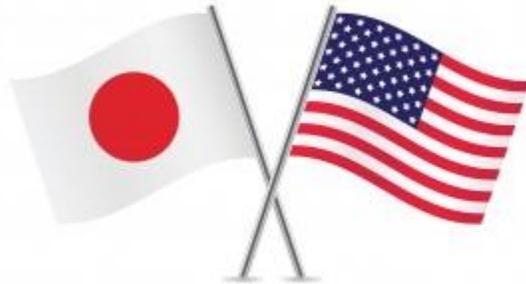




MacArthur Memorial Education Programs

Occupation of Japan (1945-1952) Primary Resources



Immediately following Japan's surrender on September 2, 1945, the Allied Occupation of Japan began. The United States of America took the lead in the occupation and General of the Army Douglas MacArthur was placed in charge of all occupation forces and tasked with transforming the devastated nation. Of this great responsibility, General MacArthur wrote:

"I, a professional soldier, had the civil responsibility and absolute control over almost 80-million people, and I would maintain that control until Japan had once more demonstrated that it was ready, willing and able to become a responsible member of the family of free nations. Never in history had a nation and its people been more completely crushed than were the Japanese at the end of the war.... Ruin and disaster never conceived possible had engulfed them....My professional military knowledge was no longer a major factor. I had to become an economist, a political scientist, an engineer, a manufacturing executive, a teacher, even a theologian of sorts. I had to rebuild a nation totally destroyed by war."¹

Despite the great challenges the Occupation of Japan presented, today it is regarded as the most successful occupation in history – an occupation that “won the peace” after victory had been won on the battlefield.

¹ Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), 321-322.

PHOTO: MacArthur Landing at Atsugi Airbase, August 30, 1945

Several days before the actual surrender of Japan, General Douglas MacArthur made a dramatic arrival in Japan at Atsugi Airbase. His arrival was potentially dangerous because the war was technically not yet over, and Atsugi Airbase was home to Japanese kamikaze pilots. General MacArthur was aware of the danger, but also wanted to make a strong statement. He was to lead the Occupation of Japan after the war ended, and he wanted the Japanese people's first glimpse of him to be of a confident, brave leader. His arrival was covered in great detail by Japanese media. As he had hoped, the Japanese people were impressed by his bold move. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill later remarked that MacArthur's early arrival was one of the bravest acts of the war. Today, scholars believe this act helped set the stage for a successful occupation.



PHOTO: Tokyo in Ruins, September 1945

In the aftermath of World War II, the Japanese used the term *yaki-nohara* (burned wasteland) to describe the state of their country. Two cities had been destroyed by atomic bombs and an additional 60 cities had been destroyed by conventional bombing. In some areas, all factories, hospitals, schools, and houses had been destroyed. In addition to the destruction, the Japanese also faced famine and the spread of disease. As the Occupation of Japan started, it was very clear that it would take a great deal of work to rebuild Japan. Unlike the recovering European nations however, Japan did not receive economic aid from the United States in the form of the Marshall Plan.



DOCUMENT: Official US Policy for Japan, September 23, 1945

The United States led the Allied Occupation of Japan and outlined several main goals for the Occupation. The first major goal was to ensure that Japan could never threaten others again. Other goals included demilitarization, democratization, and economic revitalization. Most of these goals were expected to be carried out by the Japanese themselves. Tasked with overseeing these goals, General MacArthur relied on the ideals expressed in documents like the U.S. Constitution, the Gettysburg Address, the Kellogg Briand Pact, as well as policies like the New Deal.



GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES ARMY FORCES, PACIFIC

Advance Echelon
APO 50C
23 September 1945

Department of State
Radio News Bulletin
22 September 1945

No.....227

(Intercepted by GHQ Signal Service)

WHITE HOUSE

UNITED STATES INITIAL POST SURRENDER POLICY FOR JAPAN

The following is a statement of general initial policy relating to Japan which has been approved by the President and distributed to the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers and to appropriate United States Departments and Agencies for their guidance:

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

The objectives will be achieved by the following principal means: a. Japan's sovereignty will be limited to the islands of Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku, and such minor outlying islands as may be determined in accordance with the Cairo Declaration and other agreements to which the United States is or may be a party. b. Japan will be completely disarmed and demilitarized. The authority of the militarist and the influence of militarism will be totally eliminated from her political and social life. Institutions expressive of the spirit of militarism and aggression will be vigorously suppressed. c. The Japanese people shall be encouraged to develop a desire for individual liberties and respect for fundamental human rights, particularly the freedom of religion, assembly, speech and the press. They shall also be encouraged to form democratic and representative organizations. d. The Japanese people shall be afforded opportunity to develop for themselves an economy which will permit the peacetime requirements of the population to be met.

