Part A (1/2):

The reflection on the Japan’s reconstruction period: What happened to Japan after WWII and why Japan could recover from the war so fast and became one of the most powerful countries by the end of 20th century?

After WWII, as the result of war defeated, Japan was occupied by the America. However, this occupation period was a pivot time for Japan since it established Japan’s future political and economic terrain.

First of all, after series of air strikes from the U.S., The Bombing of Tokyo and atomic bombs, in the aftermath of WWII the economic in Japan was delicate, almost all cities in Japan were in ashes. After the occupation which leaded by General Douglas MacArthur, the US provide huge direct financial support: from 1945-1952 was roughly $2.2 billion ($15.2 billion in 2005 dollars), of which almost $1.7 billion was grants and $504 million was loans[[1]](#footnote-1). These financial supports provided Japan a head start for the reconstruction.

Besides, the U.S. occupation brought extensive reforms to Japan, and this is the vital reason that Japan could experience such a period of rapid economic expansion. The reforms that the U.S. brought, including the creation of constitutions, the implementation of land reforms, and the restructuring of Japan's industrial and political systems, greatly helped the development of democracy in Japan. The reason the U.S. helped Japan so much is that the U.S. needed an ally in far east to curb the growing communism and against Soviet Union and China. Thus, the United States implemented a policy shift known as the "Reverse Course" by approximately 1947, which transitioning from a strategy of neutralizing Japan to actively promoting its re-industrialization. During this period, industrials like automobile and electronic industries skyrocketed. Compared with the financial aid from the U.S., the industrial reform is the more essential reason that Japan could develop rapidly and became one of the most powerful countries during 1980s.

Part A (2/2):

The reflection on the Japan’s WWII: How Japan get on the path to militarism before WWII?

The history factor was essential in Japan's aggressive attitude during WWII. Dated back to the 19th century, the "Black Ships" left a scar on Japan's national confidence triggered the opening of Japan. Objectively speaking, the decision to open up brought benefits to Japan, such as new technology and democracy, compared with the closing policy that the Qing dynasty took, which helped Japan develop incredibly fast in a short period. Another vital turning point for Japan was the Russo-Japan War at the beginning of the 20th century. The victory over Russia significantly boosted Japan's confidence and national power, ignited a fervent nationalist spirit, and reinforced the militarism in Japan.

After the Manchurian Incident in 1931, Japan successfully obtained vast land from the Qing Dynasty. From 1932 to 1937, Japan made a colossal effort to construct Manchukuo, including investing in infrastructure and building up the railway system. Besides, to show the justification for the invasion, the Japanese government claimed that they were "exploring" Northeastern China and helping local citizens; they tried to make the invasion sound similar to the discovery of the West in the U.S. During this period, it happened that Japan encountered Showa Depression during this period. Desperately seeking more resources, the Japanese government became greedy after acknowledging China's weakness. They were now seeking the Manchurian and the whole of China.

Another essential point for militarism in Japan is the Marco Polo Bridge Incident. This incident and the shelling of the city of Wanping are considered the point that the military finally came out of the Japanese government's control, and then this incident became the full-scale invasion of China.

Part B:

"Akihabara Geeks," as a 2005 documentary, it immerses view in Tokyo's vibrant Akihabara district, a place where is famous for subcultures in technology, anime, and games. The film intricately portrays the lives of Katsumi, the person who is an overclock fan, deeply invested in PC hardware. To reach higher CPU frequency, he took every possible action, even used liquid nitrogen for cooling. Although the improvement is small and has no practical benefit in daily usage, however, the world record is the goal he is looking for. Not afraid of difficulties, spending time on investigating, that’s the spirit of geeks. It also focuses on Motohara, the man who spend most of his money on anime, manga, anime, and games. As for him, the world of anime is the utopia where he could escape from the pressure from life. However, the reliance on anime and manga is damaging his life and social ability: no saving, minimal spending on real-world life, no social interaction with any other. It is a sarcasm that a person could tell names of girls from all the animations and games but not familiar with any girls in real life. To sum up, "Akihabara Geeks" is more than a documentary; it's a tribute to a unique subculture that thrives in the heart of Tokyo, showing the life for different subculture in this area.

1. From "United States Aid to Japan: A Reassessment," by [author name scrubbed]. Unpublished Paper. September 1977. Based on The United States' Role in Japan's Postwar Economic Recovery. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1976. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)