The Dagger and the Gift: The Impact of the Korean War on Japan

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In September 1950, *Contemporary Japan,* the journal of the prestigious Foreign Affairs Association of Japan, carried two articles about the impact of the Korean War on Japan. One, by Admiral Nomura Kichisaburō, a former minister of foreign affairs and ambassador to the United States on the eve of Pearl Harbor, sounded an old theme. Quoting his great predecessor Komura Jutarō, foreign minister during the Russo-Japanese War, Nomura reminded his readers that "The peninsula of Korea thrusts itself, like a menacing dagger, from the Continent toward the vital parts of Japan." Just as it was intolerable at the beginning of the century for a hostile great power to occupy that peninsula, so now, at mid-century, it was imperative that Soviet Russia not dominate it. War in Korea "marked a definite turn" in the current of world events that compelled Japan to stand with the United States against any further expansion of communism.[1]

The other, by a long-time resident observer of Japan, the British journalist Hessell Tiltman, made the same point in less apocalyptic terms. The Korean War, he argued, represented "both a great responsibility and a great opportunity" for Japan. It was a kind of gift which, if repaid, would bring ample rewards. Tokyo must, Tiltman insisted, follow the lead of the Western democracies in opposing naked aggression in Korea. By providing a "secure rear base" for the effort to contain communism, Japan would be certain, whatever the result of the fighting in Korea, to gain a peace treaty and full recovery of its sovereignty.[2]

Both of these contemporary observers implied that the war in Korea made the summer of 1950 a decisive moment in Japan's history. More than forty years after the event, however, what Nomura and Tiltman so vigorously affirmed as fact is better approached as ques-

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1. Nomura Kichisaburō, "A Peace Treaty and Japan's Security," *Contemporary Japan* 19 (July-September 1950): 351, 357.

2. Hessell Tiltman, "Japan and the Korean War," *Contemporary Japan* 19 (July-September 1950): 334. For Tiltman's earlier career, see *Japan Biographical Encyclopedia and Who's Who* (Tokyo, 1960), 1684–85.

tion. Was the Korean War a "transforming event"—for Japan and the Japanese, no less than for those nations and peoples who fought it? Did it have the character of what Ernest R. May has referred to as a "great event?" Were things fundamentally different, for Japan, after the war from what they had been before it? Did large numbers of Japanese then—and thereafter—think that the Korean War set their lives and the life of their nation on a course that might otherwise not have been taken?[3]

There is a striking pattern in what has been written over the last four decades about the impact of the Korean War on Japan. In marked contrast to American, European, and Chinese or Korean writers, Japanese analysts and historians have paid scant attention to the impact of the Korean conflict of 1950–53 on their nation. There is but one major Japanese monograph devoted to the war, and neither it nor the collection of articles published by the premier Japanese journal of military history to mark the fortieth anniversary of the outbreak of the fighting mention its impact on Japan.[4] The war is almost invisible in the twentieth-century volume of *The Cambridge History of Japan*,[5] and is barely mentioned in the most recent Japanese and American scholarly assessment of the Showa emperor's reign.[6] While the most distinguished Japanese chroniclers of the early postwar era mention the Korean War and acknowledge its importance, their major concerns are the ending of the Pacific War, the military occupation that followed it, and the shaping of the San Francisco peace settlement of 1951.[7] This contrast between Japanese and non-Japanese observers'

3. Ernest R. May, "Great Events and U.S. Politics," in George K. Osborn et al., *Democracy, Strategy, and Vietnam* (Lexington, Mass., 1985), 8.

4. Okonogi Masao, *Chōsen sensō* (Tokyo, 1986). Chonggye Yonguso published a translated edition in Seoul in 1987; *Gunji shigaku* (Military history) 26 (December 1990). The quasi-official, ten-volume Rikusen kenkyū fukyū kai, ed., *Chōsen sensō* (The Korean War) (Tokyo, 1966) mentions neither Japanese involvement in the fighting nor the war's impact on Japan.

5. Peter Duus, ed., *The Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. 6, *The Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Mass., 1988). Only a political scientist, Fukui Haruhiko, and an economist, Kōsai Yutaka, make mention of the Korean War in their respective essays on postwar political and economic history (pp. 158, 502, 509–10). It might be noted that the pattern in this encyclopedic volume repeats itself in what is perhaps the most widely used English-language text dealing with modern Japan. See Edwin O. Reischauer, *Japan: The Story of a Nation*, 4th ed. (New York, 1990), 200.

6. Carol Gluck and Stephen R. Graubard, eds., *Showa: The Japan of Hirohito* (New York, 1992), xxiv–xxv, 105, 110, 234.

7. These generalizations are based on Hata Ikuhiko, *Shiroku: Nihon saigunbi* (The historical record: Japan's rearmament) (Tokyo, 1976); Hosoya Chihirō, *San Furanshisuko e no michi* (The road to San Francisco) (Tokyo, 1984); Igarashi Takeshi, *TaiNichi kōwa to reisen* (The Japanese peace settlement and the Cold War) (Tokyo, 1986); and Watanabe Akio and Miyazato Seigen, eds., *San Furanshisuko kōwa* (The San Francisco peace settlement) (Tokyo, 1986).

treatment of the Korean War reflects a crucial difference in their understanding of the conflict's significance. For non-Japanese, the conflict was a discreet event that pointed toward a different future. For Koreans, the war was arguably the central event of their modern history. For Americans it was something new: "cold war" turned hot. In recent years, it has come to be seen as something that pointed toward a similar, and perhaps even "greater" event in the future. The Korean War, as Callum MacDonald so pithily expressed it, has become "The War Before Vietnam."[8]

For Japanese, however, the war carries no such significance. *This* Korean war did not bring to them the kinds of momentous change that earlier conflicts on the peninsula in 1894–95 and 1904–5 sent sweeping over their forebears. The war did not set Japan on some new course obvious to people then and thereafter. That it did not do so was not simply because mid-century Japanese, unlike their predecessors, were not formal belligerents in the war of 1950–53. The purveyors and enablers of war can be changed by it almost as much as those who fight it.

Rather, the Japanese people's perception of the Korean War and understanding of its place in their history was shaped by even more momentous events that preceded it. Japan's war against its Pacific neighbors from 1937 through 1945, not the shorter Korean conflict, was the "transforming event" of mid-century. It destroyed its empire, changed its polity, and set in motion the forces that would alter its economy and society. That war, and the ensuing conflicts in China, Southeast Asia, and Korea to which it contributed, explain why the Korean conflict of 1950–53 merits relatively little attention from Japanese historians and political analysts. In the grand sweep of modern Japanese history, what looms so large elsewhere rightfully seems smaller. *The* Korean War becomes simply another Korean war. What looks like a distinct and perhaps event-defining episode for the future becomes a penultimate chapter in a far bigger story of war and peace, defeat and transformation begun in the past. For Japan, then, the Korean War of 1950–53 was *not* a "great" or "transforming" event.

To put the point that way is not, however, to rob the conflict of significance. Instead, by looking at the Korean War of 1950–53 as an act in a much longer drama of change, one can come to a more refined understanding of its importance for Japan. We can do so by considering how the war affected three aspects of Japan's national life: its security, its economy, and its society and culture. The Korean War did not cause fundamental change in any of the three, but it

8. Callum A. MacDonald, *Korea: The War Before Vietnam* (New York, 1986).

modified all. The war helped define structures that would guarantee Japan's national security for decades. It accelerated forces of change already set in motion by war and occupation that put the nation on course toward immediate economic recovery and eventual economic greatness. And, not least, the Korean conflict confirmed and rendered immutable those social and cultural shifts caused by the Pacific War that would make Japan in the second half of the twentieth century a more diverse and "international" society than it had been in the first.