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PHOTO: MacArthur and Hirohito, September 27, 1945

Assuming his duties as leader of the Occupation of Japan in September 1945, General MacArthur was faced with a daunting task. History was not in his favor – no occupation had ever been particularly successful. One of his first tasks was figuring out what to do with Japan's Emperor Hirohito. Many people wanted to see the emperor arrested and humiliated. MacArthur chose a different option. He waited for the emperor to make the first move. Weeks into the Occupation, the emperor asked for a meeting. MacArthur agreed and invited Hirohito to meet him at his home. This was unprecedented. In Japanese culture, people *went* to the emperor – not the other way around. The two men met at MacArthur's home on September 27, 1945. This photograph was taken of the meeting and was later distributed throughout Japan. The Japanese had looked to the meeting for signs of how the Occupation would be run and this photograph encouraged them. Their emperor was not humiliated, but it was clear that MacArthur was in charge. For his part, MacArthur strongly believed that the success of the Occupation depended on the emperor's cooperation and support.



CARTOON: Hirohito Renounces His Divinity, unidentified American newspaper, January 3, 1946

On January 1, 1946, Emperor Hirohito released an official proclamation supporting General Douglas MacArthur's plans to democratize Japan. In addition to voicing his support for democratization, the emperor also told the Japanese people that he was not a god. For hundreds of years, the Japanese emperor had been regarded as a god by the Japanese people. As such, the emperor was considered the source of all legitimate power in Japan. This idea was incompatible with democracy - in which the people are the source of legitimate power. By renouncing his divinity, Hirohito preserved the role of the emperor - but as a figurehead, not the source of power. This made the Japanese emperor's role similar to that of constitutional monarchs in Europe. General MacArthur was very pleased with the emperor's proclamation and saw it as a vital part of ensuring a stable, democratic Japan.



PHOTO: Repatriation of Japanese Troops, c. 1946

When World War II ended, nearly six million Japanese troops were spread out across the Pacific Theatre. During the Occupation of Japan, these troops were brought back home to Japan. It was a daunting task and took several years to complete. It was also complicated. On a humanitarian level, it was important to bring the Japanese troops back home to their families. With so many parts of Asia suffering because of the war, it was also important to bring the Japanese troops back to Japan so other nations could begin the process of rebuilding. Bringing millions of troops back to Japan was somewhat tricky, though. With Japan struggling to rebuild, initially, there were few economic opportunities for these troops. The success of the Occupation rested on the ability to peacefully reintegrate these troops back into society.



DOCUMENT: Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, 1946

The main Allied goal for the Occupation of Japan was to ensure Japan never went to war again. General MacArthur and his staff worked with Japanese politicians to draft a new Japanese Constitution. Article 9, a special clause within this Constitution, officially outlaws war as a means for Japan to settle international disputes. The article also states Japan will not maintain a military for aggressive purposes.

RENUNCIATION OF WAR

Article IX. War, as a sovereign right of the nation, and the threat or use of force, is forever renounced as a means of settling disputes with other nations.

The maintenance of land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be authorized. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.

DOCUMENT: Excerpt of MacArthur's Speech to Recently Elected Japanese Women Politicians, June 21, 1946

Prior to World War II, women in Japan did not have the right to do things like vote, own property, decide who they would marry, or run for election. During the Occupation of Japan, General MacArthur directed the committee drafting the new Japanese Constitution to directly address and outlaw gender discrimination. With the adoption of this Constitution in 1946, Japanese women gained a number of rights – including the right to vote. This allowed them greater freedom, equality to men, and a higher status within Japanese society. In the Japanese elections that followed, General MacArthur proudly noted that 13 million women voted for the first time, and 39 women were elected to Japan's national legislature.

WOMEN OF JAPAN LAUDED BY GENERAL MACARTHUR

(Extract of Press Release 10:00, dated 21 June 1946)

"Women of Japan are responding magnificently to the challenge of democracy; their record of participation in the general elections on 10 April sets an example for the world," declared General Douglas MacArthur in an informal meeting with the 39 women members of the Diet at 1800 last night.

The conference was held in the Supreme Commander's office at General Headquarters in compliance with the expressed wish of the women legislators to meet General MacArthur and to discuss with him current problems confronting the Japanese people.

"Japanese women are displaying an increasing interest in political, social, and economic affairs which exceeds the most hopeful anticipation of political observers. It attests to the powerful appeal of the democratic idea and to the enthusiasm with which Japanese women are discarding the age-old bonds of convention which have so long denied them the fundamental democratic right to participate in communal affairs beyond the home", General MacArthur told them.

