measure should require unanimity." At the time, the United States held the Philippines as a colony and discriminated against its own African-American population.

The invasion of Africa by European powers was ongoing at the time, and lasted well into the twentieth century.

In 1900, Great Britain conquered Kumasi, the capital of the West African Ashanti Empire (in modern-day Ghana), and then in 1903 conquered the Sokoto Caliphate in northwestern Nigeria. In addition, France subjugated Morocco in 1912, and the next year Great Britain assumed control of Egypt.

In 1935, Italy invaded the Kingdom of Ethiopia, an independent African nation with over 2,000 years of history and reputed to have been the world's oldest kingdom. The Ethiopian Army, armed with spears and axes, fought boldly but was no match for the Italians. The following year, the king fled into exile in London, and Ethiopia was incorporated into Italy.

During and before World War II, the people of Asia, African-Americans, and the aboriginal peoples of Australia and New Zealand all looked up to Japan as a shining beacon. The many memoirs and recollections recorded during this time provide ample testimony of how greatly they longed for Japanese victory against the United States, Great Britain, and the Netherlands.

From Asia to Africa and the Americas, the colored peoples of the world had had their dignity as human beings robbed for hundreds of years by a world order dominated by whites--until Japan's participation in World War II.

### **The Japanese Army, the beacon of hope for the nonwhite people of the world**

The Japanese Army made spectacular advances in the early stages of the war.

Upon the outbreak of the war in 1941, the Japanese Army immediately captured Hong Kong, Great Britain's "Pearl of the Orient," and by May 1942, occupied in succession the British colonies of Malaya, Singapore, and Burma, Dutch-ruled Indonesia, and US-ruled Philippines.

The peoples who were degraded due to the color of their skin and who had been forced into misery were freed from their chains by Japan, and finally given new hope for the future.

The leaders of the United States, the British Empire, Australia, and other white nations were taken aback by this mass awakening of the oppressed colored peoples of the world. They greatly intensified their crackdown on activists, but at the same time, panic compelled them to mitigate some of their racist practices in the hopes of placating other colored people.

For white people, the Japanese Army's campaign was a truly staggering event that shattered their centuries-long domination of the world.

By contrast, the Japanese saw the people of Asia as "brothers". In the territories cleared of white rule, Japanese soldiers expressed sincere sympathy for their fellow Asians and, quite unlike whites, treated them as equals.

The memoirs and recollections of contemporary Asians and African-Americans praise Japan for bravely standing up for them, whereas the Chinese of the time are seen as self-serving and sycophantic towards white nations.

Until Japan's defeat in 1945, the Westerners who ruled over Asia and Africa were called "white devils", and young people in Japan dreamed of liberating Asia from Western oppression. Such was the spirit of the times.

Everywhere Japan liberated, this spirit resonated with the local people's aspirations for independence. Independence movements rapidly gathered strength across Asia.

However, Japan's gains did not last long.

In June 1942, seven months from the start of the war, the Japanese Navy suffered a devastating defeat at the Battle of Midway and lost its main task force.

In August 1942, the United States began its counteroffensive by landing 19,000 Marines on Guadalcanal in the southwestern Pacific. Japanese army and naval landing units totaling 4,800 men were hurriedly dispatched, but they failed to retake the island. On two occasions, two Japanese divisions were committed to the fight, but they sustained heavy losses from withering American firepower and withdrew in February of the following year.

In May 1943, during the US Army's vigorous counterattack, a whole Japanese garrison fought to the death defending Attu Island in the Aleutians. In November, the US Army landed on Tarawa and Makin in the Gilbert Islands.

### **The Greater East Asia Conference: Leaders of the non-white races unite**

In October, just as the leaves of the ginkgo trees surrounding the Imperial Diet Building (now the National Diet Building) were changing color with the oncoming fall, the leaders who would attend the Greater East Asia Conference arrived in Tokyo.

As the war was about to enter its third year, the Greater East Asia Conference was convened in order to declare to the world, and to future generations, Japan's purpose in fighting the war.

The conference began on November 5 in the Imperial Diet Building. Gathered together in one room were Japanese Prime Minister Tojo Hideki, Premier of the Republic of China



Wang Jingwei, Representative of the Kingdom of Thailand Prime Minister His Majesty Wan Waithayakon, Manchukuo Prime Minister Zhang Jinghui, the President of the Philippines Jose Laurel, Prime Minister of Burma Ba Maw, and Representative of the Provisional Government of Free India Subhas Chandra Bose.

Japan had granted independence to Burma in August of that year, and to the Philippines in October.

The Greater East Asia Conference was a historic summit, bringing together the leaders of the world's nonwhite nations for the first time in human history.

Indonesia had been a colony of the Netherlands, as the Dutch East Indies, but under Japanese rule, steady progress was made to prepare Indonesia for independence. Japan developed Indonesia's educational and administrative systems and trained its future national army.

At the Greater East Asia Conference, each Asian leader delivered a speech. Wang Jingwei, in his speech, quoted the words of Sun Yat-sen, the revered founding father of the Republic of China:

Just three months before he passed away, our founding father Dr. Sun Yat-sen said, 'For a hundred years, our Asia had been invaded by Britain and the United States and entered a period of decline. Most Asian nations lost their status as independent states. However, at the moment of our darkest hour, we suddenly arrived at a turning point. This turning point was Japan's Meiji Restoration, which allowed Japan to become an Asian great power. This was the starting point of Asia's revival. Every nation in Asia must work with the great power Japan as one mind and body. We must do away with hegemonic Western civilization and, by completely driving out the invasive Anglo-American powers, complete the restoration of sovereignty to the nations of Asia.

Dr. Sun explained that, 'Japan and China are like brothers. Japan once also struggled under the shackles of the unequal treaties, but Japan was the first to throw off those shackles and become an Asian great power. Today China is seeking to abolish its unequal treaties just as Japan once was. We earnestly desire that Japan provide us with ample support in our endeavor.

In January, 1944 Japan became the first nation in the world to return its concessions to China and repeal extraterritoriality.

Jose Laurel declared that, "In fact, as I look back, Your Excellency, and recall the history of human civilization, I feel that this meeting of the peoples of Greater East Asia should have been held a long time ago. Whereas, in the past we have been kept as strangers, one and all, it is really gratifying to note that through the trying efforts of the great Empire of Japan, for the first time in history we are gathered and grouped together, never again to be separated

as in the past, ready to fight oppression, exploitation and tyranny so that we may proclaim to the world that, no longer shall the one billion peoples of Asia be subjected to domination and exploitation by a few Western Powers."

The Philippines became Spanish territory in 1571. In 1898 the United States launched a sudden attack on the Spanish colony of Cuba and, during the resulting Spanish-American War, seized the Philippines from Spain.

After ridding themselves of the Spanish, the Filipino people demanded independence and clashed with the US Army. A constituent assembly was convened which declared the independence of the Philippine Republic. Its first president was Emilio Aguinaldo, who had led the pro-independence campaign since the time of Spanish rule.

When the Japanese Army invaded the Philippines, General Aguinaldo welcomed the Japanese as liberators and worked with them.

From 1898, the Filipino Army fought against the US Army, but was ultimately defeated. The Philippines was reduced to the status of an American colony. During this period, more than 500,000 Filipino people were massacred.

Burma was invaded by Great Britain three times, in 1824, 1852, and 1885. In 1886, Burma was made a British colony.

Prime Minister Ba Maw of Burma was overcome by a surge of warm emotion when he attended the conference:

It is impossible to exaggerate the feelings which are born out of an occasion like this. For years in Burma I dreamt my Asiatic dreams. My Asiatic blood has always called to other Asiatics: In my dream, both sleeping and waking, I have always heard the voice of Asia calling to her children. Today, for the first time, I hear Asia's voice calling again, but this time not in a dream.

Before the war, it seemed that such a meeting as this would be inconceivable. It would have been impossible then for Asiatics to gather together like this. Yet now we are here. I see with my mind's eye a new world being exacted.

When we were only sixteen million Burmese, although we struggled for our birthright, it was in vain. For generations our patriots rose, led the people against the British enemy. Every revolt of ours against the enemy was mercilessly crushed. Thus, some twenty years ago in a national revolt Burmese villages went up in flames, Burmese women were massacred, Burmese patriots were imprisoned, hanged, exiled. But, although the revolt ended in defeat, the flame, the Asiatic flame, kept burning in every Burmese heart.

### **India's gratitude to Japan**

Subhas Chandra Bose is an Indian national hero.

In India he is known as "Netaji", which means "great leader". He is revered along with Gandhi and Nehru as one of the three key leaders of the Indian independence movement.

In his speech, Bose listed the major international conferences which had taken place over the span of more than a hundred years, including the Congress of Vienna following the downfall of Napoleon, the Congress of Paris after the Crimean War, the Congress of Berlin in the aftermath of the Russo-Turkish War, the Versailles Peace Conference after World War I, the Washington Naval Conference of 1921 to secure Anglo-American supremacy in the Pacific Ocean, and the Locarno Conference of 1925:

And as I sat listening to the proceedings of this historic Assembly, I began to wonder what the difference was between this Assembly and similar assemblies that the world's history has witnessed in bygone days.

Your Excellency, this is not a conference for dividing the spoils among the conquerors. This is not a conference for hatching a conspiracy to victimize a weak power, nor is it a conference for trying to defraud a weak neighbour. This is an Assembly of liberated nations, an Assembly that is out to create a new order in this part of the world, on the basis of the sacred principles of justice, national sovereignty, reciprocity in international relations and mutual aid and assistance.

Bose closed his speech with, "I pray to God that this Joint Declaration which this historic Assembly has unanimously adopted this afternoon may prove to be a charter for the nations of East Asia and, what is more, a charter for the suppressed nations of the whole world."

Whereas Gandhi and Nehru advocated non-violent resistance, Bose parted company with them by insisting on the path of armed revolution.

Following the outbreak of World War II in Europe, Bose evaded the tight surveillance of the British authorities and escaped India by way of Afghanistan. He then made his way to Germany where he asked for support.

In February 1943, Bose boarded a U-boat at the German port of Kiel and, after rounding the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa, he transferred to a Japanese submarine off the coast of Madagascar. In May, he arrived at Sumatra and then flew to Tokyo.

After reaching Tokyo, Bose delivered an eloquent speech at Hibiya Public Hall:

About forty years ago, when I started attending elementary school, an Asian nation went to war with the world's largest imperial power, Russia. That Asian nation defeated Russia. That nation was Japan. When the news reached us, a wave of excitement spread across all India. Everywhere in India, heroic tales of the Siege of Port Arthur, the Battle of Mukden, and the Naval Battle of Tsushima caused a sensation. The children of India sincerely admired General Nogi and Marshal-Admiral Togo. My parents competed to get their hands on photos of the General and Marshal-Admiral, but were unable to.

Instead, they bought Japanese trinkets at the marketplace and decorated our home with them. This time, Japan has declared war on India's sworn enemy, Great Britain. Japan has given the Indian people a once in a lifetime opportunity for independence, and we are truly grateful for it. Japan is Asia's beacon of hope. If we pass up this opportunity, another one like it may not appear again for the next one hundred years. I am certain that victory will be ours and that India will achieve its dream of independence.

The Greater Asia Declaration was unanimously adopted. At the conference, each Asian nation agreed to honor their traditions, promote creativity, awaken cultural activity, and develop their economies under the principles of cooperation and reciprocity, as well as to "construct a morality-based order of co-existence and co-prosperity." The declaration ended with a commitment to "strengthen our friendship with all the nations of the world, abolish racial discrimination, promote worldwide cultural exchange, actively open up resources, and contribute to global progress."

### **The Greater East Asia Conference as a turning point in world history**

By gathering together the leaders of the Asian people under the banner of global racial equality, the Greater East Asia Conference was a major turning point marking the end of a long period in human history.

In August 1941, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill met aboard a ship in the Atlantic Ocean and unveiled the "Atlantic Charter". Although the Atlantic Charter airily promised to "respect the rights of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live," that pledge was only aimed at European peoples.

During the war, what Roosevelt and Churchill feared the most was that Chiang's government in China might make peace with Japan.

If Chiang's government dropped out of the war and joined Japan, then Roosevelt and Churchill's war would turn into a "race war," pitting the white race against the nonwhite races.

Consequently, the United States had no choice but to continue to pour generous amounts of financial aid and massive quantities of military supplies into China, while fully knowing that Chiang's government was entirely corrupt.

While the Japanese Army advanced south down the Malay Peninsula toward Singapore, the Fujiwara Agency, a military intelligence unit known as the "F Agency", called on Indian soldiers serving in the British Army to defect. Indian soldiers surrendered one after another and eagerly offered their services to the Japanese Army. Their numbers swelled to over 45,000 men.

After the fall of Singapore, these Indian soldiers aspired to liberate their country and formed the Indian National Army (INA).

In March 1944, the Japanese Army marched from Burma into India with the support of the INA, making their target the northeastern Indian city of Imphal.

The Japanese Army also occupied the Andaman Islands, which stretch down into the Indian Ocean. Here, Bose set up the seat of his Provisional Government of Free India with himself as prime minister.

Bose traveled from Tokyo to Singapore, where he took up command of the Indian National Army.

Bose announced the INA's campaign using the slogan *Chalo Delhi* (To Delhi!), and his troops marched while singing the stirring marching song, *Chalo, Chalo Delhi*. For them, this was a historic advance into Mother India.

The officers and men of the INA crossed the India-Burma border along with the Japanese Army and marched on Imphal while shouting the war cry, *Chalo Delhi*. Bose encouraged his men by telling them to "Raise our country's flag over the Red Fort!"

The Red Fort is an imposing castle dating from the time of the Mughal Empire (1526-1858) which is located in the old district of New Delhi. It received its name because it was constructed of red stone.

On October 28, 1956, *The Observer*, a British newspaper of record, printed an article by the world famous historian Arnold Toynbee which included the following:

"The Japanese in the Second World War made history, not for themselves, but for unintended beneficiaries and in all the countries temporarily included in the short-lived Japanese 'Co-Prosperity Sphere'... The Japanese made history by demonstrating to the rest of the human race that the Western rulers of Asian and African were not the invincible demigods that they had been deemed to be for the last two centuries."

#### **Local residents' cooperation with the Japanese Army**

Since 1945, journalist Henry S. Stokes worked, in succession, as Tokyo bureau chief for *The New York Times*, the *Financial Times*, and the *London Times*.

Stokes has written the following in praise of Japan's liberation of Asia and the crucial role played by the Greater East Asia Conference in the development of world history:

"During World War II, Japan worked to create a 'fifth column' in the Southeast Asian colonial possessions of the United States, Great Britain, and the Netherlands. This strategy succeeded because the Japanese Army was liberating the peoples of Asia from Western imperialism and guiding them toward independence. The Japanese Army was not invading Asia in order to dominate it. Japan provided the colonized peoples of Asia with education

and military training in order to help them achieve independence. Subhas Chandra Bose, the commander of the Indian National Army who was supported by the Japanese Army, declared that 'Japan is Asia's beacon of hope' and expressed wholehearted gratitude to the Japanese. The situation was the same in Malaysia and Singapore. The reason why Japanese intelligence operations succeeded and why the British were forced to surrender is precisely because the Japanese were fighting for the just cause of liberating Asia from white rule. Today, many Japanese scholars continue to claim that the Greater East Asia Conference was a gathering of 'puppet leaders of Japanese occupied states' which was convened solely for the purposes of domestic propaganda. However, it is those Japanese who are the real puppets. They are the puppets of the victor powers who are still trying to control Japan."