Security Redefined

How did the Korean War affect the formation of structures for the preservation of Japan's national security? In the last decade analysts on both sides of the Pacific have sounded three themes in their responses to that question. They have suggested in various ways that the Korean conflict helped shaped the essential features of a Pacific peace settlement. It influenced the terms of peace and security treaties that formally ended the Pacific War but guaranteed the continued presence of American troops and bases in Japan. The war also brought to the fore the question of Japanese rearmament, creating, in the process, the anomaly of a nation with a "peace" constitution building up its armed forces. The Korean fighting, by speeding conclusion of a "one-sided" peace with only non-Communist nations, distorted Japan's future foreign policy by making impossible the restoration of normal relations with mainland China. In this perspective, the Korean War looks very much like a dagger—one that cut off Japan's chances to avoid conflict with its immediate neighbors and to move toward greater independence from the United States.[9]

While these arguments contain elements of truth, they exaggerate and distort the impact of the Korean War on the creation of contemporary Japan's national security structures. They overlook the fact that the Pacific War created the security problems which Japan had to confront and resolve during the Korean War. The earlier conflict transformed Japan's security environment, both at home and abroad.

9. In addition to the works cited in note 6, above, see Yui Daisaburō, "Chosen sensō to katamen kōwa" (The Korean War and the one-sided peace), in Rekishigaku kenkyūkai and Nihonshi kenkyūkai, ed., *Kōza Nihon rekishi 11 Gendai 1* (Lectures on Japanese history, vol. 11: Contemporary, pt. 1) (Tokyo, 1985), 143–88; Richard B. Finn, *Winners in Peace: MacArthur, Yoshida, and Postwar Japan* (Berkeley, Calif., 1992), 263–69, 274–83, 307–8; Michael Schaller, *The American Occupation of Japan: The Origins of the Cold War in Asia* (New York, 1985), 246–98; Howard B. Schonberger, *Aftermath of War: Americans in the Remaking of Japan, 1945–1952* (Kent, Ohio, 1989), 237–81.

War and occupation left the Japanese with a new friend, the United States; an old enemy, the Soviet Union; and Pacific Asian neighbors alienated, in varying degree, by their actions as colonial overlords or battlefield opponents. Defeat deprived Japan of the navy and outlying territories which previously had formed a "forward defense" for the home islands. Occupation reforms not only disarmed the Japanese population; they also "demilitarized" the structure of the state. Under the new constitution, written in 1946 and formally proclaimed a year later, the military surrendered its claim to special status, and the nation renounced, in the famous Article Nine, the use of force for anything other than self-defense.[10] Japanese politicians who had cooperated with the military in the war effort now distanced themselves from its defeated and disgraced leaders. Their movement toward cooperation with the United States reflected both practical necessities of life under military occupation and realization that their nation depended upon American forces, deployed in and around the home islands, for its defense.

Much of the existing literature also underestimates the degree to which American and Japanese leaders had moved—before the outbreak of war in Korea—toward consensus on the essential security features of any peace settlement. Between 1947 and the spring of 1950, they drifted toward mutual realization that American bases must remain on Japanese soil after a peace treaty was concluded. Spiralling Cold War tensions and civil war in China rendered the first solution proposed to end Japan's security problem—great power–guaranteed disarmament and neutrality—implausible.[11] The escalation of tensions following the triumph of Mao Zedong's armies in China and Soviet detonation of an atomic bomb late in 1949 made defense and deterrence from a distance, with American forces stationed in small numbers on outlying islands—a notion that General Douglas MacArthur, the Supreme Allied Commander in Tokyo and State Department Policy Planning Staff Director George Kennan fa-

10. Finn, 89–104, summarizes the drafting of the Constitution and ensuing controversies over the authorship of its Article Nine; Kyoko Inoue, *MacArthur's Japanese Constitution: A Linguistic and Cultural Study of Its Making* (Chicago, 1991), 6–36, chronicles the drafting process as a prologue to a detailed, sophisticated linguistic analysis of the document. Tetsuya Kataoka, *The Price of a Constitution: The Origins of Japan's Postwar Politics* (New York, 1991), 13–45, offers an idiosyncratic, highly nationalistic interpretation of the emergence of the new constitution.

11. U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946* (Washington, D.C., 1971), 8:153–55, 158 (hereafter cited as *FRUS* with year); Nishimura Kumao, *San Furanshisuko heiwa jōyaku* (The San Francisco Peace Treaty), vol. 27 of Kajima heiwa kenkyū jo, ed., *Nihon gaikō shi* (A diplomatic history of Japan) (Tokyo, 1971), 6–12.

vored—seem impractical.[12] Before 1949 was over American war planners presumed that Japan would be a base from which to carry on offensive operations in a war against the Soviet Union, and the State Department's principal peace treaty draftsman assumed U.S. forces would remain in Japan for at least a decade.[13] When General MacArthur argued in June 1950 that the entire Japanese archipelago must be, in effect, a base for American armed forces, he was simply voicing agreement with what his Washington superiors had already deemed necessary.[14]

More important and less well known outside of Japan, however, is the fact that Tokyo's leaders had come to the same conclusion. Although John Foster Dulles later claimed it took the Korean War to shake Japanese leaders from their "stupor" on matters of national defense,[15] in fact a foreign ministry committee was formed late in 1945 to study all aspects, including the security features, of a peace treaty.[16] By July 1947 Foreign Minister Ashida Hitoshi was taking soundings on that aspect of a settlement with American and Australian officials. In September of the same year he circulated to U.S. representatives a memorandum that called upon the United States to defend Japan in the event Soviet-American relations continued to worsen. He also proposed that American troops remain in his country under the guise of overseeing compliance with peace treaty terms.[17] By early May 1950, Finance Minister Ikeda Hayato told Washington's czar for Japanese economic recovery, Detroit banker Joseph M. Dodge, that Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru would be willing to request formally that U.S. troops remain in Japan after a peace settlement—even though it would be preferable for Washington to ask that they stay to "secure treaty terms and for other purposes."[18]

12. *FRUS, 1947,* 6:449, 454–55; D. Clayton James, *The Years of MacArthur* (Boston, Mass., 1985), 3:337; *FRUS, 1948,* 6:692, 700–709; Schonberger, 179.

13. Roger Dingman, "The U.S. Navy and the Cold War: The Japan Case," in Craig L. Symonds, ed., *New Aspects of Naval History* (Annapolis, Md., 1981), 299–301.

14. *FRUS, 1950,* 6:1227–28.

15. Ibid., 1243.

16. Michael M. Yoshitsu, *Japan and the San Francisco Peace Settlement* (New York, 1983), l.

17. Martin E. Weinstein, *Japan's Postwar Defense Policy, 1947–1968* (New York, 1971), 24–27; Yoshitsu, 17–20; Igarashi, *TaiNichi kōwa,* 31–37; Shindo Eiichi, ed., *Ashida nikki* (The Ashida [Hitoshi] diaries) (Tokyo, 1986), 2:287, barely mentions the drafting. Alan Rix, ed., *Intermittent Diplomat: The Japan and Batavia Diaries of W. MacMahon Ball* (Melbourne, 1988), 215, 220–21, details contacts with Japanese diplomats in the summer of 1947 but makes no specific mention of defense issues.

18. *FRUS, 1950,* 6:1194–96; Yoshitsu, 35–36.

Leaders on both sides of the Pacific also hinted at openness to Japanese rearmament, albeit in varying degree, well before the outbreak of war in Korea. From the very beginning Japanese peace treaty drafters in Tokyo coupled requests to increase "police" forces with their other security proposals. They would be needed to quell the internal Communist threat that would grow before or during more explicit Soviet threats from without.[19] Fear of the latter, in the form of an invasion of Hokkaido, prompted outgoing Eighth Army Commander General Robert Eichelberger to confide to Japanese officials in September 1947 that rearmament was both necessary and inevitable.[20] Similar thoughts prompted Occupation officials to look the other way as former Imperial Japanese Army and Navy officers supposedly overseeing the demobilization of their forces remained and, in effect, laid the organizational foundations for the emergence of maritime and ground self-defense forces.[21] By the third week of June 1950, when he came to Tokyo to sound Japanese views on a peace settlement, John Foster Dulles had already sketched the essential outlines of what would be America's argument for Japanese rearmament: Without "self-help" in that form, the Japanese could not expect a congress and president trying to pare defense spending and a public and military professionals worried about rapidly expanding American defense commitments in Western Europe to bear alone the burden of their defense.[22]

It is also true that the forces that would separate Japan from mainland China for two decades after the Korean War had accomplished much of their work before it. Japanese leaders were vigorously anti-Communist. In the closing months of the Pacific War they maneuvered to save their emperor because they thought his continuation in power would prevent Communist efforts at revolution in Japan.[23] Soviet detention and maltreatment of Japanese prisoners of war long after the fighting stopped added to their hostility toward Moscow.[24] By the spring of 1950, even some Japanese socialist leaders were

19. Yoshitsu, 1, 9, 17, 19.

20. Ibid., 17.

21. For detailed discussions of this "pre-rearmament," see James E. Auer, *The Postwar Rearmament of Japanese Maritime Forces, 1945–1971* (New York, 1973), 53–89; Frank Kowalski, *Nihon saigunbi* (Japan's rearmament), Katsuyama Kijirō, trans. (Tokyo, 1969).

22. *FRUS, 1950*, 6:1210–13.

23. Leon V. Sigal, *Fighting to a Finish: The Politics of War Termination in the United States and Japan, 1945* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1988), 77–78.

24. William J. Sebald, *With MacArthur in Japan* (New York, 1965), 140–49. Yamasaki Toyoko, *The Barren Zone*, James T. Araki, trans. (Honolulu, 1985) provides a vivid fictional picture of the experience of these prisoners of war and a demonstration of their hold upon the postwar Japanese imagination.

prepared to break with the Soviet Union and proceed with a peace settlement with only non-Communist states.[25] When Mao Zedong openly leaned to one side and concluded an alliance with the Soviet Union in February 1950, the chances that Tokyo and Beijing would establish anything like strong ties of friendship became very small indeed. Very rarely does the friend of one's enemy become one's friend. In this instance, as yet unhealed wounds from Japan's earlier invasion of China as well as ideological differences made it even less likely that that would occur.

Nevertheless, one must recognize that Japanese and American leaders contemplating new security arrangements had perhaps moved faster and further ahead than others concerned with them were willing to go in the late spring of 1950. The Yoshida government commanded an absolute majority in the lower house of the Diet that would enable it to ratify a peace treaty with its attendant security arrangements.[26] The prime minister had also publicly proclaimed his openness to peace with non-Communist states only.[27] But an organized group of leading Japanese intellectuals, the editorial writer for the influential *Asahi shimbun,* and determined defenders of the "peace" constitution within the Japan Socialist Party had not given up hope of a peace treaty without continuation of the American military presence or commencement of rearmament.[28] On the other side of the Pacific, admirals, generals, and diplomats recognized the need for and logic of Japanese rearmament. But even though public opinion polls suggested that ordinary Americans would oppose military withdrawal from Japan, it was not clear that the public or their representatives in congress were ready to pay for continued forward deployment of U.S. forces in Japan or to accept Japanese rearmament.[29] Possibly adverse reactions in Southeast Asia and Australasia to these emerging answers to Japan's security dilemma gave American and Japanese leaders further reasons for concern as June 1950 drew to its close.[30]

25. *FRUS, 1950,* 6:1234.

26. Hayashi Shige and Tsuji Akira, eds., *Nihon naikaku shiroku 5* (The historical record of Japan's cabinets, vol. 5) (Tokyo, 1981), 180–81; Finn, 215–16.

27. Finn, 248.

28. Yoshitsu, 31; Igarashi, *TaiNichi kōwa,* 230–38.

29. "Special Report on American Opinion: Public Opinion on Japan and Korea, 1945–1954," no. 38, 8 March 1949, Office of Public opinion Studies, U.S. Department of State, "Schuyler Foster Files," RG 59, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

30. Roger Dingman, "The View from Down Under, Australia and Japan, 1945–1952," in Thomas W. Burkman, ed., *The Occupation of Japan: The International Context* (Norfolk, Va., 1984), 99–116, and "TaiNichi kōwa to shokoku no tachiba: Niu shirando to Fuirupin no bai" (Small powers and peace with Japan: The case of New Zealand

Thus it took an event like the Korean War to turn ideas about what would guarantee Japan's security into practical, formal arrangements for its preservation. The dagger of war was needed to cut away obstacles to the conclusion of peace and security treaties that later observers would come to regard as a "gifts" to Japan. How did it do so?

Four points deserve emphasis in any answer to that question. First, the Korean War made an abstract problem real and the need for a quick solution to it obvious. Rushing American garrison troops across the Tsushima Strait to slow the North Korean juggernaut racing toward the southern tip of the peninsula stripped Japan of most of its only effective defenders. War so near prompted talk of Japanese "volunteers" going to fight in Korea—an idea that Prime Minister Yoshida quashed.[31] He did not, however, resist General MacArthur's call on 8 July 1950 to create a "police" and coast defense force of more than 80,000 men.[32] Nor were volunteers slow to respond; more than five for every available position rushed to join this new force.[33] Indeed, public opinion polls released in September 1950, barely ninety days after the Korean fighting began, suggested that a remarkable shift in popular attitudes in Japan had taken place: Nearly 54 percent of the citizens of a country with a new "no war" constitution felt that Japan should rearm.[34]

In January 1951, adverse developments in the Korean fighting clinched the case in Washington for proceeding with negotiations on the security aspects of a peace treaty. While the Pentagon wanted to delay such talks, John Foster Dulles argued—successfully—that they were all the more necessary because United Nations forces had been chased out of North Korea and given Seoul, the South Korean capital, back to the enemy. Dulles prevailed, in part, because he argued that success in fashioning a Japanese peace settlement would compensate the Truman administration politically for reverses on the battlefield. Resolving differences with allies in the Pacific War over arrangements

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and the Philippines), in Watanabe and Miyazato, 255–92, analyze Australasian and Filipino attitudes toward peace with Japan. Ann Trotter, *New Zealand and Japan 1945–1952: The Occupation and the Peace Treaty* (London, 1990), 115–24, details intra–British Commonwealth discussions on the subject early in 1950.

31. Kyodo editorial roundup, 10 August, Jiji press summary, 26 August 1950, A 5104 file 7/22/10/3P Australian Archives, Canberra; Reinhard Drifte, "Japan's Involvement in the Korean War," in James Cotton and Ian Neary, eds., *The Korean War in History* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J., 1989), 126–31, summarizes actual Japanese participation in the Korean fighting.

32. Hata, 141–42; Finn, 263–64.

33. Finn, 265

34. Igarashi, *TaiNichi kōwa*, 242.

for Japan's future security would also boost Washington's credibility as leader of the Cold War anti-Communist coalition.[35]

Second, war in Korea precluded real discord between Washington and Tokyo and softened debate within the Japanese capital over the security terms of a peace settlement. In its absence, Dulles in 1951 would have been forced to make arguments for "burden-sharing" in abstract geopolitical and economic terms. He would have made arguments that echoed more of American strategic and budgetary needs than the imperatives of Japan's immediate security situation. Had he done so publicly, Prime Minister Yoshida would have found it difficult, if not impossible, to answer those who would certainly have regarded acceptance of what Dulles proposed as toadying to Washington. Instead, Kim Il Sung, Mao Zedong, and Stalin in their Korean War actions allowed Yoshida to argue that the general situation, not pressure from Washington, justified retaining American bases and continuing rearmament after a peace treaty was concluded.

The war also provided Yoshida with ammunition for use against his domestic political foes. Although he secretly urged socialists on the Left to make their opposition to rearmament vigorous and clear,[36] he recognized that his more significant enemies were nationalists on the Right. The more outspoken among them wanted both to revise the "peace" constitution so as to legitimize reconstituted armed forces and to move more quickly to enlarge their strength. Yoshida was able to refute them in part by arguing that the Korean War made immediate constitutional revision too destabilizing. In these ways, the prime minister justified compromise with the Americans on rearmament and acceptance of logical contradictions between declared and actual security policy that it produced. By using the war to maneuver toward the high, middle ground among his domestic political enemies, Yoshida guaranteed that ratification of the peace and security treaties of 1951 would be achieved easily and quickly.[37]

Third, the Korean War eased the way for acceptance of those agreements by creating new perceptions of Japan overseas and a working collective security framework into which they could be

35. *FRUS, 1952,* 6:1359–60; *FRUS, 1951,* 6:781–83, 787, 971.

36. Igarashi Takeshi, "Peace-Making and Party Politics: The Formation of the Domestic Foreign-Policy System in Postwar Japan," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 11 (Summer 1985): 350.

37. Roger Dingman, "Theories of, and Approaches to, Alliance Politics," in Paul G. Lauren, ed., *Diplomacy: New Approaches in History, Theory, and Policy* (New York, 1979), 260–61, elaborates this argument about the impact of domestic partisan politics on Yoshida's behavior more fully. Finn, 273–83, provides the best summary of the 1951 negotiations leading to conclusion of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty.

fitted. In the United States, the Korean War helped transform Japan from ruthless enemy into de facto ally. Popular publications which had previously depicted the country as a rathole down which SCAP (Supreme Commander, Allied Powers) economists and social engineers had poured two billion dollars with little demonstrable result now printed maps and stories that made Japan appear as the vital salient in the Western front lines of battle against communism.[38] Popular writers like James A. Michener turned the Japanese people, yesterday's barbaric foe, into today's friends—warm, human beings who shared the same hopes and dreams as ordinary Americans.[39] Not surprisingly, military experts who once had dared speak only in secret of rearming the Japanese now trumpeted the arguments for doing so wherever Americans would read or listen.[40]

The war also made it easier for those who would otherwise have objected vigorously to accept Japanese rearmament. The Korean conflict produced a de facto Pacific pact. By the time John Foster Dulles went to Tokyo to discuss that most contentious aspect of a peace settlement, Australia, New Zealand, and the Philippines—the nations most fearful of a rearmed Japan—had committed troops to Korea in an effort to gain some measure of influence over the terms of a Japanese peace settlement.[41] In doing so, they were drawn, alongside the United States, into everyday cooperative working relationships with the Japanese. That collaboration by no means ended their bitterness toward Japan for its Pacific War actions. But it enhanced their ability to demand—and get—from the United States security treaties which they regarded as legitimate rewards for their belligerency.[42] At the same time, real cooperation in Korea made it possible

38. "Two Billion Dollar Failure In Japan," *Fortune* 39 (June 1949): 74–75; "SCAPitalism Marches On," *Fortune* 40 (October 1949): 76–77; Helen G. Mears, "We're Giving Japan Democracy, But She Can't Earn Her Living," *Saturday Evening Post*, 18 June 1949, 12ff; "What's Wrong in Japan? Plenty, Blasts Survey Expert," *Newsweek*, 18 Apr. 1949, 45; *Life*, 10 July 1950, 23–29; "Liability into Asset?" *Time*, 22 Jan. 1951, 22. Bernard C. Cohen, *The Political Process and Foreign Policy: The Making of the Japanese Peace Settlement* (Princeton, N.J., 1957), 43, cites American raw polling data which showed dramatic shift in popular attitudes toward Japan. Whereas only half the college graduates and a third of high school graduates were favorably disposed to the Japanese in April 1949, nearly two-thirds of the former and almost 60 percent of the latter felt friendly toward Japan in January 1953.

39. James A. Michener, *The Voice of Asia* (New York, 1951), 13–18.

40. Robert L. Eichelberger, "Japanese Troops as Balance Wheel for the Far East," *Newsweek*, 4 Dec. 1950, 30.

41. Ian C. McGibbon, "New Zealand's Intervention in the Korean War, June-July 1950," *International History Review* 11 (May 1989): 272–90; Trotter, 132–34; Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War, 1950–53* (Canberra, 1981), 1:45–76.

42. *FRUS, 1951*, 6:147–49, 153–54; Trotter, 157–72.

for the architects of American policy to argue for acceptance of new security treaties, including that with Japan.

Finally, the Korean War guaranteed, in the manner of its ending, that arrangements for Japanese security shaped in its midst would spew frictions into Japanese-American relations for decades to come. The American diplomats who originally proposed security arrangements to keep U.S. forces in Japan expected their numbers to decline gradually.[43] Instead, the fragile truce on the Korean peninsula, purchased at the price of the firm security treaty that Syngman Rhee extorted from Washington,[44] guaranteed that Americans would man the ramparts of what had once been the inner core of Japan's empire. Their numbers soared to 350,000 in 1953, when the fighting stopped, and remained, ten years after its commencement, more than a hundred times what they had been in 1950. The fragile peace on the peninsula also slowed the draw-down of American forces in Japan.[45] And, it must be noted, the Korean War provided the rationale for putting a sizable number American military and naval advisers on Taiwan.

The presence in and around Japan of so many Americans in uniform gave Yoshida Shigeru every reason to drag his feet in implementing commitments to rearm. John Foster Dulles barely left Tokyo in February 1951 when he realized the essential irrationality of the supposed bargain that he had struck. So long as American forces in any sizeable numbers remained in Japan, dollars flowed from their pockets to the Japanese. What reasonable Japanese politician would be willing to advocate spending billions of yen for rearmament to replace hard currency-producing protectors?[46] The fact that the war shifted bulk of American ground forces to Korea,[47] thus removing the type of force that symbolized occupation and demanded large amounts of scarce land for its operations, made their continued presence in Japan more tolerable than it might otherwise have been. In this manner, the Korean War helped perpetuate tensions between Americans who insisted that Japan should do and spend more for

43. Fearey to Allison, 13 and 14 October 1949, 740.0011 pw (peace), RG 59; *FRUS, 1950,* 6:1355; *FRUS, 1951,* 6:1307–9, 1403.

44. *FRUS, 1952–1954,* 15:1481–90, provides a sample of Rhee's wheedling style in negotiations that led to the signature of the United States–Republic of Korea Mutual Defense Treaty on 7 August 1953.

45. "U.S. Military Personnel Strengths by Country, 1948–1962," data provided by Office of the Secretary of Defense to author, 1989. U.S. forces based in Japan, including Okinawa, peaked at 263,350 in 1953; they did not decline to pre–Korean War levels until 1958, five years after the fighting stopped.

46. *FRUS, 1951,* 6:171.

47. "U.S. Military Personnel Strengths by Country, 1948–1962."

their own defense and Japanese content to enjoy the low-cost security American troops and bases provided.

When viewed in the broad context of modern Japanese history, then, the Korean War of 1950–53 can be seen both as a dagger blunted and a gift with sharp edges. It did not revolutionize structures for the preservation of Japan's security but rather facilitated the crystallization of changes brought about by the Pacific War and the implementation of ideas developed before 25 June 1950. The security "gifts" it brought to Japan—a formal treaty with the United States, continuation of American bases and increased numbers of Americans in uniform, and a commitment to rearmament—simultaneously "solved" an immediate security problem and guaranteed that that solution would remain controversial for years to come.

Economy Advanced

What impact did the Korean War have upon Japan's economy and the well-being of the Japanese people? If one turns to contemporary responses to that question, one might easily be led to the conclusion that the war triggered an economic boom that made it easier for Japanese political leaders to overlook popular discontent with certain aspects of the national security structures that emerged during the Korean War. Barely a week after the fighting there began, senior Japanese government officials began dropping hints that they anticipated profits to flow from Korea's civil war.[48] Spiking the pessimism of traders who noted that war would mean the loss of a hundred million dollars in two-way trade with the only country to which Japan had regular shipping services, Finance Minister Ikeda Hayato hinted ten days later that the war "might exert favorable influence on Japan's economy" in the short term.[49] Four days after that, the spiral of optimism rose till higher when the president of a major bank predicted a protracted war in which "a portion of a colossal amount" of American military expenditures would "inevitably" be spent in Japan.[50] By mid-July, the Tokyo stock market was enjoying an unexpected boom that prompted comparisons to the wave of prosperity that World War I brought to Japan.[51] Before the war was a month old, the governor of

48. Kyodo press release, 3 July 1950, A 5104 file 7/22/10/3, Korean War, Japanese Attitude, Australian Archives.

49. Saitō Hiroyuki, "Korean War Upsets Japanese Trade and Makes Outlook Hazy," *Japan Economic Weekly*, 6 July 1950; Kyodo press release, 12 July 1950, A 5104 file 7/22/10/3, Australian Archives.

50. *Nippon Times*, 16 July 1950, A 5104 file 7/22/10/3, Australian Archives.

51. *Asahi shimbun*, 18 July 1950.

the Bank of Japan had to issue a warning against "excessive optimism" about the impact of the war on the nation's economy.[52] War in Korea might, indeed, prove to be a great economic gift to Japan.

Statistics seemingly confirm such a conclusion. Japan's GNP grew, on average, slightly more than 10 percent per year during the Korean conflict.[53] The index of industrial production (with the years 1934–36 as 100) shot up from 94 in June 1950 to 142 in July 1951. During that same period Japan increased its industrial output by more than 50 percent—with less than 10 percent more non-agricultural workers.[54] For those who toiled in firms like the Toyota Motor Company, the average wage within a year of the war's ending was more than two and a half times what it had been before the fighting began.[55] And—for an island nation dependent on overseas sources and markets for its livelihood, the war brought important changes in its trading position. If Japanese shipping firms had trade arrangements with Korea alone when the war started, by its end a single company—Nippon Yūsen Kaisha—had regular service to North America, Australia, the Persian Gulf, and South and Southeast Asia.[56] The first two years of the war brought a 53 percent increase in the value of exports and an 84 percent rise in the total value of foreign trade.[57] Such figures leave no doubt that the Korean War years were a boom time in Japan.

But was this the moment when postwar Japan received the decisive boost that set it on the path toward the economic superpower status Japan enjoys today? Some analysts—more American than Japanese—have suggested that the answer to that question must be "yes." Chalmers Johnson, the Japanologist turned revisionist critic of Japan today, suggested that the economic effects of the Korean War on Japan were comparable to those of the Marshall Plan on Western Europe. Between June 1950 and July 1954, America spent nearly three billion dollars in Japan for war-related goods and services—a sum in one country that amounted to nearly 60 percent of what Washington had poured into the various nations of non-

52. *Economic News*, 21 July 1950, A 5104 file 7/22/10/3, Australian Archives.

53. Calculation based on statistics provided by Richard B. Rice in William Nimmo, ed., *The Occupation of Japan: The Impact of the Korean War* (Norfolk, Va., 1990), 23.

54. Sherwood M. Fine, "The Impact of the Korean War on the Japanese Economy," ibid., 139.

55. Fujita Kuniko, "Corporatism and the Corporate Welfare Program: The Impact of the Korean War on the Toyota Motor Corporation," ibid., 123.

56. Saitō, "Korean War;" Nippon Yūsen kaisha, *Shichijū nen shi* (Seventy-year history of the Japan Steamship Company) (Tokyo, 1956), 531. Intermittent trans-Atlantic service to Western Europe and North Africa was also inaugurated during the Korean War years.

57. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Statistical Handbook of Japan* (Tokyo, 1961), 73.

Communist Europe.[58] William Borden, in his analysis of American foreign economic policy and Japanese trade recovery, concluded that the Korean War was "the decisive event," in the revival and redirection of Japanese trade. American war spending stanched the flow of red ink in Japan's balance of trade accounts. Washington's pressures, stepped up by American enmity toward the China it fought in Korea, sapped the growth of Sino-Japanese trade and directed it across the Pacific to the United States. The war prompted the Japanese to seek more markets and opportunities in Southeast Asia and drew them into a policy of "economic cooperation" with Washington that, in fact, assured continued economic dependence on the Americans.[59]

Japanese business leaders and historians of Japanese business have used the same facts to make a case for the decisiveness of the Korean War in a somewhat different manner. The president of the Bank of Japan called American war procurement orders "divine aid." The president of Toyota insisted—years later—that Korean War orders "were Toyota's salvation."[60] Fujita Kuniko has argued that the war provided that same automobile manufacturer and its fellow producers with the opportunity to gain the upper hand over organized labor and extract much more work—at less cost—from their employees. The Korean War that facilitated the emergence of the "just-in-time" mode of industrial management,[61] by implication spawned the industrial giants that would turn Detroit into a rusted wasteland.

If one looks beyond such "first cut" assessments of the war's economic impact on Japan and behind the raw numbers of economic growth, however, a somewhat different picture emerges. It suggests, first of all, that in the economic area no less than the security, the pace and direction of change were shaped more by the Pacific than the Korean War. Defeat destroyed Japan's political and military power and struck powerful blows against its industrial capacity. But not all industries were hit equally hard. Segments of heavy industry, coal mining, and chemical production survived the onslaught of American bombs far better than other elements of the Japanese economic structure. Defeat intensified Japan's trade dependency by removing colonies from Tokyo's control. What happened between 1941 and 1945 and from 1945 through 1949 also laid the foundations for drastic changes in management-labor relations. A Japan that had suffered from labor shortages in non-farm industries before 1941 found

58. Cited in William S. Borden, *The Pacific Alliance: U.S. Foreign Economic Policy and Japanese Trade Recovery, 1947–1955* (Madison, Wis., 1984), 146, 217.

59. Borden, 143–65, passim.

60. Ibid., 146.

61. Fujita, 111–26.

itself cursed with both excess industrial productive capacity and too many would-be workers for those industries.[62] A bigger population crammed into a smaller, decolonized territory alone insured that post-1945 Japan would have to become, once more, a nation of overseas traders.

By June 1950, Japanese and American Occupation officials had struggled for four years, with indifferent success, to re-ignite the engines of prosperity.[63] What matters, however, is not so much that they had yet to succeed completely but rather that they had agreed on the broad outlines of what was needed to achieve economic recovery from the Pacific War. As early as 1947 Japanese economists had conceived what they called the "priority production program." By its terms heavy industries least damaged in the war would be the first to be revived and supplied with coal. Their output would be exported overseas to earn funds to pay for imports vital to increasing the production of manufactured goods for sale overseas.[64] By late 1948, SCAP and Japanese economic planners had also prepared a program for increasingly self-reliant economic recovery.[65] In 1949, Detroit banker Joseph E. Dodge framed what came to be known as the "Dodge line" for economic recovery. Its essence was a strong dose of monetary deflation, mixed with fiscal stabilization and market-driven rationalization of production. It was painful for thousands of Japanese workers who had already been forcibly ejected from government employment into a still lethargic private sector.[66] But it relied upon precisely what pre–Pacific War Japanese economic officials thought essential for increasing their nation's wealth and productivity: close cooperation between business and government to monitor and promote foreign trade—and to prevent recurrent trade deficits.[67]

Thus the basic design and critical elements for Japanese economic recovery were there—even before war broke out in Korea. The conflict complicated the task of using that design and using those elements to lay the foundations for future prosperity. It fueled a general economic recovery—but one that came in spurts, with sudden jumps

62. Nakamura Takafusa, "Depression, Recovery, and War," in Duus, ed., *Cambridge History of Japan*, 6:492; Kōsai Yutaka, "The Postwar Japanese Economy, 1945–1973," in ibid., 505.

63. Schonberger, 160–223, provides an excellent, succinct analysis of this effort.

64. Kōsai, 500–501, 517.

65. Fine, 137.

66. Schonberger, 205–15; Hiwatari Yumi, *Sengo seiji to NichiBei kankei* (Postwar politics and Japanese-American relations) (Tokyo, 1990), 5–26.

67. Nakamura, 470–74, 481–82; for a fuller analysis of the emergence of the government-business relationship, see Chalmers Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle* (Stanford, Calif., 1982).

and dismaying slumps.[68] It provided spectacular—but uneven—surges of growth in different segments of industry. The seemingly insatiable demand of American GI's and their Korean allies for jeeps spurred new production records and set profit records for Toyota. But the ups and downs of the fighting raised and lowered demand for other industrial products—jute and barbed wire for defensive fortifications; railroad rolling stock and equipment to sustain UN forces north of the 38th Parallel; and foodstuffs and textiles to meet the needs of Korea's war-devastated population.[69] Thus it was hardly surprising that Japanese and American economic managers took until March 1951 to agree on compromise adjustments to an economic recovery plan—one said by a leading Japanese economic historian to have had "no material effect" on the nation's subsequent economic development.[70]

Indeed, with the advantage of hindsight, it seems clear that each economic "gift" the Korean fighting brought to Japan was accompanied by a dagger. Inflation approaching the magnitude of that in the chaotic immediate post–Pacific War years threatened new prosperity and promised lower unemployment rates. The rapid rise in levels of world trade and skyrocketing demand for shipping that brought much needed profits to Japanese merchant marine firms brought with it a run on raw materials resources that increased the cost of Japanese imports and thus reduced the competitiveness of manufactured goods for export made from them.[71] The flow of U.S. dollars that substituted for capital investment needed to allow Japanese manufacturers to modernize or expand their factories brought with it increased dependence on the United States—the very thing Tokyo's economic managers sought to escape. The Korean War's broad impact on the global economy made trade with Western Europe more difficult, forced Japan to look to less developed Southeast Asia for resources and markets, and consequently slowed planned reductions in America's share of Japan's trade.[72]

Thus when the war finally ended in 1953, Japanese leaders by no means believed that they had found through it the keys to sustained

68. Kondo Shigekatsu, "Japanese Response to the Korean War," in Nimmo, ed., *Occupation of Japan*, 8.

69. Fujita, 124; Shiraishi Takashi, *Japan's Trade Policies 1945 to the Present Day* (London, 1989), 56.

70. Schonberger, 227–29; Shiraishi, 61.

71. Shiraishi, 78–79.

72. Ibid., 80–81, 196. For a more nearly contemporary analysis that makes the same point, see Institute of World Economy, Tokyo, *The Japan Annual, 1954* (Tokyo, 1954), 364.

future prosperity. They had been tested, and perhaps been forced to become better managers of the economy and its key industries, by the fighting.[73] They had definitely moved in the upward direction they wanted to go; but they could not be certain they could continue to do so. War had facilitated a return to the kind of collaboration between politicians, bureaucrats, and industrial leaders that characterized the pre–Pacific War years; but none had succeeded in returning the nation to the benchmark 1934–36 levels of overall economic activity and well-being that remained their goal.[74] In 1953, the kind of sustained economic growth that Japanese would experience a decade later and come to expect as the norm over the next twenty years was still much more dream than reality.

That fact helps bring the economic impact of the Korean War on Japan into much clearer focus. Without doubt, the war accelerated the pace of Japan's movement toward eventual recovery from the devastation of the Pacific War. It tested and probably even strengthened the wills and skills of the bureaucrats, bankers, and politicians who would in time create what later seemed an economic miracle. But, on the whole, the Korean conflict simply accelerated and rendered permanent economic changes forced upon Japan by the Pacific War.[75]

Society and Culture "Internationalized"

How did the Korean War affect Japanese society and culture? The answer to that question is paradoxical: In this aspect of Japanese life, just as in the areas of security and economics, the conflict across the Tsushima Strait proved to be both dagger and gift. It did not cause, but it most certainly consolidated important changes. The war provided those who continued to believe in the myth of racial purity and superiority an opportunity to accelerate a program of "ethnic cleansing" designed to rid Japan of the presence of large numbers of

73. Suzuki Gengo, "The Impact of the Korean War on Japan: An Overview," in Nimmo, ed., *Occupation of Japan*, 76–81, provides an excellent example of a Ministry of Finance official's discovery of self-confidence during the Korean War.

74. Shiraishi, 196; *Japan Annual, 1954*, 364.

75. This point is perhaps best illustrated by the pattern of shifts in Japan's trade with China. While some scholars have pointed to the Korean War as the cause of its decline, in fact that trend began well before the war. Pre–Pacific War trade with China excluding Taiwan accounted for 14 percent of Japanese imports and exports. By 1950, all of China, including Taiwan and Hong Kong, produced only 10.41 percent of Japan's trade. In 1952, that figure had fallen to slightly less than 7 percent, where it would be a year after the Korean fighting ceased.By 1958, five years after the Korean truce, Japan's China trade had fallen to barely 2 percent of its total world trade. See Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Statistical Handbook of Japan, 1961*, 73–75.

Koreans. Yet at the same time it created conditions that made fulfillment of that dream impossible. This war also guaranteed the protracted presence of a second foreign body introduced by the Pacific War: Americans in uniform. In so doing it altered the pathways along which alien cultural elements would enter into the everyday life of the Japanese people. Thus the Korean War helped guarantee that Japan would remain a society more "internationalized" and open to cultural penetration than it might otherwise have been.

The Korean conflict made irreversible two changes in the composition of Japan's population that had been triggered by the Sino-Japanese and Pacific Wars that preceded it. By 1950 those two struggles had stranded on Japan's shores two alien elements that had not been there in significant numbers before 1937. In that year slightly more than 700,000 Koreans were in Japan, drawn from their desperately poor homeland by hopes for higher paying jobs or better education.[76] The 10,000 American tourists who arrived nearly equalled the numbers of Yankee businessmen, missionaries, and educators who dwelt in Japan.[77] As conflict first in China, then throughout the Pacific and Southeast Asia continued, Japan's need for laborers to replace those fighting abroad increased dramatically. Legislation passed by the Diet in 1939 allowed the Japanese to import Koreans against their will, and by the end of the Pacific War in August 1945 their numbers had soared to nearly two million.[78]

At that same time the American "invasion" of Japan began. Two full American armies, numbering more than 400,000 men, arrived to oversee demilitarization and democratization of Japan. Sailors and marines joined them, and by early 1946 a British Commonwealth force that would eventually number nearly 6,000 men had arrived to help pacify and police western Honshu.[79]

By June 1950 both alien elements had shrunk dramatically from their 1945 levels. The Korean community that remained in Japan, clustered in Osaka and ghettoized in the poorer districts of other major metropolitan areas, was barely half its 1945 size. Strong desires to return home plus job prospects made grimmer each day by the flood of returning Japanese veterans sent many Koreans back to their homeland.[80] The Japanese people's easy acceptance of military occupation and escalating congressional resistance to defense spending

76. Changsoo Lee and George DeVos, *Koreans in Japan: Ethnic Conflict and Accommodation* (Berkeley, Calif., 1981), 37.

77. *Japan Year Book, 1937* (Tokyo, 1937), 664.

78. Lee and DeVos, 37, 52.

79. James, 3:68–69; Trotter, 54–70 summarizes the British Commonwealth Force experience in Japan and details that of its New Zealand members.

80. Lee and DeVos, 58–59.

reduced the numbers of Americans in uniform in occupied Japan in June 1950 to less than 100,000.[81]

Thus on the eve of war, Koreans and Americans living in Japan constituted barely one and a half percent of the population.[82] The prospects for their numbers shrinking still further were very strong. SCAP and the Japanese government had agreed that Koreans be accorded the rights of citizenship—temporarily, until the signature of a peace treaty, when they would again become aliens. But the two had also concurred on implementation of a program to deport Koreans deemed undesirable. That label was easily attached to them. American officials did so on political grounds, basing their arguments on the fact that significant elements within the Korean community in Japan were Communist. Their Japanese counterparts used similar reasoning, but that simply hid more deep-seated racial antipathy toward Koreans, who were thought to be a "dirty" and dangerous criminal element in society. The rate of deportations rose dramatically, and during the course of the fighting in Korea, more than 8,000 Koreans were forcibly removed from Japan.[83]

Their departure was, arguably made easier for those who engineered it because of the war. They could argue that Communist aggression made necessary removal of Red agitators in Japan. Prejudice could be cloaked in the demands of security. The war also reduced the Republic of Korea's ability to resist these deportations. Syngman Rhee, although never as staunch a defender as Koreans living in Japan would have liked, was overwhelmed by the demands of war and limited in his ability to challenge a policy in which SCAP acquiesced by his increased dependence upon General MacArthur for restoration and preservation of his country. The fate of the Korean minority in Japan did not rank at the top of his list of priorities.[84]

When the Korean fighting stopped, population readjustments, both forced and voluntary, all but halted. The number of Koreans deported in 1954, the first postwar year, dropped to less than a third the level of 1953 and fell below what it had been when the war began.

81. James, 3:77–78. According to "U.S. Military Personnel Strengths by Country, 1948–1962," American armed service personnel in Japan proper plummetted to 84,611, with an additional 21,970 in Okinawa in 1948. By the eve of the Korean War, their total number was about 100,000.

82. *Japan Annual, 1954*, 408; Lee and DeVos, 37, 58–64; "U.S. Military Personnel Strengths by Country, 1948–1962."

83. Lee and DeVos, 96, 149. Approximately a quarter of all Korean deportations from Japan took place during the Korean War. Yoshida Shigeru had no qualms about telling John Foster Dulles that his government wanted to send "almost all" Koreans in Japan " 'to their home' " in April 1951. See *FRUS, 1951*, 6:1007.

84. Lee and DeVos, 95–96.

Much more significantly, war-wrought devastation of the Korean peninsula, north and south of the 38th Parallel, made returning home almost impossible even for those living in Japan who wanted to do so. For Tokyo, the kind of contacts with Pyongyang necessary to establish a repatriation program was unthinkable in the immediate postwar years. Not until December 1959, nearly a decade after the Korean fighting began, did Koreans in Japan begin to return north of the new dividing line between the two Koreas. Continued cool relations between Tokyo and Seoul ruled out any concerted repatriation effort for southerners who wanted to cross the Tsushima Strait.[85]

Thus the war left Japan with a much more sizable Korean minority than would otherwise have been the case. Those outcasts became, in the eyes of many Japanese, a dagger pointed at the heart of Japanese society and its image abroad. They posed a threat, in the minds of many Japanese, not only to the myth of national racial purity, but also to the harmony of Japan's supposedly unique society. While some Koreans concealed their national identity in pursuit of assimilation into that society,[86] many more simply endured prejudice without complaint. A much smaller group reacted by turning to crime or pursuits that bordered on criminality.[87] That sufficed to reinforce long-standing and deep-seated anti-Korean prejudices—even among Japanese who were well-educated and relatively well off.

At the same time as it perpetuated the marginalization of Koreans in Japan, the war gave the American military presence there far greater social and cultural importance. Fighting in Korea first drained Japan of that presence then dramatically increased it. On its eve, military planners looked forward to a continued, but reduced and dispersed American military presence in Japan. The combination of shrinking defense budgets at home and growing commitments in the Atlantic pointed toward reduction of ground forces in Japan and greater reliance on naval and air units to defend it.[88] Commanders

85. Ibid., 96, 106.

86. William Wetherall, "Public Figures in Popular Culture: Identity Problems of Minority Heroes," in Lee and DeVos, 281–88, details the extraordinary efforts to which the popular wrestler Rikidozan went to hide his Korean identity and the complicity of the Japanese media in that attempt.

87. Yuzuru Sasaki and Hiroshi Wagatsuma, "Negative Self Identity in a Delinquent Korean Youth," in ibid., 334–55.

88. For the war plans on which these force redistributions were based, see Roger Dingman, "Strategic Planning and the Policy Process: American Plans for War in East Asia, 1945–1950," *Naval War College Review* 32 (November-December 1979): 4–21; James R. Blaker, *United States Overseas Basing* (New York, 1990), 32, 40, points out the number of bases in the Pacific was reduced by one half between 1945 and 1947 and halved again between 1947 and 1949.

"on the ground," like the commander of U.S. Navy Fleet Activities, Yokosuka—Captain Benton W. Decker—feared that Washington would drastically cut the number of men working for them.[89] Diplomatic experts on Japan anticipated that the small residual American force that would have to remain after conclusion of a peace treaty would be shifted and consolidated into fewer bases far away from major population centers.[90]

The Korean War overturned all of those assumptions. Between 1950 and 1953, the number of Americans in uniform in Japan soared to more than 250,000, a figure greater than it had been six months after the post–Pacific War Occupation began and more than two and a half times as large as it had been in June 1950.[91] Those who came needed more, rather than fewer, bases. Facilities in western Japan, close to Korea, that might otherwise have been closed remained open. By September 1950, the U.S. Air Force alone had thirty-five separate sites in Japan, and a month later the navy added Atsugi to its three other bases in Japan and Okinawa.[92] The men who came there typified a shift in the character of the new American military population in Japan. They were pilots from the two additional carrier groups rushed across the Pacific to meet the Korean emergency. They and the skilled mechanics who serviced their aircraft and repaired their ships added a new, more educated, and potentially more influential element to the American military presence in Japan.

Thanks to the war, they did not disperse but clustered, for the most part, in and around Tokyo—the hub of Japan's popular cultural activity as well as of its political life.[93] Their presence required the continuation of culturally penetrative activities, such as the English-language Armed Forces Radio Service, that might otherwise have

89. Dingman, "U.S. Navy," 302–3. For a more detailed account of the buildup of the Yokosuka naval base and of hopes for its retention, see Benton W. and Edwina Decker, *Return of the Black Ships* (New York, 1978).

90. Fearey to Allison, 13 and 14 October 1949, 740.0011 pw (peace), RG 59; *FRUS, 1950*, 6:1355; *FRUS, 1951*, 6:1307–9, 1403.

91. "U.S. Military Personnel Strengths by Country, 1948–1962"; James, 3:68.

92. *The Air Officer's Guide*, 4th ed. (Harrisburg, Pa., 1950), 436–38; Paolo Coletta and K. Jack Bauer, eds., *United States Navy and Marine Corps Bases, Overseas* (Westport, Conn., 1985), 18, 433, 434. Blaker, 32, sums up the change in basing policy by saying that the Korean War reversed the trend of reductions.

93. Two of the three navy bases were adjacent to Tokyo; the U.S. Air Force had eight sites in Tokyo and an additional five in Yokohama, plus major facilities at Tachikawa and Yokota west of the capital. Coletta and Bauer, 433–44; *Air Officer's Guide*, 436–38; Camp Zama, on the site of the former Imperial Japanese Army Military Academy, southeast of Tokyo, was the largest single U.S. Army installation in the western Pacific when the Korean War broke out. Cf. Tom Scanlan, ed., *Army Times Guide to Army Posts* (Harrisburg, Pa., 1963), 333.

been discontinued. Arguably, it had a much greater influence on ordinary Japanese than the heavily scripted programs praising democracy and damning militarism that SCAP had foisted on NHK, the Japanese government radio broadcasting service, earlier in the Occupation. Voluntary assimilation replaced forced indoctrination.[94]

These throngs of Americans in uniform also constituted a "test market" of sorts for Japanese entrepreneurs eager to sell the products of their factories to Americans. Their numbers, proximity, affluence, and desire for quality Japanese-made goods made them rewarding teachers to the exporters of the future. In part to sell to them, in part to buy from them, Japanese far further down in the corporate hierarchy than would otherwise have been the case began to learn to do business in English.[95]

These "gifts" of war on the Korean peninsula brought with them the social ills of any concentrated military presence in wartime: riotous behavior by sailors loosed from weeks or months at sea; the proliferation of bars, brothels, and brawls in port and post towns; and an upward surge of crimes against persons. But they also changed what might otherwise have been a very much more restricted, elite-oriented pattern of cross-cultural exchange between Japan and the United States. Those programs had taken shape in the minds of their progenitors before the Korean War broke out. Former Ambassador Joseph C. Grew had joined with missionary elements to launch a campaign to build what became the International Christian University in suburban Tokyo.[96] The GARIOA (Government-assisted Aid for Recovery in Occupied Areas) funded study abroad for government officials, students, and a technical exchange program that would bring industrial teachers to Japan and mature working students to the United States.[97] John D. Rockefeller III, who accompa-

94. For a description of earlier indoctrinative uses of radio in Japan, see Marlene J. Mayo, "The War of Words Continues: American Radio Guidance in Occupied Japan," in Thomas W. Burkman, ed., *The Occupation of Japan: Arts and Culture* (Norfolk, Va., 1988), 45–83.

95. A decade after the war ended, when the author first went to Japan, "beach" merchants competed vigorously in selling such then-exotic devices as FM radios to U.S. Navy personnel; David W. Plath, "My Car-ism: Motorizing the Showa Self," in Gluck and Graubard, eds., *Showa*, 234, describes how he, as a naval officer on an amphibious ship during the Korean War, oversaw the loading of American vehicles on ships for U.S. military families bound for Japan—and the brisk trading with Japanese buyers of those same vehicles that subsequently took place on the far side of the Pacific.

96. Schonberger, 143–46, describes the formation of the American Council on Japan, which provided Grew with a network from which to solicit donations for the university.

97. Igarashi, *TaiNichi kōwa*, 145.

nied John Foster Dulles to Tokyo in January 1951, believed that continued cross-cultural communication among American and Japanese elites was essential to the success of a peace settlement; his visit laid the personal and financial foundations for the influential International House of Japan.[98]

The hundreds of thousands of Americans who came to Japan during the Korean War broadened such exchange programs beyond the wildest imaginings of their originators. They brought what might otherwise have been cerebral elite activities down to the level of ordinary people. They broadened the stream of American influence on Japanese popular culture which had reached Japan during the early years of the post–Pacific War Occupation into a torrent. Their presence and activities may even explain why American popular culture, rather than the writers, artists, and performers who constitute our "high" culture, has had such an enduring impact upon the life of the Japanese people.[99]

The novelist James Michener captured the essence and implications of this interchange in popular culture in his two best-selling Korean War novels, *The Bridges at Toko-ri* (1953) and *Sayonara* (1954)—both of which were translated and widely circulated in Japan. In different ways, they make a common point. In *Bridges* the hero returns from war in Korea for a brief leave in Japan, where his wife and daughter join him. They go to a luxurious resort modeled on the Kanaya Hotel at Hakone, near Mount Fuji. When they, as a family, enter the hot-spring baths there, completely unclothed as is customary, their togetherness is shattered by the intrusion of a Japanese family, no less naked. For a moment the two groups stare warily at one another, embarrassed by their curiosity about one another's physical differences and uncertain that they can share the same large pool of hot water. But once the Japanese step down into it, their shyness and sense of difference vanishes. They are simply human beings sharing a pleasure that transcends their differences. Common humanity triumphs over whatever feelings about the past or cultural idiosyncracies that may have separated them.[100]

In *Sayonara,* Michener's American protagonists are precisely the kind of Americans war in Korea brought to Japan. One is an ambi-

98. Ibid., 146–47.

99. J. Thomas Rimer, "High Culture in the Showa Period," in Gluck and Graubard, eds., *Showa,* 276.

100. James A. Michener, *The Bridge at Toko-ri* (New York, 1973), 50, 67–68. It should be noted that this short novel originally appeared in *Life,* 6 July 1953, just prior to the conclusion of the Korean truce agreement. In that form alone it reached five million people. See A. Grove Day, *James A. Michener,* 2nd ed. (Boston, Mass., 1977), 75.

tious pilot recuperating from wounds suffered in the war. The other is an enlisted man. Both meet and fall in love with Japanese women—the officer with a beautiful dancer from the elite Takarazuka Dance Troupe, the sergeant with an urban girl who provides the kind of love and care he, as an orphan, never experienced at home. But the prejudices of race and strictures of social norms conspire to frustrate both love affairs. Unable to cut through military red tape designed to keep him from bringing his common-law wife home, the sergeant commits suicide. The dancer and the officer regretfully conclude that the demands of racial "purity" their respective professions impose will not allow them to marry. But they come away from their broken relationship with a deeper understanding of each other's culture. "Sayonara, Japan, . . . you enemy, you friend," Michener's hero says. But Michener leaves little doubt that the two cultures, different yet thrown ever more closely together by war in Korea, cannot forever be kept apart.[101]

The fictional Sayonara ends with a poignant parting. But the real Korean War assured the continuation of popular cross-cultural activities that go on to this day. In the summer of 1952, Henry C. Bush, a young American teaching English at Hirosaki University, far from metropolitan Tokyo, published a telling commentary on the impact of American popular culture in Japan. He noted that the Occupation had long since pushed British and European films and authors to the margins of Japanese consciousness. In the provincial town where he lived, American soldiers danced with local girls at the Club St. Louis and watched Hollywood movies at a tiny theater. The extension of power, particularly when justified by commitment to a "good cause" such as saving Korea from communism or coaching Japan in democracy, Bush concluded, brought with it the urge to diffuse one's culture.[102] He might also have added that the continued presence of that power made those who received its benefits and shared in its dangers more open to whatever that culture had to offer the people of Japan.

Thus, in its impact on Japan's society and culture, the Korean War might appropriately be considered a combination of dagger and gift. It reinforced the Japanese sense of uniqueness and superiority by ensuring the continued presence of Koreans who could be scapegoated for the failures of the policies of Japanese, American, and Korean governments. But it also helped open the eyes of ordinary Japanese to the good as well as the bad in the persons of those who

101. James A. Michener, *Sayonara* (New York, 1954), 243; See also Day, 79–82.

102. Henry C. Bush, "Impact of American Culture," *Contemporary Japan* 20 (July-September 1951): 331–40.

came to their shores in American uniforms. Ironically, something as grim and deadly as war in Korea helped millions of Japanese see what was delightful or desirable in American popular culture no less than the potency of American arms.

Conclusion

What difference in the end, then, did the Korean War make for Japan? It was a secondary, not a primary, event in modern Japanese history. Following the truly transforming Pacific War, it influenced the shape of structures designed to preserve Japan's national security. Without war on the Korean peninsula in 1950, Japan and the United States would still have concluded peace and security treaties, and American troops and bases would have remained on Japanese soil. But the number of the former and size of the latter would have been smaller. The Korean War blunted the Red dagger that Americans and Japanese came to believe was pointed at Japan. But in guaranteeing a large forward-deployed American military presence on the Korean peninsula that remains there to this day, the war proved calculations about Japanese rearmament wrong, exposed the logical inconsistencies underlying Washington's pressures on Japan to rearm, and set the stage for decades of controversy over military burden-sharing. In this respect, the Korean War proved a "gift" to Japan that was anything but simple "free security."

Three years of fighting in Korea left the Japanese people more prosperous and, perhaps because of that well-being, more open to a continued close security relationship with the United States. But the war confirmed and accelerated economic changes already set in motion by the Pacific War. The basic features of what would later be seen as phenomenally successful national industrial policy were in place before Kim Il Sung's troops raced across the 38th Parallel. Being purveyors to those who resisted them did solve Tokyo's immediate balance of payments problem. But those who would guide Japan's economic destiny over the coming decades did not regard that "solution" as anything other than temporary. The Korean War did not pro-offer Japan the gift of a formula for future prosperity. Instead, it left the Japanese people and their economic leaders with a heightened sense of the fragility of their economy—an attitude that was but one of many factors that would shape their determination to prosper in world markets. In the long perspective, that gift, seen by many at the time as a dagger, may have had a far greater influence on the subsequent course of Japan's overall economic development than profits earned during the Korean War.

Finally, it must be said that the Korean conflict, by assuring that large numbers of foreigners—Koreans and Americans in uniform—would remain on Japanese soil, helped keep Japan "internationalized." Neither destroyed the myth of Japanese racial purity that helped propel Japan into the Pacific War and that remains a fundamental element of national self-understanding today. But both helped subvert the designs of those who, if otherwise left to their own devices, would have cleansed Japan of what they regarded as socially and culturally corrupting alien influences. Continued foreign presence was regarded by many then as a dagger, yet it turned out to be a gift of considerable value. Openness to the strangers who continued to stream into their midst as a consequence of the Korean War not only enriched Japanese popular culture; it also helped shape the ability of mid-century Japanese to open the markets of the world to the products of their economy and culture.

In the end, then, both Nomura Kichisaburō, the admiral, and Hessel Tiltman, the journalist, were wrong in their assessments of the impact of the Korean War on Japan. It was neither threat nor gift of magnitude sufficient to alter fundamentally the direction of modern Japan's history. But both were correct in recognizing the potential for change that the outbreak of war on the Korean peninsula brought in June 1950. The war that began then confirmed and extended, expanded and accelerated, and twisted and consolidated the forces of history unleashed by the Pacific War that were pushing Japan toward a different future—one scarcely imagined then, but one which we accept as the reality of today.