PHOTO: Crowds Outside of the Dai Ichi Building, November 6, 1946

During the Occupation of Japan, General MacArthur's office was located in the Dai Ichi Building in Tokyo. He worked seven days a week and kept a predictable schedule. Crowds of Japanese citizens formed each day to catch sight of him arriving at or departing from the building. Although he had been their enemy during World War II, his administration of Japan during the Occupation earned him the admiration of many Japanese. They referred to him as the "Gentle Conqueror," and were fascinated by the image he projected.



DOCUMENT: "MacArthur Fired," San Francisco Chronicle, April 11, 1951

On June 25, 1950, the Korean War broke out while General MacArthur was running the Occupation of Japan. When the United Nations decided to send a multi-national force to protect South Korea's independence, General MacArthur was selected to command the force. This meant he oversaw both the Occupation of Japan and the Korean War. Although there were some major successes early in the Korean War, disagreements between President Truman and General MacArthur eventually led to the president firing MacArthur on April 11, 1951. MacArthur was removed from command of both the Korean War and the Occupation of Japan. While the firing was within the president's power, people around the world were stunned. The Japanese people were particularly upset. Days later, when MacArthur departed Japan, 2 million Japanese turned out to bid him farewell.

MACARTHUR FIRED Truman Ousts Him From All Jobs ---Tokyo HQ Stunned by the News

Sterling Hayden Says He Was a Communist Film Actor Admits He Joined Party In 1946, but Soon Quit in Disguise

Remmer Gives Up Gambler Posts Bail on Charge Of Tax Evasion

The President's Historic Decision General Ridgway Is Given Far East Commands ---MacArthur Receives His Ouster in Silence

WASHINGTON, April 11.—President Truman today announced that he had fired General Douglas MacArthur from all his Far Eastern commands because of his inability to give "his wholehearted support" to the policies of the United States Government.

MacArthur, who was in Tokyo today, was informed of the news by a radio message from the White House. He was expected to leave for his home in the Philippines today.

MacArthur's firing was a surprise to many of his friends and associates. He had been in the United States since his return from Japan in 1945.



'He Has Proven Himself Unable to Co-operate With United Nations Policy'

United Airlines advertisement with regional logos: NORTH, SOUTH, EAST, WEST.

Mac Tze-Tung Reported Sick. The general was reported to be in poor health and unable to perform his duties.

The Index. A list of stock market indices including Dow Jones Industrial Average, S&P 500, and others.

Veterans' Affairs Leader Leaps to Death. A report on the death of a prominent leader in the veterans' movement.

Valley Towns Roped as Mercury Soars. A report on the impact of rising mercury levels on the fishing industry in the Pacific Northwest.

GOP Incensed. A report on the reaction of the Republican Party to the firing of General MacArthur.

United Air Lines advertisement with contact information.

Continuation of the Veterans' Affairs article.

Continuation of the GOP Incensed article.

Continuation of the Valley Towns article.

Continuation of the Veterans' Affairs article.

Continuation of the GOP Incensed article.

DOCUMENT: Yoshida Telegram to MacArthur, September 1951

By the late 1940s, it was clear that the Occupation of Japan had been successful. The Japanese had completed a process of demilitarization, had adopted a democratic constitution, and were rebuilding their economy. Approximately five months after MacArthur was fired by President Truman, the Peace Treaty of San Francisco was signed. The treaty stipulated that the Occupation of Japan would end on April 28, 1952. Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida, who had worked closely with MacArthur during the Occupation, sent MacArthur a telegram after the treaty was signed. Like many Japanese people, Yoshida believed that MacArthur had played an important role in the creation of a new, post-war Japan.

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NA157 LONG DL PD=SAN FRANCISCO CALIF 10 1017A=
GENERAL OF THE ARMY DOUGLAS MACARTHUR=
WALDORF ASTORIA HOTEL=

PEACE TREATY WAS SIGNED THE DAY BEFORE YESTERDAY. MY HEART AND THE HEARTS OF ALL JAPANESE TURN TO YOU IN BOUNDLESS GRATITUDE. FOR IT IS YOUR FIRM AND KINDLY HAND THAT LED US, A PROSTRATE NATION, ON THE ROAD OF RECOVERY AND RECONSTRUCTION. IT WAS YOU WHO FIRST PROPOUNDED THE PRINCIPLES FOR A FAIR AND GENEROUS PEACE WHICH WE NOW HAVE AT LONG LAST. IN THE NAME OF THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE I SEND YOU OUR NATIONS HEARTFELT THANKS=
SHIGERU YOSHIDA=

MACARTHUR ARCHIVES

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE