

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

**By Kase Hideaki**

## **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, where 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 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 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 wheels removed and its back wheels 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 Umezu 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 was 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 subject 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*."