A "fifth column" refers to "forces within a country who are secretly assisting the enemy". As the Japanese Army advanced, local residents eagerly aided the Japanese soldiers. Japan's "intelligence operations" involved covert espionage work.

Despite overwhelming support from native peoples, as documented in contemporary accounts written by non-Japanese people, Japan's school textbooks and dictionaries still define the Greater East Asia Conference as a "conference convened to bring together the 'puppet leaders of Japanese occupied states' for the purposes of propaganda".

In the authoritative Japanese dictionary *Kojien*, the entry on Ba Maw describes him as, "Politician and nationalist leader of Burma (now Myanmar)... When the Japanese Army invaded Burma during World War II he collaborated with the Japanese and launched a campaign against Great Britain. In August of 1943 he declared Burma's 'independence' and was installed as its national leader, but this was actually a Japanese puppet government."

The massive *Heibonsha World Encyclopedia* does not include an entry on the Greater East Asia Conference, nor does the term even appear elsewhere. There is a short entry for "Great East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere", but it starts with "a slogan used to justify Japan's policy of aggression towards China and Southeast Asia during World War II".

Why are Japanese dictionaries and encyclopedias propagating the *victors'* historical view?

## **Chapter 4 - The Noble Spirit Which Inspired the People of Asia**

### **The Battle of Imphal's critical role in Indian independence**

After Japan lost the war, Great Britain branded the forces of the Indian National Army, who fought at the Battle of Imphal, as a rebel army. Three former officers of the army, one Hindu, one Sikh, and one Muslim, were put on trial at the Red Fort for high treason against the British crown.

Hinduism, Sikhism, and Islam are the three major religions of India, and these three officers had been selected as symbols of India.

However, when the trial began, widespread anger erupted across India. The people of India stood up as one to say, "The men of the INA were patriots, not traitors!"

Millions of Indians flooded into the streets. The British attempted to suppress these mass demonstrations, even buzzing them with Spitfire aircraft and strafing them with machine gun fire from the air, but this only increased the chaos.

Eventually, even Indian soldiers and their units joined in on the protests, leaving Great Britain with no choice but to grant India its independence.

Eric Hobsbawm was a prominent British historian who had worked as a professor at the University of London. In his magnum opus, a reflection on the twentieth century entitled "The Age of Extremes", Hobsbawm argued that the independence of India was not the work of independence activists like Gandhi and Nehru, but rather was sparked by the attack on India by the Indian National Army and the Japanese during the Battle of Imphal.

The Battle of Imphal ended in a terrible military defeat, but it did succeed in its objective to put India back in the hands of the Indian people.

Since the 1980s, I have been to India many times.

In August, 1997, I attended the ceremonies commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of Indian independence, which were held in New Delhi. There were a great many special events.

In his address, the leading Indian politician and former Speaker of the Lower House Rabi Ray said, "As we celebrate this great day, we cannot allow ourselves to forget the year 1905. The people of India were emboldened by Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War and rose up to join the independence movement." Rabi Ray was a longtime socialist and had been considered for the presidency several times by then.

Dr. Pran Nath Lekhi, an Indian independence fighter and influential lawyer, said of the Battle of Imphal, "As long as the light of the sun illuminates the sky, the light of the moon soaks the earth, and the light of the stars shine in the night, the people of India will not forget their debt of gratitude to the people of Japan."

The next year, when I returned to New Delhi, three senior members of the All India INA Committee, a veterans' association for former Indian National Army members, paid me a visit at the hotel where I was staying. They handed me a letter of thanks written in English and told me, "We veterans all feel gratitude to Japan. Please take this letter of thanks to Yasukuni Shrine as an offering."

I translated the letter into Japanese and delivered it to Yasukuni Shrine.

The letter read, "India's debt to Japan is too great to be adequately expressed through words. Your great country offered us all the military assistance it could at the time of the liberation of India. A hundred thousand or more Japanese soldiers fought with us as comrades in arms and shed their blood, sweat, and tears alongside us. The Indian National Army will never forget all those noble men of the Japanese Imperial Army who perished for the cause of India. The Imperial Japanese Army made India an independent country, and we pray that the bond between India and Japan will henceforth become even stronger. -SS Yadav, Captain in the Indian National Army and General Secretary of the All India INA Committee"

Yasukuni Shrine duly put the letter and its Japanese translation up for display in its war museum, Yushukan.

Over 20,000 Japanese soldiers died of disease during the Battle of Imphal. The whole campaign was regarded as being highly reckless, and during the Japanese retreat, huge numbers of soldiers died of disease, injuries, and starvation. So many corpses were piled up along the Japanese lines of retreat that they were called "bone roads".

#### **A letter from a war widow**

After returning from India, I got a spot on a television program in which I mentioned Hobsbawm's views on the Battle of Imphal and the letter of thanks from the All India INA Committee I had been asked to deliver to Yasukuni Shrine.

After this, a letter was sent to the television station addressed to me from a widow who said that her husband had died during the Battle of Imphal.

She wrote in her letter, "All this time, I believed that my husband had died in vain. When I saw that television program and learned that the Battle of Imphal had led to the independence of India, I couldn't help but shed tears of joy... I'm sorry to bother a busy man such as yourself, but if you would kindly send me a video of that program, I would be



deeply grateful. I want to place it on the altar dedicated to my late husband." Folded up and enclosed in the letter were five thousand yen in new banknotes.

I asked the television station for a video, which I then mailed to the widow.

Following Japan's defeat in the war, Bose decided to escape to the Soviet Union and carry on the struggle for independence from there. On August 18, he landed at Taipei Airport aboard a Japanese Army transport plane, but immediately after it took off again bound for Dalian, it crashed and burst into flames, killing Bose.

Today, bronze statues of Bose stand on the premises of India's Parliament House and in the garden of the Red Fort. Bose's portrait in Parliament House was hung beside those of Nehru and Gandhi.

Until recently, the Indian ambassador in Tokyo had invited veterans of F Agency or their surviving family members to the embassy for an annual appreciation banquet every October 21. On October 21, Bose had established the Provisional Government of Free India with Japanese support, a date which is commemorated in India as Azad Hind Day, the Day of Free India.

### **The independence monument engraved with Japan's imperial year**

Indonesia declared its independence two days after Japan surrendered.

Japan had promised the month before to grant Indonesia independence in September, but ultimately Japan surrendered to the Allies one month before.

The Indonesian independence leaders Sukarno and Hatta strongly desired to declare independence before the Allied forces arrived, but Japanese Army headquarters in Jakarta firmly rejected their request. The Japanese Army was worried about what sort of revenge the Allies might exact upon Japan if it granted Indonesia independence after the surrender.

In spite of the Japanese Army's strong rejection, Hatta and Sukarno went through with their declaration of independence on August 17. Out of gratitude to Japan, the date printed on the declaration of independence is "17 8 05", meaning August 17 of the 2,605th year since the founding of Japan's ruling imperial dynasty in 660 BC. This "imperial year" system was in common use in Japan before World War II.

Japan did not compel Indonesia to use the imperial year. Indonesia is a Muslim country, so even though the Indonesians could not have used the year 1945 from the Christian calendar, they could have used the relevant date from the Muslim calendar. Even now, Japan's imperial year remains engraved on Indonesia's independence monument in Jakarta.

My first visit to Indonesia was in the year 1970 when I was invited to a development economics conference in Jakarta called, "Indonesia in the Year 2000", presided over by President Suharto.

During World War II, Japan recruited young Indonesians to serve in the volunteer army Defenders of the Homeland, known by its Indonesian acronym PETA. Even today, at Indonesia's Independence Day ceremonies held in Jakarta every August 17, former officers of PETA attend the ceremonies with the Indonesian flag in hand and a Japanese sword hung from the belt of their green uniforms.

Then a female chorus sings the PETA March in Indonesian, which goes "Old Asia suffers in misery, we have endured harsh repression for centuries, Greater Japan stands up valiantly, to protect us and save Asia, Onward! Onward! PETA!" After this, they usually sing patriotic Japanese songs in the Japanese language such as "Flower of Patriotism" and "The Patriotic March". I own a video recording of the entire ceremony.

Due to the work of the officers and men of the Japanese Army, PETA members constituted Indonesia's national army at the time of independence and trained over 40,000 young men.

After the war had ended, British and Dutch soldiers landed in Indonesia in a bid to bring Indonesia back under Dutch colonial rule.

They were fired upon by Indonesian soldiers bearing Indonesia's red and white flag, thus starting a brutal war for independence which lasted four years. Former members of PETA formed the core of the military forces fighting for independence.

PETA was the incubator of many of Indonesia's most talented postwar political leaders. Among PETA leaders were future President Suharto, future Vice-President Umar Wirahadikusumah, and Sudirman, the first commander-in-chief of the Indonesian Army, who was a major unit leader in PETA.

Former PETA members say uniformly that the education they received from the Japanese Army provided Indonesian youth with not only military training, but also the physical and mental training necessary to fight for independence.

After the end of the war, Indonesians continued to pay deep respect to the Japanese officers who contributed to Indonesia's independence and the Japanese soldiers who served as instructors in PETA.

When I travelled to Jakarta, former PETA members often paid me visits at my hotel along with their wives.

They gathered in the hotel lobby and, with lyric sheets in hand, they each sang for me a series of Japanese patriotic and military songs including "Flower of Patriotism", "Heaven's Paratroopers", and "A Soldier's Specialty".

In 1977, when the South Korean representative at an international conference in Manila strongly criticized Japan, Brigadier General Ali Murtopo, special advisor to the president of Indonesia and Deputy Minister of Information, requested a chance to speak, and he reprimanded the South Korean representative as follows.

"Japan is Asia's shining light. Japan fought World War II to make Asia independent. Although this was a battle the people of Asia should have fought, it was the people of Japan who stood up and sacrificed themselves for the cause."

According to Ali Murtopo, the other representatives from Southeast Asia applauded all at once, and the South Korean representative hung his head downward in dismay.

In the year 2011, the Indonesian government donated to Japan a bronze statue of General Sudirman, the supreme commander of Indonesian forces during the war for independence.

Today, this statue is located on the grounds of the Japanese Defense Ministry in Ichigayadai, Tokyo.

Ichigayadai is also where the Tokyo War Crimes Trial was held so that the United States could try Japan's leaders for the crime of acts of aggression against Asia.

During the Indonesian war for independence, General Sudirman was known as Pa Dirman, meaning Father Dirman. He was beloved by all his countrymen.

In Jakarta, there is a Sudirman Street where, at its center, an identical bronze statue of General Sudirman also stands.

Japan's statue of Sudirman was set up in the country's most fitting spot for it. The fact that Indonesia gave Japan a statue of the supreme commander of its independence army and put it in Ichigayadai is a refutation of the legality and the verdict of the Tokyo War Crimes Trial.

Anyone who makes a request at the Ministry of Defense is permitted to view its statue of General Sudirman. Why not go pay your respects there on Indonesia's Independence Day next August 17?

### **The movie "Pride: The Fateful Moment" moved Japan's youth**

The Tokyo War Crimes Trial aimed to try Japan's leaders for "crimes against peace" before a tribunal that the Allies had established in Ichigayadai. However, the Allies had decided in

advance that Japan was the "aggressor nation". The Tokyo War Crimes Trial was in fact an act of murder that certainly did not deserve to be called a "trial".

When I was still in university, I signed on with the script department at Toho Studios and was involved in film production. However, my true dream since then was to create a drama film, perhaps my magnum opus, proving that the Tokyo War Crimes Trial was nothing more than an unjust lynching carried out by the victor powers of World War II.

In 1998, the movie "Pride: The Fateful Moment", featuring Prime Minister Tojo Hideki and Indian justice Radhabinod Pal as its protagonists, was produced and then distributed by Toei Studios. I was the author of the film's draft screenplay.

The word "Pride" which I used in the title was meant to express the pride of Japan and of Tojo Hideki while he was on trial as a defendant.

During our first preliminary discussions with Toei Studios, the studio executives actually told us that, "We suspect that a movie on that sort of topic will only appeal to senior citizens at least in their 60s or 70s."

And yet, when the film premiered, more than half of its audience was in their forties or younger. I peered in on several screenings of the film, and always saw plenty of people in their 20s or 30s. Not a few among them were moved to tears by the film.

Even prior to the premiere of "Pride: The Fateful Moment", when I was serving on the production committee, the film was garnering a tremendous response and many excellent reviews nationwide. It became the most viewed Japanese movie in the first half of the year 1998. Across the whole year, it was the second highest grossing film at the box office, after Toho's movie "Bayside Shakedown".

It attracted this much attention even before its premiere thanks to the considerable coverage the movie received in newspapers and on television.

Before the preview screening, I happened by chance to turn on NHK TV and saw a 7:00 AM news broadcast which started with former Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi's visit to China. There was a video of his meeting with Chinese President Jiang Zemin, during which Jiang denounced our movie and Murayama apologized in response.

There was a close-up of Murayama hanging his head and saying "I deeply apologize." However, if I had been in Mr. Murayama's position I would have responded to Jiang's criticism by saying, "I too found the movie to be deplorable, but unlike your country Japan is a democracy. Even if Japanese citizens create a scandalous movie, the government may not intervene."

That morning, all of Japan's morning newspapers, from the Yomiuri Shimbun to the Mainichi Shimbun, were covering this story at the top of their front pages. Under normal circumstances, it would have been unheard-of for newspapers to discuss an entertainment film on their front page. My colleagues and I were all thrilled by the publicity.

China was familiar with the film even before the preview screening. Clearly, either a person from Toei's labor union or someone else with inside connections had tipped off the Chinese embassy in advance.

### **Bringing back the spirit of "self-preservation and self-defense"**

I served on the production committee of the 2001 film, "Merdeka 17805", about the Japanese liberation of Indonesia. It was released nationwide by Toei Studios.

This was Japan's first nationwide screening of a factually-based drama film concerning Japan's liberation of Asian peoples during World War II.

At the start of the film the subtitles say in large lettering, "Japan went to war for its own self-preservation and self-defense." It was also the first postwar Japanese film to include this message.

The phrase "self-preservation and self-defense" appears in Japan's Imperial Declaration of War of 1941 against the United States and Great Britain.

I viewed the movie many times from the pre-editing rush stage and onwards, but I was touched each time I saw this.

There were large audiences at preview screenings of the film, and many among them were moved to tears. One university professor told me, "Our heartfelt tears have washed away the fifty-five years of humiliation which have elapsed since the end of the war." A member of the Japan Self-Defense Forces remarked that, "I will tell my colleagues to bring a towel to dry away their tears."

After freeing Indonesia, then known as the Dutch East Indies, from three hundred and fifty years of Dutch colonial rule in March of 1942, the Japanese Army set up a military administration with the goal of preparing the country for independence. The Japanese established Indonesian as the standard national language, improved school education, and founded organizations like women's groups, civil defense units, public service groups, and neighborhood associations which operated on all the islands of Indonesia.

The movie is based on the true story of how the Japanese Army founded and trained PETA, the forerunner to the post-independence Indonesian Armed Forces.

Before the release of the movie, my novelization, also entitled "Merdeka 17805", was published.

It is a work that harkens back to a time and a spirit that have been forgotten.

The protagonist is based on the real-life Yanagawa Munenari, a hot-blooded First Lieutenant (promoted to Captain after the war) in the Japanese Army. After graduating from Takushoku University, Yanagawa studied at the Nakano School for army intelligence officers. In 1942, he participated in a landing operation under enemy fire on the island of Java. The scene in the movie where he single-handedly charges into the Dutch Army headquarters with his sword drawn and demands the surrender of the commander was also an actual event.

Yanagawa opened the Youth Dojo to train the future leaders of the Indonesian National Armed Forces. He played a key role in the founding of PETA.

Following Japan's defeat, the Dutch Army returned to Indonesia with the support of the British Army in order to restore the colonial regime. They were resisted by pro-independence Indonesian forces carrying Indonesia's red and white national flag, the Merah-Putih. Former members of PETA, who numbered 38,000 men, formed their core.

If PETA had never existed, Indonesia could not possibly have won the war for independence.

Two thousand Japanese soldiers declined to return to Japan after the end of World War II and, in order to continue their fight to liberate Asia, they instead remained in Indonesia where they participated in the war for independence alongside the Indonesian people. Yanagawa returned home after the end of World War II, so the rest of the protagonist's story is fictional.

Half of the over two thousand Japanese soldiers who fought in Indonesia's war for independence died in combat. The remains of the Japanese soldiers who gave their lives for Indonesia's independence today lie in Indonesia's Heroes' Cemetery.

I named the protagonist Shimazaki Takeo. Right after the Indonesians have achieved victory in the intense final battle for Yogyakarta, Java, Shimazaki is rejoicing with his Indonesian girlfriend when he is shot and killed by a Dutch sniper.

I wrote this scene as follows.

"The bright moon had illuminated the contours of the far-away mountains.

Aryati's forehead reflected the stars and the moonlight cast beautiful shadows over her face.

At that moment, Shimazaki suddenly lurched backwards and fell to the ground. A second later, the sound of a gunshot rang out from far in the distance.

'Takeo!', Aryati screamed. She picked up Shimazaki and cradled him on her lap. The bullet had hit him directly through his chest.

He had been shot by a sniper. The Indonesian side immediately returned fire. Over ten members of his unit dashed into the forest all at once in pursuit of the Dutch soldiers.

Nurhadi ran up to Shimazaki, but there was nothing he could do for him.

Shimazaki could only mumble, "Ryati", in a feeble voice.

'Takeo! Takeo! Don't leave me! Takeo!'

Tears poured down Aryati's nose and face.

Shimazaki gathered all his remaining strength and smiled faintly.

'Takeo! Hang in there. Your dream is a reality! Japan was defeated, but you have won!'

Aryati pressed her cheek against Shimazaki's again and again as Shimazaki faded away."

I meant Aryati's line to signify that Japan had lost the war as a country, but won the war as a people.

Ryati was Shimazaki's term of endearment for Aryati, and Nurhadi was a PETA member who had served alongside Shimazaki.

I went to Indonesia as the film "Merdeka 17805" was being shot on location. Vice Commander of the Indonesian Armed Forces Bambang Yudhoyono graciously allowed us to borrow two hundred soldiers for shooting scenes over a period of two months. Military museums also provided us with free use of contemporary weaponry like machine guns and rifles.

The film contains many battle scenes, but the untrained extras we had hired could not even march in file correctly, and we would never have been able to complete the film without the cooperation we had received from the Indonesian Armed Forces.

In front of the military museum in Jakarta, there is a Japanese, World War II-era Tachikawa Ki-9 Training Aircraft on display. The Tachikawa Ki-9 was a biplane that was affectionately known to the Japanese people as the "Red Dragonfly". Over the course of World War II, it was difficult to transport petroleum from Indonesia to the Japanese mainland, and so the training of pilots was undertaken in Indonesia.

The Japanese Army recruited young Indonesian volunteers, who were called "heiho", and taught them how to operate and maintain aircraft. After the end of World War II, Indonesia's pro-independence forces flew their Tachikawa Ki-9 aircraft above Dutch positions and dropped bombs on them by hand.

The bottom half of the Japanese sun flag on the fuselage of the Tachikawa Ki-9 at the military museum in Jakarta was repainted white in order to change it into an Indonesian flag.

Vice Commander of the Indonesian Armed Forces Bambang Yudhoyono was elected President of Indonesia in 2004.

Yanagawa Munenari's Youth Dojo was located in the city of Bogor on Java. The Youth Dojo expanded into a training facility for PETA officers.

Today there is a PETA Museum in Bogor in front of which stands, just like on Sudirman Street, a statue of General Sudirman.

The museum contains exhibits featuring weapons used by PETA as well as many documents, photographs, and artwork. Among them is a relief depicting Indonesian youth wrestling on sandbags under the guidance of a Japanese Army instructor.

In the film "Merdeka 17805", there is one scene in which even the Japanese Army noncommissioned officers, who are training Indonesian men on the grounds of the Youth Dojo, have stripped naked and are shouting "Fight until death!" with them in Indonesian.

### **King Sihanouk in the role of a Japanese soldier**

I have a close relationship with His Majesty King Sihanouk of Cambodia, and I know that he is not sparing in his praise for the conduct of the Japanese Army during World War II.

The King has made a hobby of directing and starring in his own movies.

In the year 1979, while he was in exile in North Korea, King Sihanouk produced and starred in the drama film "Rose of Bokor", made in a film studio in Pyongyang.

After the Vietnamese Army invaded Cambodia, the King fled abroad and divided his time between staying in Beijing and Pyongyang. When he travelled to Tokyo as a guest of the Japanese government, he always lodged at the Imperial Hotel.

One day I was invited to the hotel and, while being treated to wine, I listened to what the King had to say. It was at this time that I received a video of the film.



King Sihanouk told me that at the preview screening, President Kim Il-sung, who was attending with his eldest son Secretary of the Central Committee Kim Jong-il, praised it as "a magnificent film".

The film starts with a portrait of President Kim Il-sung alongside subtitles praising his leadership. The story begins with the stationing of Japanese soldiers in Bokor, Cambodia.

The King plays as Colonel Hasegawa Ichiro, a unit leader in the Japanese Army, and the King's actual wife Queen Monique appears as Hasegawa's lover, the beautiful daughter of a powerful local man. The video's dialogue was dubbed into Korean, but there were also English subtitles for the benefit of foreign audiences.

The movie portrayed the Japanese Army as a highly disciplined force. The many Japanese soldiers appearing in the film were members of the North Korean Army mobilized as extras. When the Japanese Army came to Bokor, cheering crowds greeted them as "liberators".

The Japanese soldiers occupied the former headquarters of the French Army, took down the French Tricolor from its roof, and raised the flag of Japan in its place.

The extras of the North Korean Army strained to smile as they lined up and presented arms towards the Japanese flag. Then Colonel Hasegawa delivered a speech declaring that "Japan is fighting to liberate Asia." Hasegawa was presented throughout the film as being a gallant Japanese soldier with a military saber hanging on his belt.

There is a scene in which the Japanese Army fights with the French Army. The French commander was killed in combat and a funeral was held at a church on a small hill. Hasegawa also attended the funeral, and as the coffin was being lowered into the earth, Hasegawa stood in salute. As a soldier, he behaved courteously even towards his enemies.

Hasegawa had decorated the top of his office desk with a portrait of the Emperor in uniform riding on a white stallion. In the final days of the war, his aide-de-camp brought him a report informing him that an atomic bomb had been dropped on Hiroshima. Once his aide-de-camp left the room, Hasegawa burst into tears and lamentation.

After receiving a communiqué about Japan's unconditional surrender to the Allies, Hasegawa went to the home of his lover, the daughter of a local magnate played by Queen Monique, and played a piece on the piano.

The piece was the Japanese folk song, "Cherry Blossoms, Cherry Blossoms". As Hasegawa's piano music plays, images appear one after another showing the cherry blossoms of springtime Japan in full bloom, the mountains and rivers of the Japanese autumn full of colored foliage, and the white snow of the Japanese winter.

The film conveys the message that, even though Japan was defeated in war, the noble spirit of the Japanese people remained unaltered. I was profoundly moved both by King Sihanouk's affection for Japan, and the spirit of our forbearers who built the Japan which is still admired by people across Asia.

Every time my workplace is visited by Korean journalists, I show this film to them. It doesn't fail to leave them speechless.

Japan had completely changed the face of Asia.

**Pro-Japanese collaborators as "race heroes"**

The presumption in today's Japan, that Japan is hated because of its conquest of Asia during World War II, is quite contrary to the facts.

It is true that, after the end of the war, thousands of Chinese people who collaborated with Japan, including the leaders of the Wang Jingwei government, were put on trial and executed as "hanjian", which means "race traitors".

On the other hand, in no country between Southeast Asia and India were any pro-Japanese collaborators ever put on trial. Going so far as to execute them would have been unthinkable.

And yet, that ought to have happened if Japan had been hated and deemed an aggressor. In fact, pro-Japanese collaborators in Indonesia, India, and Myanmar were regarded as "race heroes" after the end of the war.

In the Philippines, the eldest son of President Jose Laurel studied at the Imperial Japanese Army Academy during the war and later became the Filipino ambassador to Japan. The family of President Aquino also cooperated with Japan, and indeed, one could cite innumerable similar examples from any country.

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



## **Chapter 6 - The Japanese Army's "Spirit-First Policy"**

### **"Repositioning" and "honorable deaths"**

In August 1942, US Marines landed on the islands of Guadalcanal and neighboring Tulagi with a force of 19,000 soldiers.

The Battle of Guadalcanal was the Japanese Army's first defeat at the hands of the US military since the outbreak of the war.

The Japanese garrison defending Tulagi was completely annihilated in one day's fighting.

Meanwhile a Japanese Navy construction unit was building an airfield on Guadalcanal. The unit consisted of 2,200 men, but a majority of those were conscript laborers.

Japan's Imperial General Headquarters hastily dispatched a naval landing party of 500 men strong plus army units 4,300 men strong, but the troop strength of the attacking American force had been badly underestimated and the Japanese were defeated. The Japanese Army's standard tactic of mass bayonet charges proved disastrous in the face of the US Marines' overwhelming advantage in firepower.

Of the 916 Japanese soldiers who attacked the US military position, 777 were killed in action. Only 126 Japanese soldiers made it back to their bases alive, while the US Marines had lost 40 soldiers.

In October, Imperial General Headquarters recognized the gravity of the situation and sent in the 2nd Division. The men of the 2nd Division traversed the island's unexplored jungles in order to make an all-out frontal assault on the American position, but the result was another devastating defeat.

The 38th Division was also deployed to Guadalcanal, but seven of its eleven transport vessels were sunk before reaching the island. Only 2,000 men made it ashore and all their artillery had been lost.

The United States gained supremacy of the air and sea around Guadalcanal which made it almost impossible to bring in rations. Many Japanese soldiers died of starvation.

Finally, Imperial General Headquarters decided to abandon Guadalcanal and withdrew its forces between January and February of the following year. At the time of the official announcement, instead of calling it a "retreat", the word "repositioning" (*tenshin* in Japanese) was used for the first time.

Since August, Japan had brought a total of 31,404 soldiers to Guadalcanal, but only 10,652 of those managed to withdraw successfully. Over 20,000 had perished through combat or starvation.

Throughout this period, fighting continued to rage on the vast island of New Guinea between the Japanese and the armies of the United States and Australia. In December 1942, Japanese forces in New Guinea had been decimated in fighting around the village of Basabua, losing 800 men in battle. In the following January, Japanese forces were again crushed at Buna, and then, following a fierce fight, withdrew from Giruwa as well. Between Buna and Giruwa the Japanese had lost 7,600 soldiers in combat.

On May 12, 1943, 12,000 American soldiers landed in Attu, one of the Aleutian Islands, under cover of an array of aircraft carriers, battleships, and cruisers.

About 2,500 Japanese soldiers defended Attu, and on May 29, the remainder of these made an all-out suicide charge against US forces.

The next day, Imperial General Headquarters officially announced that, "The defenders of Attu Island had been in an extremely difficult situation since May 12, fighting a non-stop, bloody battle against a vastly numerically superior foe. However, on the night of May 29, they decided to show the enemy the true spirit of the Imperial Army by launching a final blow against the enemy main force. All the remaining defenders made a bold and heroic attack on the enemy. After this, all communications ceased and we assume that every man met an honorable death. Even the sick and wounded, who were unable to participate in the attack, had all committed suicide in advance."

This was the first time that Imperial General Headquarters had used the phrase "honorable death", which is pronounced *gyokusai* in Japanese and literally means "shattered jewel".

The newspaper *Asahi Shimbun* praised the last stand of the defenders of Attu in an article which read, "The word 'gyokusai' neatly sums up the attitude towards life and death of the people of Japan, who, valuing their reputations more than their lives, would give up their lives to live honorably. The heroic destruction of the 'War God Unit' on Attu is the very definition of 'gyokusai', an amazing exploit which will be remembered for ten thousand years."

The article explained that, "The word 'gyokusai' derives from a passage in the Book of Northern Qi's biography of Yuan Jingan, composed at the end of the Six Dynasties period of Chinese history. The passage reads, 'A real man would rather be a shattered jewel than a complete roof tile.' 'Gyokusai' means that it is better to die a gallant and honorable death in service to the state, respected by all like the beautiful light reflected off a jewel. The alternative is to lead a life without achieving anything, emitting no light like a roof tile." The article mentioned that, "We often see the same idea in the words and deeds of the great

men of our own nation's past", and then proceeded to quote the poetry of Saigo Takamori and the prison writings of Yoshida Shoin.

The Japanese Army and Navy lost every battle they fought from the time of the Battle of Attu onwards.

On Attu and on all the other islands after that whose defenders met honorable deaths, the Japanese fought to the last with no hope of resupply or reinforcement. Having lost control of the sea and air, not even a single rice ball could make it to the defending garrison intact.

What could Japanese officers have been thinking in the face of such overwhelming American firepower?

In November, 20,000 American soldiers landed on Cape Torokina of Bougainville Island, which is on the east side of New Guinea. They routed a Japanese Army surveillance team consisting of over two hundred men.

A single regiment composed of 1,200 Japanese soldiers was speedily dispatched to repulse the Americans. Bougainville Island's total land area is over one quarter that of Hokkaido.

After the regiment went ashore, it trudged through fifty kilometers of unexplored jungle and two of its members were eaten by crocodiles while crossing a river. Then the regiment launched a bold night-time attack on US forces, employing the bayonet charges which were the Japanese Army's speciality.

According to *Senshi Soshō*, the history of the war compiled by the Japanese Defense Ministry's Military History Office, the regimental commander Colonel Hamanoe Toshiaki wrote the following concerning the battle:

"Enemy resistance was stiff and the fighting was just getting fiercer. We were unable to advance even one step. During typical fighting in China, resistance was also stiff at first, but when we kept pushing they gave way. Our current predicament seemed completely different from fighting the Chinese Army. The enemy mortars delivered a nonstop barrage of concentrated fire. We divided up the Japanese Army's battlefield and marked our maps with the appropriate numbers indicating depth and width. In short order the enemy fired hundreds of shells at the area we had marked out with numbers, and kept on firing so intensely that not even a single mouse could have survived. So intense was its power and so grand was its scale, we did not even have the strength to advance. If we stayed there our casualties would have risen rapidly and we would have had to accept our annihilation as inevitable. We had no choice but to endure the shame and transfer our units outside of the effective firing range of the enemy mortars so that we could regroup our forces, replenish our ammunition, and prepare a counterattack."

The word "transfer" meant "retreat". Colonel Hamanoe had decided to withdraw and his regiment abandoned the battlefield.

The Japanese Army abhorred the word "retreat" and refused to use it. The Army was closing its eyes to reality out of an obsession of avoiding bad omens. In the Army, a retreat was either a "transfer" or a "repositioning".

### **The Type 38 Arisaka rifle and the firepower gap**

The US Army landed on the island of Tinian on July 23.

The island's 4,000 Japanese defenders, including both army and navy units, launched a close-quarter attack on US Marines on the 25th. The attack ended in failure at the cost of 1,241 men killed in action.

The commander of the 1st Air Fleet deployed at Tinian, Kakuta Kakuji, telegraphed the Navy General Staff on July 27 and reported on the power differential between the US and Japanese militaries.

"The Americans keep a close eye on their positions which are studded with acoustic locators and barbed-wire entanglements. As soon as they detect our approach they hail withering fire on us from their tanks, mortars, and automatic firearms, and as we advance further they make extensive use of flamethrowers. Then their ship cannons and ground cannons surrounding us rain down an endless stream of flares all night long. They are not sparing in their use of every kind of shell, and are firing shots into the air. (Starting from the day before the start of the landing, the whole of Tinian has been hit with probably no fewer than 3,000 such shells each night and somewhere between 600 or 1,000 shells were fired at our headquarters on Mt. Lasso alone.) There are a huge number of obstacles for night-time operations. After the failure of our Army's night attack on the 25th, the regimental commander said, while shedding bitter tears, 'As great as our men's bravery was, the enemy's equipment was greater.'"

The Japanese defenders of Tinian met honorable deaths on August 3.

Whereas the US military made liberal use of ammunition, the Japanese Army compensated for its lack of firepower through sheer strength of spirit. The Japanese Army fought with force of will rather than force of matter.

Against the Japanese Army's Type 38 Arisaka rifles, the US Army had automatic rifles. The Type 38 was developed in 1905 during the Russo-Japanese War.

The Type 38 could fire up to five rounds before needing to be reloaded. It was put to use for the first time during Japan's siege of Tsingtao, which was a German leased territory at the time of World War I.

Of course, Japanese soldiers did not fight their battles exclusively with the Type 38. Japanese infantry units also had equipment like light machine guns, heavy machine guns, grenade launchers, infantry support guns, and automatic cannons, but compared with the US Army, the Japanese had fewer weapons and less ammunition. Whereas the US Army blanketed an entire area with a barrage of firepower, the Japanese Army fired only at specific spots. Battles between the US and Japanese Armies were battles of points versus two dimensional space.

Later, when the US Army landed on Luzon of the Philippines, they airdropped a great quantity of propaganda leaflets on the Japanese Army. The leaflets included a photo of the Type 38 Arisaka rifle and the following message.

"As you are all aware, the Type 38 Arisaka rifle which you are using made its debut as a cutting-edge weapon back in 1905, at the time of the Russo-Japanese War, when it replaced the Murata rifle. However, that was forty years ago. People throughout the world know well that, since then, every country has been competing aggressively in the field of scientific research and great strides have been made in the production of scientific weaponry. So why is it that you are still being forced to fight against automatic firearms with lever-action rifles? If you had been fighting with both your martial spirit and the advanced weaponry belonging to the US Army, then perhaps you might have avoided disastrous defeats like the one you suffered at Leyte. No matter how strong your spirits are, how could you ever fight back against a Consolidated 500-kilogram bomb with a Type 38 rifle?"

"Consolidated" refers to the bombers built by America's Consolidated Aircraft Corporation.

The Type 38 Arisaka rifle was the backbone of an army which valued bayonet charges more than anything.

In 2009, two television programs, Fuji TV's "This Concerns Me!" and TBS's "Mino Monta's Morning Straight Talk", broadcast features on how the Japanese Army's old rifles have been used to treat patients at Showa, a long-term care facility in Kasukabe, Saitama Prefecture.

The staff at Showa showed models of the old Type 38 rifle to elderly men suffering from dementia, but though they had been unable to even stand on their own two feet up to then, they immediately rose up, slung the model gun over their shoulders, and started to walk.

According to the TV programs, the facility henceforth found models of the Type 38 rifle to be useful in the treatment of dementia.

### **The ammunition gap and the Japanese Army's famed close combat tactics**

On every battlefield, the Japanese Army employed the exact same hand-to-hand combat tactics it had been using since the time of the Russo-Japanese War.

In April 1945, in preparation for the decisive battle on the mainland, the Army Section of Imperial General Headquarters distributed a pamphlet called the "Citizens' Resistance Manual", which noted that, "Not only guns and bayonets, but everything from swords, spears, and bamboo pikes up to sickles, hatchets, bushhammers, carving knives, and firemen's hooks can be used as weapons in close quarters combat."

The Japanese Army expected that, when the Americans arrived, ordinary civilians would also be taking part in close quarters combat. A bushhammer is a steel hammer used to break stones and a firemen's hook is a rod with a steel hook attached to the tip used to smash things.

Up to the day Japan surrendered, infantrymen were the core of the Japanese Army and close combat was considered the decisive element determining the outcome of a battle. The Japanese adopted a "spirit-first policy" which emphasized the Army's fighting spirit above all else.

Before American soldiers went ashore, they pummeled the target islands with a withering bombardment using their carrier-based aircraft, battleships, cruisers, and destroyers. Most of the land area of the islands was entirely within their firing range, and so the Japanese defenders had to endure a fierce, relentless onslaught of fire from the sea.

The quantity of ammunition carried by an American battleship was equivalent to the ammunition carried by five Japanese Army divisions. An ammunition stockpile so large would have been unthinkable in the Japanese Army.

All throughout the night, streams of flares lit up the sky as if it were broad daylight. For this reason, it was challenging for the Japanese soldiers even to move out of their dugouts.

Starting on June 13, 1944, an American task force consisting of seven battleships, eleven cruisers, and twenty-six destroyers commenced a three-day bombardment of the islands of Saipan and Tinian. Then on the 15th the first wave of US Marines landed on Saipan.

The island's garrison, composed of Japanese Army and Navy units, put up a stout defense, but on July 5, Vice Admiral Nagumo Chuichi, commander of the Central Pacific Area Fleet, and Lieutenant General Saito Yoshitsugu, overall army commander in the Northern Marianas, jointly ordered a final all-out attack.

The order started with, "(1.) Though the invasion of the American devils remains in full swing, all units have shown them on this day what our strength and fighting spirit are really capable of. (2.) The defenders of Saipan shall assemble at the locations indicated in advance, and on the 7th, the day after tomorrow, shall advance to attack the American devils. We are resolved to all die honorable deaths, taking out ten enemy for every one of us."

On the 6th, the time came for the garrison to carry out its last charge. A briefing was handed to the soldiers in the name of Vice Admiral Nagumo, and the following declaration was telegraphed to Imperial General Headquarters.

"The men of the Imperial Army, Navy, and Air Services stationed on the whole island, as well as the civilian employees, have fought well and bravely, and they have successfully worked together as a united force. Everywhere they have done justice to the honor of the Imperial Army... The true value of men of the Empire is that we choose the proper time to either live or die... Now we shall strike the US Army with one great blow and shall cover the island of Saipan with their bones to block their advance in the Pacific..."

Nagumo sent a final parting telegram to Imperial General Headquarters which read, "Though the garrison has fought bravely, and has put as much effort and strength into the battle as possible, ultimately it had no effect. All our forces will charge the enemy with their highest-ranking officers at the vanguard. We shall show them the true worth of the Imperial Army." After that, all communication ceased.

### **"Banzai charges" and the valor of Japanese soldiers**

The US Army referred to the final "honorable death" attacks of the Japanese as "banzai charges". US Army documents show that the Japanese Army left behind 4,311 corpses during the banzai charge referred to above.

The total number of Japanese soldiers killed in action during the Battle of Saipan reached 41,244. On the other side, the US Army suffered 3,441 dead and 11,465 wounded.

Half of the roughly 20,000 Japanese residents of Saipan were also killed in battle.

Between June 19 and 20, three Japanese Navy aircraft carriers were sunk and one was damaged during the Battle of the Philippine Sea. As a result, the Japanese Navy lost the capacity to engage in carrier battles.

On June 21, the US Army landed on Guam with the support of a force of twelve aircraft carriers, six battleships, nine cruisers, and fifty-seven destroyers.

According to America's official history of the Pacific Theater, US forces fired 16,214 shells at the island in the three days prior to the landing.

The 19,000 Japanese soldiers defending Guam engaged the Americans, but as early as July 24, three days after the US Army had landed, their commander Lieutenant General Obata Hideyoshi sent the following farewell telegram to the Imperial General Headquarters:

"The Army wants a single decisive battle utilizing all of our troop strength to take place on the night of the 25th against the enemy's main force. Although there is a very big gap in the

quantity of resources available to the enemy and our own, I have an absolute, unshakeable faith in the spiritual power of our brave and loyal imperial soldiers."

The briefings and the parting telegrams of the Japanese Army contained a lot of flowery rhetoric referring to "the honor of the Imperial Army," "the true value of men of the Empire," and "the true worth of the Imperial Army". Today Japanese people are quite easily intoxicated with buzzwords and phrases like "peace," "pacifist constitution," "protection of the constitution," and "United Nations".

On September 15, 49,000 American soldiers went ashore on the island of Peleliu. They outnumbered the Japanese garrison five-fold.

On that tiny island, there were just 10,500 Japanese soldiers, holed up in caves and dugouts. They fought against the Americans with steely determination for seventy-three days until they all met honorable deaths on November 25.

The United States expected that it could capture Peleliu in three or four days.

Chester Nimitz, the Commander in Chief of the United States Pacific Fleet who led the operation to capture Peleliu, commented in his memoirs that, "overcoming the intricate defenses of Peleliu cost the attackers the highest combat casualty rate (nearly 40 per cent) of any amphibious assault in American history."

Everywhere it fought, the battlefield performance of the Japanese Army was spectacular. Out of admiration for the bravery of Japan's soldiers, Fleet Admiral Nimitz himself composed a poem which is today engraved on a stone monument on the island of Peleliu.

"Tourists from every country who visit this island should be told how courageous and patriotic were the Japanese soldiers who all died defending this island. Pacific Fleet Command Chief (USA) C.W. Nimitz"

### **The meaning of fighting in order to die**

The US Army could not possibly have understood the state of mind of Japanese soldiers.

American soldiers fought in order to survive, but, as unbelievable as it was to the Americans, Japanese soldiers fought in order to die.

Professor Donald Keene is a leading authority on Japanese literary studies and a recipient of Japan's prestigious Order of Culture. He studied at the US Navy Japanese Language School during World War II and was involved in translating interrogation records of Japanese POWs as well as letters and documents taken from the corpses of Japanese soldiers in the Pacific Theatre.



Professor Keene wrote in his book *Meeting with Japan* that, "The diaries often spoke of Guadalcanal as 'Starvation Island.' As I read the diaries of men who were suffering such hardships, it was impossible not to be moved. By contrast, the letters of the American sailors I had to censor once a week revealed no ideals, and certainly no suffering, but only their reiterated desire to return to their former lives... Throughout the war this contrast haunted me - the consecration of the Japanese to their cause and the total indifference of most Americans to anything except returning home... I could not help but feel admiration for the ordinary Japanese soldiers, and in the end I came to believe that the Japanese really deserved to win the war."

In Keene's book, *The Heroic Symphony of the Battlefield: My Experiences in the War between the United States and Japan*, he states that, "I consider the Japanese soldiers, who never complained about anything, to be truly commendable. By contrast the American soldiers just whined about how 'The movie today was boring', 'The cigarettes are awful', or 'I want to go home early.' In none of their letters did I ever see a word about their hopes and ideals, like the objective of the war being to bring democracy to Japan." American soldiers, he writes, did not "hold noble ideas" like Japanese soldiers did.

### **The Kamikaze Special Attack Units**

Peleliu was the island closest to the Philippines, and after it fell, the Philippines were next.

On October 17, a fleet of 314 American ships, including aircraft carriers and battleships, assembled in the sea east of the island of Leyte in the Philippines. They were accompanied by 420 transport vessels. Three thousand two hundred land-based aircraft and 1,200 carrier-based aircraft also joined the attack.

The Japanese Navy's 1st Air Fleet, which was in charge of the Philippines at the time, had already been depleted by previous battles. In terms of usable aircraft, it had thirty-five Zero fighters, and less than one hundred aircraft in total even if we include other sorts of aircraft such as its twelve *Tenzan* torpedo planes and *Ginga* torpedo plane/bombers.

By this point in time, most of Japan's experienced pilots had been killed in action. In the Navy, Japanese pilots spent an average of about three hundred hours in the air, whereas in the Army it was only two hundred hours. A qualified pilot is said to require five hundred hours of flying time.

The commander of the 1st Air Fleet, Vice Admiral Onishi Takijiro, has been called "the father of the *kamikaze*".

Onishi believed that the only remaining option to turn the tides of the war was to use *kamikaze* pilots, who could sink one enemy ship with one plane by crashing themselves into it.

On October 20, Sublieutenant Seki Yukio received an order to constitute a unit. The order stated: "Refer to this attack group as a Kamikaze Special Attack Unit." He took off at the head of eight other aircraft from Mabalacat Airfield, which is on Luzon, eighty kilometers north of Manila. They were the first kamikaze.

Today, amidst the remains of Mabalacat Airfield, there stands a stone monument which was erected by local Filipinos. The inscription on the monument reads, "Sublieutenant Seki Yukio, who became the world's first official human bomb, took off at this location."

The day Sublieutenant Seki first flew out of Mabalacat Airfield was two years and eleven months from the day, at the start of the war, that Sugiyama Hajime, the Chief of the Army General Staff, had prayed at Kyoto's Iwashimizu Hachiman Shrine "that we would see this war through to its end without needing the help of the divine wind of the Gods." In Japanese, *kamikaze* literally means "divine wind".

Iwashimizu Hachiman Shrine was constructed during Japan's Heian Period (794-1185) as a Shinto shrine to protect the southwest side of Kyoto. The Shrine was the subject of a story in Yoshida Kenko's literary masterpiece *Essays in Idleness*, and its official shrine rank was equal to that of Japan's famous Ise Grand Shrine.

Prime Minister Tojo Hideki is well known for saying, at the time of the outbreak of the war, "Once in his life a man will find it necessary to leap from the veranda of Kiyomizu Temple." The main building of Kiyomizu Temple in Kyoto has a high veranda overlooking a deep valley. It was constructed at a high altitude so that visitors would have to exert themselves climbing the steep slope of the mountain.

### **A war without an exit strategy**

During the Russo-Japanese War, Japan's national leaders went to war only after careful deliberation on their means for ending the conflict. By contrast, when Japan launched into war against the United States, none of Japan's leaders had any idea on what their exit strategy would be. By that point in time, Japan was in too desperate a situation to be able to think straight.

On October 20, a huge force of over 200,000 American soldiers began landing on the island of Leyte.

Between October 23 and 26, the Japanese Navy deployed all its remaining sea power in the Battle of Leyte Gulf.

During the Battle of Leyte Gulf, the Japanese Navy lost, in quick succession, four aircraft carriers, three battleships including the *Musashi*, six heavy cruisers, four light cruisers, eleven destroyers, and five submarines. These were the heaviest losses ever suffered by a nation in modern naval history.

The United States lost three of its thirty-two aircraft carriers deployed off Leyte, the *USS Princeton*, the *USS Gambier Bay*, and the *USS St. Lo*, as well as three destroyers. All were sunk by kamikaze attacks.

However, none of this altered the outcome of the war.

From then until the end of the war in August 1945, 2,531 Japanese Navy servicemen and 1,417 Japanese Army servicemen flew on kamikaze missions and never returned.

These figures do not include the flight crews who deliberately crashed their planes into American B-29 bombers over the skies of Japan.

The B-29 bombers flew at an altitude of more than 10,000 meters, and Japanese fighters were unable to reach such heights in order to confront them unless they lightened their aircraft by removing weapons such as their machine guns. Japan did not even have any antiaircraft guns with a range of over 5,000 meters. Thus, there was no choice for the pilots but to fly their planes straight into the B-29s.

And yet despite this, Japanese airmen volunteered, one after another, boarding their unarmed interceptor planes and soaring high into the sky. It took them over one hour of flying time to reach an altitude of 10,000 meters.

After the Battle of Leyte Gulf, the Japanese Navy completely lost its capacity to challenge the supremacy of the US Navy.

## **Chapter 7 - Why Do We Praise The Kamikaze?**

### **Soviet suicide planes and German *Sondercommando***

In 2002, I wrote the book *Kamikaze: Japan's Suicide Gods* in English and had it published through Longman, the United Kingdom's largest publishing firm. Longman is known as the publisher favored by Winston Churchill.

My intention in writing the book was to spread awareness abroad about Japanese culture and modern history by taking up the story of the world-famous Kamikaze Special Attack Units.

What I especially wanted the world to understand was that World War II was not a war of aggression provoked by Japan.

I was concerned that if I wrote the book alone it would be dismissed as Japanese propaganda, and so, in order to ensure that the book would be read by as many foreign readers as possible, I asked the American military history writer Albert Axell to be the co-writer. Mr. Axell has been a close friend of mine for the last forty years.

Mr. Axell contributed three chapters to the book dealing with the suicide planes of the Soviet Air Force, German kamikaze-style Special Forces (called *Sondercommando* in German), and the suicide missions of British planes protecting Arctic convoys during World War II.

During the early stages of World War II on the Eastern Front, Stalin responded to bombing raids by the German Air Force on the Soviet capital of Moscow by ordering the Soviet Air Force to form suicide units.

In June 1941, Second Lieutenant Leonid Butelin became the first fighter pilot to kill himself by crashing his own plane into a German Junkers 88 bomber. Kamikaze aviators were certainly not a Japanese invention. According to Soviet announcements, over three hundred German planes were downed as a result of Soviet suicide attacks.

The *Sondercommando*, employed by Nazi Germany in the final stages of World War II, were inspired by the Japanese kamikaze. Germany formed these units by asking for volunteers to crash their own planes into Allied bombers. The *Elbe Sondercommando* was formed by about three hundred volunteers.

In March 1945, 1,300 Allied bombers, protected by 800 fighters, invaded the skies above Desau on the Elbe River in Germany.

They were intercepted by the *Elbe Sondercommando*, consisting of 183 aircraft, mostly Messerschmitt 109s. The *Elbe Sondercommando* attempted to smash themselves into the Allied aircraft, but only succeeded in downing a few of them. Most of the suicide planes were shot down, and only fifteen aircraft survived the attack.

That was the *Sondercommando's* first and last battle. Germany later surrendered in May.

**The worldwide readership of *Kamikaze: Japan's Suicide Gods***

*Kamikaze: Japan's Suicide Gods* sold well in the United States, and was subsequently translated into Spanish, Danish, Finnish, and Estonian. I donated a copy of each language edition to the Bansei Kamikaze Peace Museum in the city of Minamisatsuma, Kagoshima Prefecture. The museum put all five of these books on display.

Bansei is one of the three largest sand dunes in Japan and is known for Fukiage Beach. Between 1943 and 1944, local residents worked together to construct the Army's last air base here.

During the Battle of Okinawa, Bansei was the kamikaze base closest to the beleaguered island.

Almost two hundred kamikaze, including young pilots just seventeen or eighteen years of age, took off from Bansei towards Okinawa.

I wrote *Kamikaze: Japan's Suicide Gods* on the basis of numerous interviews with the people involved, as well as with the documents, letters, and photographs they provided to me.

I heard many moving stories. The families of the young kamikaze pilots, who were informed in advance about their missions, came to Bansei Air Base or Chiran Air Base from all across the country in order to see them off for the last time.

However, because the railroads throughout Japan had been torn to pieces by American aerial bombing and naval bombardments, it took families in Hokkaido and northern Japan many days to reach the air bases in southern Japan.

In order to protect them from enemy air strikes, the kamikaze planes were concealed in locations some distance from the air base. When the time to attack drew close, students of the local girls' schools, who had been mobilized for public labor, removed the camouflage nets from the planes, and their pilots took the controls.

The kamikaze pilots started up their engines with a roar, and then, as they left the taxiway one by one, they saw all their family members gathered at the side of the runway.

There was one pilot who lifted up his plane's canopy and held out in one hand a stick with a red piece of cloth tied to it. He had told his family about this in advance, so that they would know in which plane he was flying.

Even the residents of the town, including the town mayor, were lined up together with the family members to see off the kamikaze pilots.

Once all the kamikaze planes were lined up on the runway, the family members, townsfolk, female students, and ground crew all shouted *banzai* at the top of their lungs. Some in the crowd shouted out the names of their husband, son, or brother.

The evening before, a father who had come from northern Japan removed the string from one side of the Japanese short-coat he was wearing and handed it over to his son, who was now in the cockpit of a kamikaze plane. It was a symbol of the eternal bond between a father and son.

The Battle of Okinawa took place while the cherry blossoms in Kyushu were in full bloom.

Just before the kamikaze pilots got into their planes, the students from the girls' schools had filled up the cockpits with cherry blossom branches they had picked.

Amidst cheers of *banzai*, the kamikaze planes took off one by one. Once fully airborne, they circled around above the air base one time, as if hesitant to leave, and then soared towards Okinawa.

The family members waved towards the kamikaze planes as they became mere dots on the horizon. As if half-mad, they stood there waving, long after the planes had disappeared from the sky.

At that moment, the petals of cherry blossoms floated down through the air like snow.

The kamikaze pilots had lifted up the canopies of their planes, and the cherry blossoms loaded into their cockpits had been blown out and scattered by the wind.

### **The Banda Unit and the Fugaku Unit**

There is a famous photograph of a group of five young pilots smiling while petting a puppy dog just before leaving on a mission. Many people believe that this group left from Chiran Air Base, but in fact they took off from Bansei Air Base.

Among the documents I received was a personal, handwritten account of Lieutenant General Tominaga Kyoji, who was in charge of the Japanese Army's kamikaze units in the Philippines. He wrote the account at the request of the Japanese Defense Ministry's Military History Office.

Lieutenant General Tominaga took up his post as commander of the 4th Air Army in Manila just two months before the US Army attacked the Philippines in October of 1944.

The Japanese Army's first kamikaze units, the Banda Unit and the Fugaku Unit, were formed under his auspices and sent into action in Leyte Gulf in November.

I shall quote from Lieutenant General Tominaga's account at length. The Japanese word *banda* refers to the branches of a cherry tree heavy with blossoms, and the word *fugaku* is another name for Mt. Fuji.

"I was the one who came up with the names of the kamikaze units including 'banda' and 'fugaku'. It was presumptuous of me to have named them myself, and it probably would have been more appropriate for me to have let the members of the kamikaze units select names of their own preference... Some of the kamikaze units dispatched from the Imperial General Headquarters did not volunteer but rather had simply been called upon. They seemed to have mentally prepared themselves to become kamikaze while on their way to the Philippines from their departure points in Japan. Even so, there were a few who simply couldn't bring themselves to be kamikaze and who were unwilling to voluntarily fly off to their deaths. I couldn't blame them for that. It was not that they had had a change of heart, it was that they had been ordered to die regardless of their wishes. It was a truly sad choice to make... In December of 1944, during air operations accompanying the enemy landing on Mindoro, a part of the 5th Air Brigade of heavy bombers unanimously resolved to become kamikaze against the attack of the enemy fleet. They would die heroic deaths as the 'Kikusui Unit'. They went aboard their kamikaze planes. At the time they had all boldly volunteered, it seemed quite pitiable to have left anyone behind, but even so a unit commander should not thoughtlessly kill his valuable subordinates. The unit commander should have shown more courage and resolutely prevented any more than the minimum number of personnel from boarding the kamikaze planes. On this matter, I blame myself for not having effectively communicated my intentions... The Kamikaze pilots had the pure hearts of heroes and the noble spirits of the Gods. The dignity they exhibited had no equal. However, once they had finally managed to prepare themselves mentally, their shoulders were burdened with the great mission they had to fulfill, and it seems they then wanted to go forward as soon as possible in order to achieve their cherished objective. In the same way, I realized that the unit commanders assigned to them worried day and night about how to put the kamikaze to effective use, and for this reason tended to use them too early. I also got that general feeling just by observing their behavior. We have to take these psychological trends into sufficient consideration in order to seize good opportunities and avoid misusing our personnel."

Lieutenant General Tominaga left the Philippines in March 1945 and returned to Tokyo by way of Taiwan. In July, he was appointed commander of the newly constituted 139th Division in Manchuria. After the end of the war, Tominaga was detained in Siberia by the Soviet Army and was eventually repatriated to Japan in 1955.

Here is another excerpt from Tominaga's account:

"I felt sincerely grateful for the Army's special treatment of the kamikaze units, and for the sympathy and kind treatment given them on the part of Japanese society. And yet, I cannot forget that I also felt deep shame at how differently the kamikaze were treated from the other pilots, who by and large were also certain to be killed in combat during their missions."

Tominaga offered the following words of advice on what Japan should do in case it must again resort to kamikaze tactics in a time of war:

"When that time comes, we need in particular to select a leader with nerves of steel, in other words a commander who will stay the course with this grim strategy without suffering a nervous breakdown from the pain and stress he undergoes."

In his capacity as commander of kamikaze units, Tominaga lamented that, "I feel so deeply ashamed about my own errors and lack of consideration." In the following passage, he commits to paper some of his deepest regrets:

"I should have asked the Army Minister to grant a standing audience with the Emperor to the members of kamikaze units formed in the Tokyo area. If possible, I think that it would have been reasonable to work to have that honor granted to all the members of kamikaze units, not just the ones formed in Tokyo. At the center of their pure hearts, our kamikaze heroes truly thought only of their Emperor and country. I wanted to crown these young, noble gods with the honor of an imperial audience, and if we had just asked the Emperor, probably he would have granted the request immediately. The blame for this failure lies solely with me."

### **The unalloyed patriotism of the kamikaze**

I don't believe there was any need for the Emperor to have met with and personally encouraged the kamikaze pilots.

In the English-language book, *Kamikaze: Japan's Suicide Gods*, I did not make use of the account of Lieutenant General Tominaga because I wanted to record the kamikaze pilots' unembellished thoughts about their native country.

Tominaga's eldest son Yasushi was studying at Keio University when he became a member of the Japanese Army Air Service. In May 1945, he was sent on a kamikaze mission to Okinawa, where he died a hero.

Japan had employed kamikaze for the first time in the Philippines in October 1944 as a tactic to weather a critical emergency.



Despite this, the use of kamikaze evolved from an expediency to a strategy in January 1945 when Imperial General Headquarters presented the Emperor with the report, "Overview of the Strategic Plan of the Imperial Army and Navy".

At the time he first resolved to utilize kamikaze tactics, Vice Admiral Onishi Takijiro said, "Kamikaze attacks are a heresy of command." And yet, they were adopted as a national strategy.

I have read the diaries and personal writings of a great number of kamikaze pilots. I am convinced that the overwhelming majority of these young men volunteered to be kamikaze.

Student soldiers wrote an especially large number of the surviving personal accounts. They grappled with the prospect of death in a serious manner. They agonized and vacillated, before finally resolving to volunteer for a kamikaze mission. The young people of those times thought about their lives in a far more serious manner than the youth of today.

Many kamikaze pilots volunteered out of sheer patriotism.

One student soldier wrote in his diary that, "The only option for Japan is a voluntary strategy of using our strength of self-sacrifice and patriotism in order to compensate for our weakness in all material matters, including manufacturing power, science, and equipment." There were many such people who believed that the kamikaze were Japan's only chance to turn the tides. The idea was to pit Japan's spiritual power against America's material power and to destroy one American ship for every one Japanese plane, thus stymieing the enemy's offensive and reversing the course of the war.

Alternatively, there were also those who decided to willingly sacrifice themselves in the hopes of inflicting losses on the enemy forces so great that they would sign a favorable peace agreement with Japan. Some made up their mind to become kamikaze in order to protect their loved ones, family members, or fellow citizens from the American devils.

### **Japan's highly educated common people**

I read through the last words, wills, posthumous poems, and farewell letters to family members of not only student soldiers, but also of kamikaze from lower class commoner backgrounds and kamikaze who were just seventeen or eighteen years of age at the time of their final missions. As I did this, I came to realize that Japanese people then were considerably better educated than those of today.

The Japanese people of the time understood the fact that they had been victims of unjust American persecution and interference, even though Japan had never posed any harm to American interests, and thus had no choice but to fight the war.

Concerning the war between China and Japan, they were also fully aware that it was China's repeated, illegal provocations which had caused the fighting to spread across the vast Chinese mainland.

Nowadays, many Japanese people are convinced that their country was deceived into going to war by their own government and military. However, this belief has no basis in fact. Japan never had any territorial ambitions on China, nor any motivation to seize China's resources.

Professor Herbert Passin, who served as Chairman of the Department of Sociology at Columbia University, was one of my few close American friends.

Passin graduated from the US Army Japanese Language School during World War II. When he came to Japan after the end of the war as a member of the occupation army, he was amazed by the high level of education of the Japanese people.

According to his book, *Encounter with Japan*, Second Lieutenant Passin asked a farmer for directions while traveling through the Kyushu countryside, and chatted with him for a while.

The farmer asked him, "How do you like Dazaifu?", and then he recited a poem.

"Splendid is the moon,  
and crystalline sounds the river's purl.  
Come, let us all revel,  
we who go to the capital  
and we who stay behind."

Passin wrote that, "I was startled to learn that it was not just some local Chamber of Commerce plug for the old hometown but from the *Manyoshu*, the great eighth-century compilation of poetry... Later on, when I was doing studies in preparation for the Occupation's land reform program, I often had occasion to remember that incident when I would run into still another example of the very high cultural level that one encounters in Japanese villages."

The Battle of Okinawa began on April 1 when the US Army landed on the island.

During the battle, the Japanese Navy sent 1,005 planes and the Japanese Army sent 886 planes on kamikaze missions. 1,986 members of the Navy and 1,201 members of the Army were killed during these missions.

On the ground, over 89,000 Japanese soldiers were killed in action on Okinawa. On the American side, the US Army and Marine Corps together lost 7,374 men in battle. The US Navy lost 5,000 servicemen, most of whom were killed in kamikaze attacks.

Among the US Navy's losses were three destroyers sunk by kamikaze planes. A great number of large ships, including battleships and aircraft carriers, were also hit by kamikaze and sustained severe damage.

### **Racial equality: Japan's gift to the world**

After the demise of the shogunate in the mid-nineteenth century, Japan strived to modernize based on the models provided by the white men of Western nations. However, Japan at the same time continued to hold a deep-seated fear of the West, as hard as that is to imagine nowadays.

Most of the world was under white domination until the outbreak of World War II in the Pacific when Japan finally broke the back of Western hegemony. In a short period of time, Japan ousted the Western colonial powers, from the British in Hong Kong, which was known as the "Pearl of the Orient", to the Dutch in Indonesia.

Until the Japanese Army marched into Southeast Asia and occupied this vast territory, the Western powers ruled the world and white superiority over colored men was accepted as the natural order of things.

Today, as a result of Japan fighting in World War II, the peoples of Asia and Africa, and even the African-American community of the United States, have achieved equality with white people.

The souls of the kamikaze pilots can rest in peace knowing that they did not die in vain. Rather, their sacrifice completely overturned the historical dominance of white people and created a new world based on the equality of the races.

We have advanced beyond the stage where a person's value is determined by the color of their skin. This stands in the annals of world history as a monumental Japanese accomplishment.

At the end of the long history of the human race, we have now for the first time achieved a world where racial equality is the accepted norm. This was the realization of the great dream nourished by the Japanese people ever since their country was forced out of its isolationism by the Western powers.

### **Worldwide praise for the kamikaze**

On July 9, after the conclusion of the Battle of Okinawa, the Swiss newspaper *Tribune de Genève* published the following editorial:

"The systematic strategy referred to as 'kamikaze attacks' is a very costly one to employ, on both human and material levels. However, the results of these assaults are far greater than normal aerial strikes. On May 24, American ships in the vicinity of Okinawa came under

intense attack from Japanese kamikaze planes. As a result of this attack, the Japanese lost 111 kamikaze planes, but they sunk eleven American warships and transport vessels. According to a message from the headquarters of Fleet Admiral Nimitz, the US Navy alone suffered 5,000 killed in action during the Battle of Okinawa. The US Third Fleet sustained losses so great that it had to be relieved by the Fifth Fleet. In war, conventional wisdom has it that one protects his own life and tries to take the lives of the enemy. Sometimes, one can try to inflict the maximum possible damage on the enemy by being ready to die oneself. In their final moments, the kamikaze are barreling towards their targets at a speed of over 1,000 kilometers per hour and then die fiery deaths. Even if they are the enemy, one cannot help but deeply admire the bravery of their acts."

Maurice Pinguet was a French philosopher. He was a professor at the University of Paris, and then, by invitation, at the University of Tokyo.

In his book, *Voluntary Death in Japan*, Pinguet praises the young Japanese pilots who perished in kamikaze attacks:

"Their sacrifice was all the more poignant for being devoid of pessimism and bitterness. When they looked back on the brief time which had been allowed them, they were grateful for it... Pilot Officer Nagatsuka had the gentle, but now for ever unrealizable, ambition of reading the whole of George Sand's *The Master Bell Ringers*. He thought of his mother and sisters, who must be protected from invasion. A good son, a good student, a good soldier, the young pilot of the Special Units was martyr less to his faith than to his good will. He was no daredevil and no boaster: he was serious, industrious... But what reaches us [about the kamikaze pilots] is their sense, their calm, their lucidity. From the outside they looked like raving madmen, or robots, those eager hearts too aware of the ills of their time to cling to their own lives. No one could understand what they were doing, but for them it was simple and spontaneous. People believed they were forced, inveigled, brainwashed, fed on promises, illusions and drugs; people's eyes went through the crystal clarity of their self-denial, so clear it was impossible to perceive. It is this purity which is so unbearably moving. These young men, learning to die well at an age when life might have been so fair, were misunderstood. It is for us to give them the tribute of admiration and compassion which they deserve. They died for Japan, but we do not need to be Japanese to understand them."

*Voluntary Death in Japan* was selected as one of the twenty best books of 1984 published in France. Pinguet found that the Japanese, which was used by the kamikaze pilots in their final memoirs, wills, or poems addressed to their family members, was highly polished. Though there are photos of many pilots heading towards their planes with cheerful smiles on their faces, their thoughts were calm and clear.

There are a great many other non-Japanese who have written or spoken words of praise for the kamikaze. I recommend that interested readers consult *The Nobility of Failure: Tragic*

*Heroes in the History of Japan* by Ivan Morris, a prominent British scholar of Japanese literature.

My book *Kamikaze: Japan's Suicide Gods* was declared recommended reading by Columbia University Professor Gerald Curtis, who is a good friend of mine, Admiral James Lyons, former commander of the US Pacific Fleet, and Professor Edward Seidensticker, famed for his translation of the Japanese classic novel *The Tale of Genji*.

### **The Great Tokyo Air Raid massacre**

On March 10, a vast formation of B-29 bombers carried out an indiscriminate bombing raid against the Japanese capital of Tokyo. The raid centered around the low-lying Shitamachi area, where a relentless rain of incendiary shells was dropped over its densely-packed wooden residences. In one night, 100,000 citizens were killed. One quarter of the buildings in Tokyo went up in flames, leaving more than one million people homeless.

The Great Tokyo Air Raid was intended to slaughter a huge number of civilians. The number of victims was greater than that of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Okinawa fell on June 23. From that moment on, every citizen was aware that mainland Japan would be the next target.

In spite of this, the large majority of Japanese citizens never lost the will to go on fighting.

The reports of Japan's Home Ministry indicate that some people did express anger against Japan's leaders in the military, government, and imperial family through their words or actions such as graffiti. However, this group constituted a very small segment of the population.

If the Emperor had not put an end to the war on August 15, the decisive battle would likely have been brought to mainland Japan and battles as brutal as the one which took place in Okinawa would have occurred on the Japanese main islands of Honshu and Kyushu.

The people of Japan did not falter in the face of adversity. They kept themselves anxiously busy from the time the war began.

Because of this, the suicide rate declined. Statistics on suicide rates began to be recorded in the year 1882, and in the year 1893 the suicide rate was 17.2 people per every 100,000.

After that, there was little variation until the country was put under a more and more stringent war footing as a result of the war in China. By the year 1940, the suicide rate had dropped precipitously to 13.7, and continued to decline to 13.6 in 1941, 13.0 in 1942, and 12.1 in 1943. In 1944, statistics could not be collected due to the start of the B-29 bombing raids.

In the year 2001, the suicide rate was 213.3, so it would appear that the spirit weakens during a time of peace.

In preparation for the decisive battle on the mainland, the military and the newspapers were calling for "one hundred million kamikaze".

Because the original goal of the war had been the preservation of the nation, it was not at all anticipated that the use of kamikaze would be integrated into Japan's military strategy. Even so, Japan struggled to keep on fighting.

### **Western and Japanese views on war**

I have had the opportunity to re-learn the fact that Westerners and Japanese people hold radically divergent attitudes towards war.

Indeed, it is fair to say that the people of Japan alone have a unique philosophy on war. Even the Chinese attitude towards war is based on practicality and self-interest.

Let's take the case of Professor Kenneth Galbraith, a well-known economist who was one of the intellectuals with whom President John F. Kennedy surrounded himself. During the Kennedy administration, he served as US ambassador to India.

After this, following his return to teaching at Harvard University, I once visited his home in Boston. My American friend was close to Professor Galbraith and so I had undertaken, at their request, to translate the professor's latest book into Japanese.

This was during the Johnson administration when the anti-Vietnam War movement, centered around American young people, was at high tide.

Professor Galbraith insisted to me emphatically that, "The Vietnam War is immoral", so I responded by asking him, "But did you not strongly support military intervention in Vietnam at the time that you were President Kennedy's advisor?"

Galbraith gave me a puzzled look, as if he didn't comprehend my question, and retorted, "Is it not immoral to go on fighting a war which we have no chance of winning?"

At that moment, I was astonished to see how different this was from the Japanese attitude towards war. The Japanese people value strength of spirit over practical realities.

I then bid farewell to Professor Galbraith, and while I was heading to the airport, I thought to myself, "If Japan had won the war with America, we would certainly not have become the submissive, pseudo-pacifist state specializing in making apologies that we are today."

Surely, I thought, this transformation occurred because the people felt that it was "immoral" for us to have fought until the situation was hopeless and the war was lost.

The Japanese emphasis on spirit is completely distinct from the Western view of war.

Japan's indigenous haiku poems hit us close to our hearts due to their brevity. Western paintings fill every corner of the canvass thickly with paint, whereas Japanese paintings omit scenery.

Instead of looking at everything, we express, through our hearts, only the core spiritual essence.

## **Chapter 8 - The United States and the Atomic Bombings of Japan**

### **The unnecessary atomic bombings**

An atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, and three days later another was dropped on Nagasaki.

In his memoirs, *Freedom Betrayed*<sup>1</sup>, Roosevelt's predecessor as president, Herbert Hoover, strongly denounced the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.

"Prior to the Potsdam Conference in July, 1945, the Japanese were repeatedly signaling for peace. A review of these Japanese peace efforts sheds light on the actual situation at this fateful conference... In March, 1945, a month after Yalta, the Swedish Minister to Japan was requested by Japanese Foreign Minister Shigemitsu to enlist his government to mediate peace for Japan. Nothing came from it and its only importance was the indication of Japan's determination to make peace... Thus before the ultimatum issued at the Potsdam Conference on July 26th, there had been six months of peace feelers by the Japanese, and nearly two weeks before [the atomic bombings], the positive proposal of Japan to Russia of which Truman, Byrnes and Stimson had full information from intercepted telegrams."<sup>2</sup>

At that time, James Byrnes was the Secretary of State and Henry Stimson was the Secretary of War.

"The seventeenth wandering of American statesmanship was Truman's immoral order to drop the atomic bomb on the Japanese. Not only had Japan been repeatedly suing for peace but it was the act of unparalleled brutality in all American history. It will forever weigh heavily on the American conscience."<sup>3</sup>

The men who dropped the atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki were specially trained B-29 bomber crewmen of the United States Army Air Forces who took off from the airfield on the island of Tinian.

### **What if Japan had had an atomic bomb?**

I once met with John McCloy, Assistant Secretary of War under Henry Stimson, and asked him a question about the atomic bombings. McCloy was present at the White House conference at which President Truman made the decision to drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima.

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<sup>1</sup> *Freedom Betrayed – Herbert Hoover's Secret History of the Second World War and its Aftermath* edited with an Introduction by George H. Nash, Hoover Institution Press, Stanford, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.560 - 561

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.882.



The American woman who I most admired has sadly passed away, but she had lived in New York. Mrs. Iphigene Sulzberger was the head of the Sulzberger family, which owns The New York Times Company. She was a petite but sprightly woman, brimming with curiosity. She was always delightfully animated.

When she learned that I was coming to the United States, she hosted a luncheon, called an "editorial luncheon", for me at the executive dining room of The New York Times Building which faces Times Square. The "editorial luncheon" brought together the newspaper's top editors for a question and answer session with guests. She also invited me and one of her friends to dinner at her home in the New York town of Stanford.

Once when I had travelled to New York, she had invited my wife and me to a banquet at her mansion on the upper reaches of the Hudson River, which flows to the shores of Manhattan.

At the dinner, the great *New York Times* reporter James Reston and Mrs. Iphigene's old friend John McCloy, who had been Assistant Secretary of War during the final year of World War II, were also invitees.

I was aware that McCloy was a participant in the conference where the decision to drop the atomic bombs had been made.

I brought up the issue of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and I asked him, "If Japan was in possession of even a single atomic bomb at that time, and had the capacity to drop it anywhere in America, would the United States still have subjected Japan to a nuclear attack?"

Reston was surprised by my question and immediately interjected, "Why would you ask something so obvious? You should know the answer without having to ask."

I responded, "It's something I wanted to confirm, because this is the first time I have met one of the men who participated in the decision to drop the atomic bombs."

Then McCloy said, "Naturally, you too know the answer. If Japan also had had an atomic bomb, then making a nuclear attack on Japan would have been unthinkable."

The cenotaph in Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park bears the inscription, "Let all the souls here rest in peace, for we shall not repeat this mistake." However, the real pledge we should make is to not repeat the mistake of inviting upon ourselves another terrible nuclear attack by not having nuclear weapons of our own.

**The final reunion of the unit that dropped the A-bomb**

In August 1990, in the town of Wendover, which straddles the border between Utah and Nevada, the veterans of the United States Army Air Forces' 509th Composite Group, which had dropped the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, held their final reunion.

The town of Wendover is half in Utah and half in Nevada, and it is surrounded on all four sides by a vast desert. During the closing years of World War II, it was just a small village, more than two hundred kilometers distance from the next nearest town.

That is the reason why Wendover was made the site of a top secret air base in 1944. Here, the unit which carried out the atomic bombings was formed and trained under the utmost secrecy.

The old flight crews of the 509th Composite Group brought their family members to the reunion, and soon Wendover's hotel was filled with over 500 people from across the United States.

I also was invited to the reunion to deliver a commemorative speech.

On the day before my speech, some veterans of the 509th Composite Group guided me around the old air field, which was located not far from the hotel where the reunion was taking place.

The hanger which once held the *Enola Gay*, the bomber piloted by Colonel Paul Tibbets that dropped the atomic bomb, remained intact just the way it had looked at the time.

However, it was now a quiet airport for civilian use only. There were a couple of small Cessna aircraft parked there.

I saw no signs posted anywhere to explain that once, forty-five years earlier, this had been the site of the secret air base where the unit which dropped the atomic bombs was stationed. Any person who dropped by without knowing that already probably thought of the site as nothing more than a lonely, largely abandoned airport.

The veterans brought their wives and children to the airport and the old hanger. Some of them were holding cans of beer in their hands. There were forty or fifty people there in total, and I shook hands and spoke with seven or eight of them. Some of them were salesman of Japanese-made cars or cameras.

I gave my speech the next day in the hotel's auditorium. I was scheduled to speak for forty minutes.

Retired Brigadier General Tibbets had been introduced prior to my speech. He was wearing a suit and was sitting in the front row.

In my speech, I described how Japan had been making peace offers since June of 1945 and was requesting that Sweden and the Soviet Union mediate. Because Washington was fully aware that Japan was trying to negotiate its surrender, I argued, Japan would have surrendered even without the atomic bombings and thus there was never any need to drop the bombs.

The explanation I gave of the peace maneuvers of the Japanese government and military was virtually identical to what Herbert Hoover had written about the atomic bombings in his memoirs as I quoted at the top of this chapter.

And yet, Hoover's memoirs were only released in 2011, twelve years after my speech. The memoirs, which were published by the Hoover Institution, are a huge tome, 957 pages in length.

As I was writing the rough draft of my speech, I considered mentioning what General of the Army Dwight Eisenhower, who would become the 34th President of the United States, had said to Secretary of War Stimson upon being informed that an atomic bomb would be dropped on Hiroshima. He recalled that, "my belief [was] that Japan was already defeated and that dropping the bomb was completely unnecessary... our country should avoid shocking world opinion by the use of a weapon whose employment was, I thought, no longer mandatory". I decided that because the horrific nature of the atomic bombing was evident, there was no need to quote an American to make the point.

At the time he said that, Eisenhower was Supreme Allied Commander in the European theater.

I concluded the speech by saying that, while the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were atrocious acts contrary to both international law and basic humanity, they took place in the madness of war, and for that reason, Japanese people have already forgiven it and bear no resentment against the United States.

I was only a little over five minutes into my speech when, one by one, around 100 or 150 people rose from their seats with their family members and walked out in protest. They gathered in the hallway and began to sing patriotic songs.

### **Did the atomic bombing save Japanese lives?**

By the time I had finished speaking, the room was filled with empty seats. Only forty or so people remained.

Brigadier General Tibbets was among those who stayed behind. After I had left the stage and Tibbets had exited into the hallway, I was moved to see a group of more than thirty people line up to shake my hand. They thanked me personally and told me things like, "That was a good speech" and "I truly understand the Japanese viewpoint." As I spoke to

them, the chorus of patriotic songs being sung in the hallway continued to filter into the room.

Throughout their lives, the former members of the 509th Composite Group had taken great pride in what they had done during the war, convinced that the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki had forced the Japanese to surrender and thus prevented an invasion of mainland Japan which would have cost millions of American and Japanese lives.

The precise reason why they invited me as a speaker was because they had believed that I would tell them how Japan had been saved thanks to the atomic bombings.

One of the veterans who stayed in his seat right up to the end of my speech told me, "If General Tibbets had walked out, everyone else would have followed him, and you would have been the only one left in the room."

Paul Tibbets was a small, quiet man who did not look to be in good health.

The day before, one of the veterans had confessed to me that, "After the war, Brigadier General Tibbets was not lucky as a soldier. He had bombed Hiroshima, but the Army didn't think of it as a major accomplishment and so was not able to promote him to the rank of major general. I feel truly sorry for him."

I returned back to my room. I had been invited as a guest to the reunion dinner which was taking place that evening in the hotel. However, I was told before the dinner that, "Some of the vets got drunk and were threatening to beat you to death. We apologize, but we would like you to stay in your room tonight and take room service."

The next morning, local papers reported on the gist of my speech. All the veterans joined the unveiling ceremony for a monument that had been built in Wendover's main thoroughfare, but I did not attend.

I had some free time, so I went to see the salt flats, which are located about ten kilometers outside the town.

The salt flats are an area where hard salt covers the whole area of the earth. Because the ground is perfectly level, the salt flats are famous as the place where automobile land speed world records are set.

As far as the eye could see, it was a vast expanse of pure white salt, which sparkled under the blazing desert sun. On that day too, there were dozens of racing cars of all colors parked in the pit.

Among them were three Nissan sports cars from Japan, which were being worked on by a group of ten or so young Japanese men and women. They told me that they had come together from Tokyo. Just a little while ago, they said, one of their cars had reached 277 miles per hour (446 kilometers per hour).

I chatted with several of them. When I commented that, "Forty-five years ago, that airport just over there was the place where the unit which dropped the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was trained." They were surprised and told me, "Did that really happen?"

I thought to myself, "World War II has really become ancient history to them."

Two of the former members of the 509th Composite Group saw me off at the airport that evening. Just before that, several Japanese newspaper correspondents who had come to cover the reunion interviewed me. One of them praised me for "saying what we Japanese people needed to say".

### **The different treatment of Germans and Japanese**

It was strong racial contempt of the Japanese people which motivated the United States to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, even though Japan had expressed its desire for peace.

Hatred of the Japanese people ran high at the time, derived from the earlier prejudices of white people against Asians and Africans.

In December 1944, eight months before the atomic bombings, an opinion poll conducted in the United States found that 13% of Americans answered affirmatively to the pre-prepared question, "Should all Japanese people be killed?" I was astonished that such a question had even been asked.

An opinion poll was also conducted concerning Germany, but it did not include the question, "Should all German people be killed?"

Most of the propaganda posters which were ubiquitous in wartime America depicted Japanese soldiers not simply as ugly humans, but as apes.

They showed gibbons, orangutans, or gorillas wearing the uniforms of the Japanese Army. Japanese soldiers also appeared on the posters as insects or reptiles.

Though American soldiers collected the ears and skulls of Japanese soldiers as souvenirs and turned their bones into letter openers, no incidents of this nature ever took place against German soldiers in the European theater.

In the Pacific theater, most American units never took any prisoners. There are countless eyewitness accounts of American, British, and Australian forces shooting Japanese soldiers who were trying to surrender.

Many Allied officers and men hoped to have the Japanese people wiped out.

Admiral William Halsey, who led a carrier group throughout the war, was a white supremacist who openly advocated, "the almost total elimination of the Japanese as a race." Halsey is also known for leading the Doolittle Raid, a surprise attack on mainland Japanese targets, including Tokyo, carried out by B-25 bombers early in the war in April of 1942.

MIT professor John Dower's book, introduced in Chapter 5, meticulously documents the fact that many units took pride in their policy to take no Japanese prisoners. According to Dower, an article published in an army newspaper about the 41st Infantry Division, which had been transferred to the Pacific Theater, unabashedly declared that "The 41st Didn't Take Prisoners."

Chapter One of America's official history of the Pacific Theater mentions that over ninety per cent of the Japanese soldiers engaged in America's island hopping campaign were reported as killed in action. This figure may have included Japanese soldiers massacred by the Americans, though there is no way to definitively confirm this.

US Army records state that most of the Japanese soldiers who became POWs were injured. Nonetheless, the US Army killed most of the wounded Japanese soldiers who had been captured.

In wartime Japan too, the government stoked hatred of the enemy, who were called the "Anglo-American beasts," but despite this, there were absolutely no cases of Japanese soldiers indiscriminately massacring British or American soldiers who were surrendering.

It would seem the Japanese had good reason to call American soldiers "beasts". Throughout their history, the Japanese people have always made racial equality their guiding principle.

The world was in the grip of a shocking racism directed at colored peoples, until after the end of the war when the world was reconstructed on the basis of racial equality.

### **The Potsdam Declaration and the myth of unconditional surrender**

On July 26, 1945, President Truman, Prime Minister Churchill, and General Secretary Stalin held talks in the city of Potsdam, located in the suburbs of Berlin, where they unveiled the Potsdam Declaration. Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek had not been invited, but his name was added to the declaration.

At that point in time, the Soviet Union was still bound by the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact signed in April 1941, so it did not sign the declaration. The Soviet Union only joined

in on the Potsdam Declaration on August 8, at the same time that it declared war on Japan, in violation of the pact.

Under President Roosevelt, the United States demanded that Japan and Germany surrender unconditionally. In November 1943, Roosevelt, Churchill, and Chiang met in Cairo, Egypt, where they announced the Cairo Declaration. According to the Cairo Declaration, "The Three Great Allies are fighting this war to restrain and punish the aggression of Japan," and "will continue to persevere in the serious and prolonged operations necessary to procure the unconditional surrender of Japan."

In May 1945, Germany surrendered unconditionally to the Allies.

By contrast, the Potsdam Declaration indicated that Japan could surrender with conditions. In reality, the Potsdam Declaration only demanded "the unconditional surrender of all Japanese armed forces," and not the unconditional surrender of the Japanese nation or the Emperor.

President Roosevelt died suddenly on April 12, and Vice President Truman succeeded him as the thirty-third President of the United States.

Why did America's strategy towards Japan change so dramatically in such a short period of time?

On July 24, President Truman handed down a top secret order to implement the invasion of Kyushu, codenamed Operation Olympic, in November. The order was received by General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz, and General Henry Arnold, the respective commanders of the US Army, Navy, and Air Forces in the Pacific Theater.

Twenty-two days earlier on July 2, War Secretary Stimson submitted his "Proposed Program for Japan" to the President. Stimson's program predicted that the invasion of mainland Japan would require five million soldiers, of whom more than one million might become casualties, and therefore recommended that the United States seek only unconditional surrender of the Japanese military, instead of their previous demand for unconditional surrender of the Japanese government.

### **The Japanese Army that America feared**

In 2006, all the top secret planning documents on the invasion of mainland Japan, which were approved in Washington in the waning months of the war, were declassified.

America's plan for the conquest of mainland Japan, codenamed Operation Downfall, was comprised of two parts, firstly an attack on the southern island of Kyushu, and then landings on the Kanto Plain, the heart of Japan.

Each page of the document, divided into one part on the amphibious invasion of Kyushu and one part on the amphibious invasion of Kanto on Japan's largest island of Honshu, is stamped as "TOP SECRET".

According to the plan, the invasion of Kyushu, codenamed Operation Olympic, would have taken place on November 1. Early that morning, fourteen divisions of US Army soldiers and US Marines were to storm the beaches at Miyazaki, Kagoshima, and Ariake Bay. They were to be boarded on 3,000 ships including sixty-six aircraft carriers of the Fifth Fleet to cover their landing. On November 4, there would be another landing in the vicinity of Kaimondake on the southern tip of Kyushu.

Prior to this, on October 27, the United States had planned to occupy the small islands around Kyushu and there set up a radar base, a seaplane base, and other infrastructure.

As a means of boosting the morale of America's fighting men, all the landing targets on the shore around Miyazaki were named after America's most beloved passenger cars such as Buick, Cadillac, Chevrolet, Chrysler, and Ford.

Several British Far East Fleet ships were also scheduled to participate in the attack, and so, as a gesture to them, one landing site was named Austin for the automobiles produced by Britain's Austin Motor Company.

The declassified documents foresaw that 250,000 Americans soldiers would be killed during the invasion of Kyushu alone.

The invasion of the Kanto Plain, codenamed Operation Coronet, would require double the troop strength of Operation Olympic. Twenty-eight divisions were scheduled to land in Sagami Bay on March 1, 1946.

The United States had planned to commit a force of more than 4,000 ships, from the Fifth Fleet on down, to its attack on the Kanto Plain.

Because dogged resistance from Japanese soldiers and civilians was foreseen, the United States had expected to suffer a massive number of casualties.

Major General Charles Willoughby, who was Chief of Intelligence to General MacArthur, is on record as believing that the Japanese would continue resisting until the end of the year 1946 and that at least one million American soldiers would be killed or wounded in combat.

What Washington feared the most was that the invasion of mainland Japan would be too costly in terms of soldiers' lives for public opinion at home to bear.



One of the top secret documents states that, "We have been capturing the islands of the Pacific up to Iwo Jima through our leapfrogging strategy, but in every case we have put ashore a number of troops over 2.5 times greater than the number of Japanese defenders. However, if we must assault the Japanese mainland, Japanese forces will be two times more numerous than our own army, and if we include civilians, the ratio becomes even greater. There is no race which fights as fanatically as the Japanese, whose soldiers act like they are possessed by the devil."

It was believed that even if America committed all the strength it could muster, it would still take until 1947 to force Japan to surrender.

According to the documents, the US Army would also be forced to suffer casualties from relentless air, land, and sea-based suicide attacks by Japanese soldiers and civilians.

At the time of the occupation of Japan, an American investigation found that on the day Japan had surrendered the Japanese Army and Navy put together still had 12,725 bombers, fighters, and reconnaissance planes hidden in reserve inside their fortified bunkers.

#### **The kamikaze did not die in vain**

Some believe that, if the United States had continued to insist that Japan surrender unconditionally, then the Japanese people would not have ceased resisting even after the atomic bombings.

In order to compel Japan to make peace, the United States government had decided to offer Japan a "conditional surrender", in which the Emperor system would be preserved, based on the suggestions of Joseph Grew, former ambassador to Japan who was then Under Secretary of State.

Thus, the Potsdam Declaration demanded unconditional surrender only of the Japanese armed forces while providing a list of surrender conditions to the Japanese government. The Potsdam Declaration clearly stated "Following are our terms," and then requested Japan's conditional surrender.

Between August 9 and 14, Emperor Hirohito resolved to impose an unprecedented "sacred decision," and by doing so ended a war which had lasted three years and eight months.

If the United States had continued to demand unconditional surrender, it is not likely that this "sacred decision" would ever have been laid down. In that case, Japan would have fought to the last and probably even the Emperor system would not have survived.

Without the Emperor, Japan too would have ceased to exist.

Nowadays, it's common to hear Japanese people say that the kamikaze pilots, "died for a lost cause," but in reality the kamikaze were Japan's saviours. Still, it was not only the kamikaze who did their duty to the nation.

I firmly believe that we must also show our profound gratitude to all the soldiers who, just like the kamikaze, perished in battle throughout the northern and southern islands of the Pacific Ocean.

In spite of everything, Japan's soldiers fought magnificently. It was the most powerful army the world had ever seen.

### **Japan's love of military songs**

The Japanese people adore military songs. There is no other country in the world where military songs are so widely heard in day-to-day life. In every other country, military songs are known only to those people with experience in their nation's armed forces.

In Japan, young people sing military songs as well. Even the left-wing newspaper *Asahi Shimbun* has run full-page advertisements for CD-ROM collections of military songs.

What is the reason for Japan's unique love of military songs? This is not a phenomenon seen anywhere in the Americas, Europe, or Asia.

Moreover, all of Japan's military songs have gloomy lyrics and sorrowful melodies.

The lyrics of *Danchone Melody* go, "Shells fly through the air, The mast will break... If I should die I will gather the demons, from the shores of the River Styx, and wrestle with them." The lyrics of *Father, You Were Strong* go, "You slept among enemy corpses, drank muddy water, and ate grass... You were immersed for three days, in a creek up to your neck, though you had not eaten anything for three days." The song *Bivouac Ballad* includes the lines, "My father appeared in a dream, and said to me 'Come back home after you have died!'"

One must admit that these lyrics are rather grim. If any other country had its soldiers sing these songs, morale would plummet and soldiers would be scrambling in order to be the first to flee the battlefield.

Japan's Army Ministry and Navy Ministry commissioned outside composers and songwriters to create most of their military songs, and then authorized them for use. In spite of everything, Japanese soldiers fought valiantly while singing these very songs.

This proves just how desperately and stoically all the people of Japan were fighting in response to the unjust persecution they were suffering at the hands of the Western powers.

Neither before nor during the war did the Japanese authorities need to force the people and fighting men to sing these songs.

Right up to the present day, the Japanese people have never been able to forget the spirit that led them to fight again and again to defend their country since the birth of modern Japan following the 1868 Meiji Restoration. This history is a tragic tale just like those in Japan's military songs.

Japan is the world's only country where collections of military songs are widely sold. In foreign countries, a newspaper with a high circulation would never run an ad for a collection of military songs.

The United States banned military songs and patriotic songs during the postwar occupation of Japan, and since then Japanese TV and radio stations have entirely refrained from airing them. Even so, these songs continue to be the favorites of the Japanese people as a whole, including even the youth.

We take pride, from the very bottom of our hearts, that we have fought bravely against all obstacles since the time of the Meiji Restoration.

On September 2, the surrender ceremony took place in Tokyo Bay aboard the battleship *USS Missouri*. The Instrument of Surrender was the equivalent of an international treaty signed between the victorious and the vanquished nations.

## **Chapter 9 - A Nation with a Fabricated History**

### **SCAP's battle for history**

In September 1945, the US Army occupied Japan.

During the occupation, the United States implemented the War Guilt Information Program, a plan to thoroughly indoctrinate the Japanese people to believe that Japan was a sinful nation which had to atone for starting the war.

On October 2, 1945, General MacArthur, known as the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), issued General Orders No. 4 which read, "Make clear to all levels of the Japanese public the true facts of their defeat, their war guilt, the responsibility of the militarists for present and future Japanese suffering and privation, and the reasons for and objectives of the military occupation by the Allied Powers." This was a mere one month from the signing of the Instrument of Surrender aboard the *USS Missouri*.

Instilling a sense of guilt in the minds of the Japanese people and robbing them of their spirit of independence were indeed the two most important goals of the US occupation.

Right from the outset of the occupation in September, SCAP decreed a stringent Press Code, placing restrictions on the media.

The Press Code was a major violation with respect to the Potsdam Declaration, which stipulated that, "Freedom of speech, of religion, and of thought, as well as respect for the fundamental human rights shall be established." Instead, the Japanese people were to be robbed of their normal capacity to think as citizens of an independent nation.

Everything, from publishers such as newspapers to even the private letters of ordinary citizens, was subject to strict regulation and censorship. Then, from December, the Japan Broadcasting Corporation began airing "This Is The Truth," later renamed "Truth Box," and newspapers nationwide began publishing the series "The History of the Pacific War". The plan was to make all the people of Japan believe that their country was an evil nation.

After having conquered Japan militarily, SCAP waged a full-scale battle for history with the aim of depriving the Japanese people of their history. By robbing them of their own memories of the past, SCAP intended to break the Japanese people's spirit and to remodel Japan as a vassal state, to be subservient to the United States long after the end of the occupation.

On September 11, in preparation for the Tokyo War Crimes Trial where Japan's leaders were to be judged, SCAP began arresting thirty-nine "war crimes suspects" who had worked in influential positions in wartime Japan, including General Tojo Hideki.

Then, a variety of measures intended to break Japan's spirit were implemented in quick succession, including the Shinto Directive, which abolished State Shinto, a purge of prewar officials, and the imposition of a new constitution.

The Shinto Directive was inspired by the belief of the occupation army that Shinto was a barbaric, primitive faith which worshiped mountains, trees, and animals.

Today, the principle of separation of religion and state is brought up constantly, but if Japan had been a Christian nation like the Philippines, no attempt would have been made to impose that separation.

Today, Japan is the only country in the world, excluding communist China and North Korea and Confucian nations like South Korea, whose national and local government ceremonies are strictly non-religious.

In other democracies, like the United States, Great Britain, and France, official events are Christian-based. Should the state really be promoting atheism?

### **Calling for a retrial of the IMTFE**

The International Military Tribunal for the Far East, known as the Tokyo War Crimes Trial, was the central mechanism through which a war guilt complex was implanted in the Japanese mind.

Before World War II, there was no precedent for a nation's leaders to be tried for war crimes due to their decision to go to war. Even within international law, no provision for this existed.

Moreover, the Tokyo War Crimes Trial was a clear violation of the Potsdam Declaration. The declaration did state that "stern justice shall be meted out to all war criminals, including those who have visited cruelties upon our prisoners," but this referred only to attacks on non-combatants and mistreatment of POWs.

At the Tokyo War Crimes Trial, the defendants were tried for "crimes against peace" and "crimes against humanity," but before the opening of the trial these concepts did not even exist.

The Tokyo War Crimes Trial was simply fraudulent—not at all worthy of being called a "trial".

Japan was on trial for the crime of having invaded Asia, and yet even during this show trial, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and France were fighting wars of aggression to reassert their colonial rule over the Malay Peninsula, Indonesia, and Vietnam. That alone is a major indictment of the trial's hypocrisy.

The Tokyo War Crimes Trial one-sidedly investigated only the crimes Japan was accused of, while at the same time allowing no mention of any war crimes committed by the Allies.

However, it was the United States that had dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and massacred over 100,000 people in a single night during the Great Tokyo Air Raid. Even just looking at the killing and wounding of civilians and noncombatants in violation of international law alone, the United States was guilty of serious war crimes.

Major General Charles Willoughby, who was an advisor to MacArthur and one of the two most powerful men in SCAP, once told Judge Bert Roling that the Tokyo War Crimes Trial "was the worst hypocrisy in recorded history." He also told Roling that "since this kind of trial took place, he would forbid his son to enter military service."

During the trial, William Webb, the Australian justice who served as President of the Tribunal, wrote to his wife Beatrice back home that, "I've become fed up with standing before such a tribunal as this."

The man who had started the war was President Franklin Roosevelt. Though he had died suddenly in April 1945, Roosevelt was the man who truly deserved to be put on trial for "crimes against peace".

The Indian justice Radhabinod Pal concluded in his dissenting judgment that "a trial which is carried out on this basis of law is nothing more than a pretense to make it look as if proper legal procedures have been taken, in order to satisfy one's desire of revenge."

Heramba Lal Gupta, one of the leaders of the Indian Independence Movement, gave the following speech in 1946:

"I think that the International Military Tribunal for the Far East will surely be re-evaluated by the nations of Asia by the time we enter the twenty-first century, and then, a second Tokyo Trial will be held where Asia and all the world will regain its good sense and will judge all deeds in a fair, equal, and truthful manner. At that time, all the war heroes of the United States and of the great powers of Europe, who have been committing acts of aggression against Asia for many years, will receive stern punishments. Conversely, the Japanese who were accused of serious crimes by the IMTFE, especially the seven killed as Class A war criminals, will be rehabilitated, and the day may come when they shall be worshipped like gods as the saviors of Asia. That is what should rightfully happen."

Henry S. Stokes, who I introduced in a previous chapter, has lived in Japan for forty years and has served as Tokyo bureau chief to *The New York Times* and other newspapers. In his book, "*Breaking the Victors' History Spell Cast by the Allied Powers: Wake Up, Japan!*", which was published in Japanese by Nisshin Hodo, Stokes declared that, "What we ought to do is ask the United Nations for a retrial of the IMTFE."

### **America's corruption of history**

In February 2015, I was invited to the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan in Yurakucho, Tokyo, for a joint press conference with Mizushima Satoru, president of Channel Sakura.

In January, Mr. Mizushima played a key role in founding the Citizens' Council to Investigate the *Asahi Shimbun*, which had launched a class action lawsuit seeking remedial damages and a published apology from the *Asahi Shimbun* for the significant harm that this newspaper had done to Japan's international reputation through its fabricated news stories about the comfort women.

At that time, more than 23,000 people from across the country participated in the lawsuit as plaintiffs.

I had been asked to attend the press conference by Mr. Mizushima as one of the plaintiffs. My first statement at the press conference was:

"I would like to raise an objection to the information card which was sent out to the members of the correspondents' club on the occasion of today's press conference. It says, 'Mainstream historians acknowledge the historical fact that the Japanese Army forced the comfort women to work in brothel facilities during the 1930s and 1940s.' In the articles which I have contributed to American newspapers like *The New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*, I was introduced as being a historian. I consider my views to be mainstream, and thus find this description to be greatly in error."

I also added that, "In the same card, I am introduced as being 'a representative of the revisionist view'. However, the 'revisionist view' was the history which was forced on Japan during the US occupation, and which continues to exert influence to this day. I do not consider myself to be a revisionist."

It was the United States that distorted Japan's true history.

During the question and answer phase, an American reporter stood up and asked me, "Even if you say that, do you understand that the international community believes that the comfort women were sex slaves?"

Because I was angered by his tone, I immediately upbraided him. "Throughout Japan's long history, no system of slavery has ever existed. I don't want to be asked such a question by a citizen of a country like the United States, which still practiced slavery in the second half of the nineteenth century." Several Japanese reporters applauded me.

The United States only emancipated its slaves in 1863, five years before Japan's Meiji Restoration. I added that, "Japan has never witnessed either huge massacres of whole cities

or religious wars characterized by indiscriminate killing, like those between Catholics and Protestants, at any time in its history. Please do a little more research on this subject."

### **The peoples' movement to free the war criminals**

The San Francisco Peace Treaty came into effect in 1952.

The year after Japan regained its independence, Japan's National Diet amended law books to designate as "war dead" all the so-called "war criminals" who died in prison, committed suicide, or were executed as a result of the unjust military tribunals of the victor powers. By doing this, their surviving family members were made eligible for a pension. The Diet also unanimously approved a resolution calling for the speedy release of those individuals still serving prison sentences for war crimes.

This Diet resolution grew out of a nationwide mass petition movement which began directly after Japan regained its independence under the leadership of groups like the Japan Federation of Bar Associations. They drafted a "Plea for Clemency, Commutation, and Repatriation for the Imprisoned War Criminals", which received the signatures of forty million people.

Forty million people was nearly sixty percent of Japan's population at that time, and virtually all of its adult population. The petition represented the wishes of the overwhelming majority of the people.

Today, the title of "Class A war criminal" is considered a badge of shame, but that was not at all the case in the immediate aftermath of the restoration of Japanese independence.

Shigemitsu Mamoru and Kaya Okinori, who were imprisoned as Class A war criminals, both served as cabinet ministers after the end of the US occupation. Shigemitsu was foreign minister in the cabinet of Prime Minister Hatoyama Ichiro, and Kaya was Justice Minister in the cabinet of Prime Minister Ikeda Hayato.

Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke was arrested as a Class A war crimes suspect and was held in Sugamo Prison.

Indeed, Ogata Taketora and Shimomura Kainan, the chief editors of the *Asahi Shimbun*, and Shoriki Matsutarō, the owner of the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, were also arrested as Class A war crimes suspects, though perhaps out of embarrassment, the *Yomiuri* and *Asahi Shimbun* today refuse to mention this fact.

In 1956, when Japan gained admittance to the United Nations under Foreign Minister Shigemitsu Mamoru, Shigemitsu was greeted with a thunderous applause when he appeared before the UN General Assembly. The fact that he had been a Class A war criminal was never made into an issue.



As Japan's experience of war grew more distant, Japan gradually lost its senses. We must not allow the memory of the war to fade away.

### **Masochistic history and its irresponsible Japanese preachers**

The War Guilt Information Program sowed the seeds of a masochistic view of history, but it was disseminated through the work of irresponsible Japanese citizens.

After Japan regained its independence, Emperor Hirohito made numerous official visits to Yasukuni Shrine, and Japanese prime ministers between Yoshida Shigeru and Nakasone Yasuhiro also openly visited the shrine.

During that period, neither China nor South Korea ever voiced a single word of protest over the visits of Japanese prime ministers to Yasukuni. However, it was only after Prime Minister Nakasone stopped visiting Yasukuni at the request of the General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, Hu Yaobang, that China came to be harshly critical of all visits to the shrine by Japanese prime ministers.

Likewise, if Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi had never condemned Japan's "colonial rule and aggression," and if Chief Cabinet Secretary Kono Yohei had never apologized for the "coercive" recruitment of girls as comfort women, then China, South Korea, and the United States would never have been able to pressure Japan to continue to adhere to the Murayama and Kono Statements.

### **Is patriotism a sin?**

Soon after, the word "patriotism" itself became taboo in Japan.

Though patriotism does not fall into Buddhism's sinful karma or as one of the seven deadly sins of Christianity, Japan's mass media and intelligentsia blame patriotism for causing World War II.

This is the reason why the parades held on Indonesia's Independence Day are never broadcast on Japanese television, even though the men waving the Indonesian flag are dressed in the uniforms of PETA and carry Japanese swords, and even though the female chorus sings the Japanese song "The Patriotic March".

In November 1991, America's ABC News reported that, "Signed documents from July 1941 have been discovered, showing that President Roosevelt approved a military plan to launch surprise bombing raids on the Japanese cities of Tokyo, Yokohama, Kyoto, Kobe, and Osaka in October of that year using over one hundred American bombers disguised as Chinese aircraft." One would think that this would be critically important news for Japanese citizens to know.

In spite of this, the Japan Broadcasting Corporation's news program never bothered to report on what, by any reasonable standard, should have been a big story.

One would also think that Japan's media would have given broad coverage to the 2013 publication of Herbert Hoover's memoirs, in which Hoover and General MacArthur concur at a private meeting that Hoover's successor as president, Franklin Roosevelt, was a "madman" who had willfully provoked Japan into war. And yet, nothing like that happened.

The year 2015 marked the 120th anniversary of Japan's victory in the First Sino-Japanese War and the 110th anniversary of Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War. These wars were two of Japan's greatest trials as a nation-state. If the Japanese had not won either of these conflicts, Japan as we know it today would not exist.

Victory was achieved only because Japan's citizenry united as one to face the crisis and because its soldiers fought with conspicuous valor and courage.

Japan's media should have honored and celebrated the anniversaries of these two historic victories, but instead they were simply ignored.

In 2014, the newspaper *Asahi Shimbun* responded to the ruling party's attempts to broaden Japan's right to collective self-defense with a banner headline reading, "WE MUST NOT BECOME A COUNTRY THAT CAN GO TO WAR." However, at the time of the First Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War, Japan managed to keep its independence only because it was a country that could go to war.

World War II ended seventy years ago, and yet, Japanese newspapers and TV networks are still under the spell of the war guilt complex created by the US occupation army's War Guilt Information Program to break Japan's spirit.

### **The spirit of an independent nation**

In October 1944, Flight Officer Nagamine Hajime wrote a farewell poem which read, "Even if I am to die here in the South Seas, I will be thinking about the springs of the years still to come." Then he flew out of Mabalacat Airfield in Luzon, the Philippines, as part of the first group of kamikaze pilots. He was only nineteen years of age.

In January the following year, Sublieutenant Fukuyama Masamichi composed a poem which read, "I don't fear losing the life I have devoted to you. I worry only about the fate of the nation." Like Nagamine, he embarked from Mabalacat Airfield as part of the 18th Kongo Unit of kamikaze fliers. He was only twenty-one years of age.

Since that nineteen-year-old hero dreamed of "the springs of the years still to come," seventy springs have passed by.

Would any of us be able to meet face-to-face with the spirits of those who sacrificed themselves to protect Japan in World War II without shirking in shame?

In 1952, the San Francisco Peace Treaty came into effect, restoring independence to Japan.

The San Francisco Peace Conference had convened the previous year, bringing together representatives of forty-eight countries including Japan.

According to Article 11 of the peace agreement, Japan was obligated to accept the judgments of the Allied war crimes trials. Even after the restoration of independence, Japan was bound by treaty to have imprisoned Class A, B, and C war criminals serve out their full sentences.

Ambassador Rafael de la Colina, the representative from Mexico, said the following about that article in his speech to the conference: "We would also have desired that [Article 11] not continue legalizing, with reference to the Allied War Crimes Tribunals,... an attitude which we believe is not completely in harmony with juridical principles and is not in consonance with the best principles of modern civilization which are enunciated in the juridical phrase, *Nullum crimen sine lege, nulla poena sine lege*, a principle which inspires the penal legislation of all cultured peoples of the world..."

Ambassador Hipolito Jesus Paz, the representative from Argentina, likewise stated that, "there are some points relative to which my delegation wishes to state in a very clear manner the interpretations under which it signs it and requests that this appear in the minutes... With regard to the courts mentioned in Article 11 of the treaty, our constitution does not permit anybody to be punished without due process of law."

At the time of the restoration of independence, the Japanese people were still largely of sound mind.

It was only after this that Japan surrendered all its national defense capacities, the most important purpose of any nation, to the United States. As Japan became more and more content to be America's vassal state, it lost its spirit as an independent nation.

Today, Japanese people take pride in being a "pacifist state", basking in peace by grace of America's protection.

When a person who lives opulently, thanks only to the good graces of others, flaunts his own luxurious lifestyle, one cannot help but find that extremely distasteful.

Throughout my life, I have frequently been on the front lines of Japanese diplomacy.

Many people, not only of the left-wing but even conservatives, have told me, or, rather, have scolded me, about how "Japan ought to forge an independent foreign policy, not simply toeing the American line."

However, I become annoyed by the way that these same people who constantly instructed me to "not toe the American line", have no problem with humbly accepting a constitution which was designed for a vassal state, rather than an independent nation, and imposed by the United States. I have always remained silent in the face of their lecturing, because I did not think there was much point in discussing politics with those kind of people.

## **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

